**Why Harry Hates the Headmaster or Alt. Year 6**

by Lil_Nezumi [archived by HPFandom_archivist]

**Summary**

Non-Canon, Char. OOC & AU from year 6. This is a different story about a letter that gets delivered after a certain amount of time has passed coming from a deceased magical relation. It’s about an unknown legacy, from a very, very unexpected quarter, which really angers Harry Potter, but not for the reason that you think. Here’s something hopefully new to you the reader.

**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**

*MY Inspiration*: Harry Potter (books, movies, various fanfiction stories posted on various sites), Twisting the Hellmouth web site and one of its interesting challenges about unusual parentage (the challenge 1758, about an unusual parentage for Xander in the crossover world of Harry Potter, which inspired this twist to an alternate or unusual parentage story for Harry)

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All the characters, worlds, base concepts or general ideas are just a bit food for the writing bug. This story is pure fiction and is in no way meant to copy or reflect real life, events or people, should this happen then obviously it is pure coincidence.

**Warning**: See profile for preferred pairing types or writing style. Dark elements will be written in this tale, but only for story purposes. This story is not intended to be dark and gloomy, but more of an affirmation of life and of moving on. Under 18 & Rape is not related to a main pairing in this story, but found in one chapter and is not that graphic. It's to add an element of explanation or history, if you will, but you've been warned, hence the (M) mature rating.

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**Speech Legend**: (This is the standard by which I write my stories and therefore you will not see this repeated in future chapters)

“Normal”

‘Thoughts’

(…Parseltongue/Other Languages/Mind Speak/Alternate Speech Patterns like sign language…)

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**Chapter One**

HPHPHP

It’s not unknown for those who’re part of the Wizarding World to receive mail from dead relatives. Time magic, charms, potions and spells all ensure that those who’re in the beyond can deliver mail to advise their offspring, progeny or any others, of particular possible portents that they may have seen, advice that they may have wanted to give before their demise, several truths about past events, etcetera, etcetera…

Now please note that I do not mean that a dead person is writing the letter, *but* that letters can get delivered at any point in time because of those particular charms, potions, spells, etc… It’s rare that someone known as a Muggle-born would ever receive such a letter. It’s even rarer for one to be in receipt of information so utterly shocking that it changes a person’s whole point view regarding another individual, especially one of their known or close acquaintances.

Lily Evans was one such person and her future child, would be another. She had received a letter
upon her magical maturation (...,i...,) date, of sixteen years, with advice that should she be unable to carry out the request in the letter that it be resealed and put back into stasis for any of her potential and future offspring.

She was shocked when she read the contents. She knew that speaking about it to her mother was out of the question. The spells that had bound her mother were so insidious that the woman would never be able to bare the truth. In fact, learning the truth would have killed her because of specific Dark Arts non-disclosure spells that seem to always linger long after they had been cast. She had tested her mother for them one night after she had dosed her with a safe sleeping draft.

What she had learned had changed her world. In the future, learning about the prophecy related to her child and that which would send her into hiding would have the same effect. Only she would worry about that later in her life and was an entirely different matter altogether.

The vivacious red-haired, sixteen year old witch couldn’t confide in anyone else about this matter either. For the person that inflicted her family with such Darkness was a trusted member of her close circle of friends. There was absolutely no one that she could trust from that quarter. Their belief in his infallibility or whatever was such that they rarely if ever questioned him or his motives.

In fact her best friend at the time, who’d been teaching her Occlumency, could only determine that something was bothering her, but could never suss out what it was. He had actually praised her on her panicked success in shielding her mind. She sincerely wished that she could have told him what she knew because his Occlumency shields were truly stronger than hers.

In the end she made a very difficult decision.

She re-spelled the letter and hoped that her future unborn child would claim what they needed for the future of their magical family. She also hoped that the inheritance would help him or her defeat the evil that was currently spreading in the Wizarding World. She wrote them a letter explaining the situation and asked for their forgiveness in not being able to seek out the magics that belonged to their family, which may have aided them in their battle to come.

Once done, she prayed to various Gods in the hopes that it would be safely delivered. Then she brewed and took a potion. It was a potion that would allow her to forget her mother’s real name and her mother’s infamous relation to the Wizarding World.

Her prayers to various Gods were heard, but the letter would still be delayed. She limited it to the time her future child reached sixteen years of age, no matter when his or her own magical maturity occurred. The letter was confined to her choice of time and date and could not be delivered one day earlier, despite the fact that the original spell was linked to the date of an offspring’s magical maturity.

Her reason for that particular choice was based on a feeling and the knowledge that some teenagers could become classed as adults, under the right circumstances, at that age. She always followed her feelings whenever they happened and it had always served her well.

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Forward Time – A Couple of Decades, more or less (a bit of background)

Harry Potter turned sixteen this year, but as with all things concerning him, he had gained his magical maturity far earlier than any of his year mates. It had occurred to him during the summer before his fifth year, just after he turned fifteen.
It didn’t come in an explosion of light and magic. It didn’t come with visits from his dead ancestors or anything of the sort. It was basically just an influx of magic and it was up to him to distribute vast amount of it to store internally within his body.

The distribution of this influx was a highly personal process and before it had happened, he had been surprised by his Aunt who showed him to a special corner of the basement of the Dursley household, in which to prepare for it and eventually access it when it came. She was also the only one that explained everything to him about magical maturity.

He had never been told anything about this strange magical aging process or even suspected that anything of the sort would occur. He didn’t know if any of the other Muggle-borns or Muggle-raised knew about this. Hermione might, but it could only be because she read the strangest things.

His Aunt Petunia even told him all of that at the beginning of last summer, the one before his fifteenth birthday. He was to go down to the basement and practice his spells, as long as he made sure to only do that when her son and husband were out of the house. She stated that it would help him to channel his magical energies and ground them more solidly before he reached his magical maturity.

She even recommended that he find some way to meditate either through Tai Chi or Yoga, which had been popular with the ladies in her community and had helped to calm her mind through the use of a routine of physical stretching. She had handed him several books on the matter that she had kept over the years, long after she had given up the process. She didn’t have the patience to continue when everyone else had given it up for the next popular ‘in’ thing.

Aunt Petunia told him in confidence that some time before her sister went into hiding Harry’s mother came for tea one final time. She had explained that things were heating up in the Wizarding World and wasn’t sure of her survival based on the fact that she came from the Muggle World.

The long necked woman hadn’t been impressed with the fact that her sister came to flout her magical differences and powers. However, her sister had explained these few things because she felt that Petunia would be involved with the Magical World one day whether she wanted to or not.

It was only a feeling that his mother had, but his Aunt had always paid attention when Lily ‘felt’ something because whatever it was, it was always linked to blood family and always came true.

Petunia Dursley sincerely hoped that that was not the case, but she had long ago accepted that things in life were always unpredictable. She knew that with one magical sister, her own offspring ‘could’, urgh, have magic too. So she allowed her sister to set up the blood wards around their beautiful townhouse and at the children’s park across the way. She also allowed her sister to set up undetectable magical shield stones in every corner and quadrant of the then unfinished basement.

Lily explained that with the stones in place, the basement would be shielded from any and all magical detection by any of practitioners of her kind of magic. It was also a place that if, heaven forbid, Petunia’s own offspring were magically inclined they would be able to practice in the Muggle World without being penalized for underage magical use. These magic shield stones, Lily explained, will also assist Petunia’s child when he or she reaches their magical maturation. It will conceal the choices made during that time and hide the fact that it had occurred.

So when his Aunt had finally told him about it, Harry was able to go down there to practice his spells for the past years and the upcoming years because he was hidden. No more letters from the Ministry for him. When it came time for his magical maturation process to occur, which happened at the tender of fifteen, he was safe, secure, secluded and hidden from the all eyes of the Wizarding World. He channelled his magic into the forms that he had always wanted to learn.
Most went into his mind to increase his memory retention and recall. He had been forever annoyed with how easily Hermione accessed information from books, which she had read. She was always able to call forth the information she needed and know where to find it.

He had read about eidetic memory (photographic memory) and other forms of savantisms that exist in the Muggle World. He used this information to map out the pathway that he wanted his magics to take during his magical maturation. He hoped that with the magical growth the primary core of his memory would increase and eventually improve his learning abilities. He researched quite a bit about the mind and body when he contemplated on his magical core and where to distribute the influx of magical energy.

The influx of magic was usually limited by the size of the magical core of a being or creature. However many people and creatures were fully aware of just how big their own primary magical core was.

Harry only suspected that his was slightly bigger and only fully realized it when he began channelling the new magic during his magical maturation process. They hadn’t been taught at school how to access it and the Professors certainly never showed him or any other students how to gauge their own magical strength or that of others. It was foolish not teach such concepts based on the fact that Voldemort was a huge pain in the Wizarding World’s backside at the moment.

Harry’s choices and pre-planning resulted in a change in his mind, but also caused a change to his physical body. He was more supple, limber and definitely taller than he had ever expected to be due to this process, although strangely his new height only began to manifest early this summer. It certainly explained quite a bit about the differences in stature regarding the many Witches and Wizards of that hidden magical world.

With the magic channelled into his limbs too, he learnt a few other things like wandless magic and about how to use the magic that coursed through his veins because of where he chose to link it. His limbs were extensions of his magic and his wand was near useless now because of it. He’d have to go see Ollivander for an explanation on this phenomenon, but had decided to wait for the summer before his sixth year at Hogwarts to do so.

The meditation moves that he learnt from Yoga, including a few of the Martial Arts texts that he had studied had resulted in a contortion like ability with some of his limbs. All that magical influx helped increase his physical stamina and speed too.

The magic that was channelled into his mind did exactly what he wanted and slightly more. The Occlumency that Professor Snape had tried to teach him, during his fifth year, never worked because the pathways in his mind were still adjusting to the excess magic that he had gained during the summer of his fifteenth year. At the very least he had been able to hide that particular fact from the man, who never noticed, because it was not something that he had been looking for when delving into the young man’s mind.

However, none of his Professors or the Headmaster had even any inkling that Harry had received his magical maturity during the summer prior to September 1st of his fifth year of attending Hogwarts. If they had, they certainly would have used another method to protect his mind. However with the few lessons Harry had, he had interpreted a new way to protect his mind and that certainly helped with the headaches and the shunting of visions that he had been receiving from Dark Lord to someplace else in his mind.

Unfortunately and probably because everyone was hell-bent on protecting him, they never gave him the proper information he needed to prevent the disastrous events at the Department of Mysteries. He didn’t have enough information to even ‘consider’ that the Dark Lord might have been able to send
'false’ visions.

To him such things were not possible and he didn’t realize otherwise until it was much too late. Sirius Black, his much wanted Godfather, was gone because of it.

Finally after all that happened at the end of his fifth year, he was still sent back to the Dursleys for the summer. This was, of course, after hearing the entire prophecy that the Headmaster had been trying to protect him from ever learning about.

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NOW

Harry was currently sitting at his desk in the smallest room of Number 4 Privet Drive in Surrey England doing his summer studies and getting ready for his sixth year. His family was finally allowing him the time to complete his schoolwork, so long as his other chores were completed first. He was busy re-writing his hastily written Charms essay when a soft popping sound occurred near his right elbow.

A magical scroll has just appeared in his room. Now he was concerned about the use of magic in this extremely Muggle neighbourhood, so he waited before taking any action to see if this magical arrival was noticed by the United Kingdom’s Ministry of Magic.

Two studious hours later, no owls or other notices appeared in his room. Not even someone from his ‘Order of the Phoenix’ guard came in to see just what it was that he had just received. He gave into his curiosity and looked at the small scroll more closely.

The scroll rested there in its innocuousness. It had a dark blue seal with a family crest that seemed similar to the Potter Crest that he had seen once, during a trip to the Bank, except this one was different based on the magic he sensed surrounding the scroll. He suspected that this first scroll was just wrapping for the true contents of the letter.

Soon his curiosity got the better of him. However he decided to go down to the shielded basement in order to test the scroll before reading it in peace. It was down here where his school trunk was stored and where he had all his other magical stuff, hidden from his destructive cousin and vindictive uncle.

He had a special Weasley wand in his trunk, a private gift from the twins. It would always detect dark magic, coercion spells, pranks and other things. It was a one-of-a-kind wand to help him with his large amount of fan mail and owl post. They felt that Harry needed something that would and could detect all possible spells, charms and other possible things like paper soaked in harmful or not so harmful potions.

Harry ran the wand over the magical scroll. A list of spells attached to the scroll was printed in the air with mage light. When he read what some of the spells were, he immediately thought that it was a letter from his deceased godfather, Sirius Black or perhaps one from his mother and father.

It wasn’t until he read the first line that he learned a very different story about him and where he came from.

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The Cover Scroll

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My Dear Child,

I do not know if you’re a son or daughter, but know this. At this point and time in my life I’m a sixth year student at Hogwarts.

I received the letter inside this scroll a couple of weeks ago, but I cannot take any form of action. I’m terribly sorry to pass this task onto you, but I have a feeling that you’re the one meant to succeed in the task.

My feelings are always right in things like this, so now it’s up to you.

Please forgive me,

Lily Evans (16 years old, July 31st, 1976)

PS: I’ve not been exposed to too much of the political conflict that’s happening at this point in time. Yet this wonderful, magical Wizarding World grows Darker. Some weird pillock named Voldemort is making a general mess of the whole deal and is vastly fighting against Muggles and Muggle-borns, but I don’t know why. I also have a feeling that you’ll be involved with that somehow too. Just thought that I’d let you know in advance. Take care my future child.

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The Inner Scroll

HPHPHP

Young one,

My name is Natalia Grindelwald, a pureblood witch of the old form and education, born in Iceland to Christiana and Gellert Grindelwald. Currently, I’m twelve years old, but I know that you and I are related by blood, as this letter could only be delivered to someone of my blood-line. I don’t know by what degree we are related, but it’s the blood-line magic in it that directs spells of this nature.

The proof is in your eyes. Mine are dark green and yours should be the same. It’s a singular family trait that comes from the Mossenberg lineage. You can verify this through potions and through looking it up in various history texts.

About my father, I don’t know what you know about him, so I’ll tell you a little bit. He was fair of hair and eyes. He married my mother under several strange conditions and he was not a kind man. My mother’s maiden name was Mossenberg and as far as I know, I’m their only child.

I’m writing to you in order to rectify a great wrong that will done to me by one Albus Percival Brian Wulfric Dumbledore. He used to be my father’s lover quite some years ago when they were younger, but according to Dumbledore my father did something terrible. Something he firmly believes to have been unforgiveable.

What was that wrong?

Well from what I’ve been told by my mother, my father apparently fell in ‘madly’ love with her. Actually it was more like her money, the strength of her magic and all her properties. However, what he basically did was cuckold Mr. Dumbledore and flaunted it in such a way that it made the man look like a right idiot and fool.

I firmly believe that my father went about the whole situation the wrong way, if that is indeed what
happened. I make no excuses for my father. I know that he is not a kind man and he is one truly prone to dabble in Dark Magical Energies.

All of Christiana’s physical assets never reverted back to her living family when she died a year ago because she didn’t have any blood family left. They were killed. It was my father or so that’s what I’ve been told complete with evidence. This was supposedly a factor to assure his continued control over her.

His apparent death at Nuremburg allowed the UK’s Ministry of Magic, to seize my father’s liquid assets (all money), but fail in their attempt to gain control the physical ones (buildings and land), of which there are three.

Unfortunately for the UK’s Ministry of Magic, my parents had foreseen such events and taken measures to secure all properties with spells to allow access only by the direct blood-line heir. The goblins of any magical Bank are the only ones who can ensure that the “Right of Ownership Ritual” is properly conducted in order to you to gain access and properly take ownership of them.

First you must understand my current situation. I didn’t want anyone to find me, so I hid mostly in the Muggle World, but I know that Dumbledore is looking for me and will eventually find me.

I feel that I’m going to be betrayed for money. This is just a feeling that I have and unfortunately my feelings always seem to come true.

That man will probably give me two choices; 1) to live or 2) to die. Since I don’t want to die, I will have to resort to other methods of preserving my identity, magic and memory for you.

I know basically what his plans are for me once he catches up to me. He’ll surely use a Dark Ritual to drain or siphon my magics. He’ll probably try to alter my memories, but I’m not going to let that happen. If I survive the siphoning process, he’ll likely change my name and send me to a Muggle orphanage. Through a Dark Ritual, he’ll deny me my rightful Wizarding heritage because of what my father did to him.

This is my only chance to send a letter to a blood-line family member, for I know that you will exist eventually, because I will choose life. I know that given the chance he’d try to prevent this letter from being delivered, but with this potion-soaked paper and these spells, he’ll never know that it is too late and that this has already been sent.

This is my true “Magical Will & Testament”, the Last Will and Testament of Natalia Grindelwald and whatever name I end up with in the Muggle World.

Please follow these instructions as best you can:
1) Reclaim your heritage, go to Gringotts or any other Goblin run magical bank and have them perform the “Right of Ownership Ritual” before any more transactions take place in your name from your accounts.
2) Remove all contents from the Grindelwald vaults that will get listed as part of the Ritual.

Our three properties contain books and teaching portraits for various magical gifts and skills, so chose your teacher wisely. The properties contain many other things, including information on how to transfer magic out of a blood-line and how to get it back, if it’s not too late.

a) I want you to honestly try to get our family magics back. This is a magical familial task that I set for you. Do everything in your power to get it back, if you can.
b) Destroy whatever Dark Lord or Witch is running about in your own time, a Seer told me that you
might be affected by him or her, whatever their gender may be, they are trouble.
c) Never let others meddle with your fate or your choices. It is, after all, your life and therefore it should be up to you how you choose to live it. I’ve ‘seen’ things regarding this matter; just correct them, all right.

Many of objects in our properties will not function without bloodline magic. Although most are blood-linked rather than magically linked, still you will need to have gone through your magical maturity to access many them.

Don’t bother with anything to do with Gellert Grindelwald, his name or his history is his own doing. He doesn’t need to be redeemed because he’s dead.

I suspect that my new name probably will become something simple, but with my same initials NG.

A name change is something that I know Dumbledore plans to do, but it must be done in such a way that it will be hauntingly close to my original name. It’s one of the things that help in transitioning from one identity to another when magic is involved or so that’s what my father told me once. That should give you a point from which to begin to redress this issue and find out where you are in our family tree.

I fear that I’m running out of time. If you plan to claim our heritage, simply state that you are a blood relation of Natalia Grindelwald to the wax seal on this parchment. Let three drops of blood land on top of the seal and wait for the magical effects to take place.

The magical effects are not big and should not be detrimental to you. They will allow you to receive the mental location maps to our properties and some of my memories.

The choice to follow this request, is as always is your own. All of this will be lost after the fourth generation of children born from my bloodline.

I wish luck whoever you may be.

Love from your…
Grandmother, Mother, Aunt etc…, whoever I may be in relation to you,
Natalia Grindelwald

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Harry was extremely shocked to say the least.

‘Grindelwald,’ he thought with vague stupefaction. ‘We haven’t learned much about him in school other than the fact that he was the Dark Lord that Dumbledore supposedly defeated, but I’m not surprised if Dumbledore is the reason why we’re not learning about that mad-man based on what I just read. I think that I will have to ask Aunt Petunia what her mother and grandmother’s maiden names were.’

He concealed the scroll in a hidden compartment of his new trunk. It was a trunk that he had purchased during the time of the Triwizard Tournament in his fourth year. It came from a specialist luggage shop in Hogsmeade.

It has dimensional pockets in the form of three front drawers, hidden behind a dark stained inlay. All drawers were keyed to him and his magic. The trunk has hidden levers, catches and lock mechanisms for all sections of it. It was protected against theft, snoops, and it shrunk, which allowed him to hide it from his Gryffindor House mates. There were few students in that House that he had called friends, but that list had been shrinking over the years.
During Harry’s fourth year the owners of that little luggage shop were happy to create the unique trunk for one Harry Potter, Boy-Who-Lived. They also didn’t mind that he had asked them to store the original plans in one of the drawers of the trunk before taking a memory wipe potion. The potion was a standard store offering and was only used under special circumstance, for example: anything commissioned by a particular individual. It wiped the memory of their commissioned work cleanly, clearly and without causing any internal damage or harm to them.

Store owners, of various Wizarding Establishments, were the creators of many fine things. However, every once in a while a customer would ask for something unique to them, but the creating of whatever it was sometimes needed to be protected too. So, for the longest time, all kinds of shop owners and item creators used this potion as insurance that they would never be targeted for destruction because they held secrets.

The potion ensured that the secrets no longer existed in the mind of the person who did the actual work and those who took the order. The only records kept at any business were the names of the individuals making a purchase, the fact that something was sold, plus the price that was charged.

The variety in the cost of normal versus commissioned work was very telling in the business ledgers. However there was nothing that would compel a worker from revealing the work done because any potion, charm or spell cast upon them to reveal the work done would fail due to the potion. It is unimaginatively called the ‘Shop Owner’s Potion’. Any attack would only result in a backfiring protective shield that would completely wipe the attacker’s memory of all learnt things.

Harry was quite pleased with his finished trunk because he knew that it would be protected against people looking to take his things. He hated his celebrity status, but there was nothing he could do about it at the moment other than to find ways, magical or muggle, to protect his belongings. He’d noticed this in his first year when all his writing implements slowly disappeared over time. He was left with one sorry looking quill pen and that was only because it was one that he carried with him all the time.

He lost nearly all of his first and second year schoolbooks because he had learned in the Muggle World to write his name in the covers of them in order to get them to return to him. He was glad to lose his Lockhart books though because they were just tawdry novels and had nothing of value in them.

However, because of all that he quickly learned a spell that would wipe his signature off of his belongings should they be taken away from him any longer than three days. It’s because he didn’t want people to profit from his signature. He even lost some of his class work for that same reason, until he began to use that spell wipe more often.

He’d learnt quickly to never write his name in permanent ink. He found a potion that worked kind of like disappearing ink only it was activated with a spell. He would write his name on his assignments, but once they were graded and returned to him, he said the spell and it removed his name because of the special ink-potion.

He truly learned a life lesson back then, when he eventually found out how they were getting his belongings. Well... that’s when he started to think about a new school trunk and getting it custom made.

That’s also around the time he learnt to secure his belongings using magical and muggle methods. It was also after getting his new trunk that a couple of his House mates had learnt to steal the Boy-Who-Lived’s stuff from his school bag until he placed protection spells and hexes on that too.

Harry grinned at the sight of his beautifully craft magical trunk. ‘This will protect the scroll until I can find out from Aunt Petunia if her mother or grandmother’s name contained the initials NG.’
(...i...) Magical Maturation, defined: It’s a concept that I found in a couple of FanFiction stories, therefore I cannot take credit it nor do I claim any originality for it. In fact the term shows up with so many different descriptions and other names that I believe I chose this one by fluke. However, I believe that a general definition for any “HP Magical Maturation” is an influx of magic, either by the recessive ancestral magical creature genes or by outside sources (Earth’s ley lines for example) or some other invented method by which any Harry Potter character will gain more power.
Two

Disclaimer & Warnings: See chapter one for all warnings, disclaimers, etc..., disregard HBP & DH and, note this story contains disturbing images involving Dumbledore, mild-bashing of Hermione and Ginny, and possibly a bit of Ron angst. From here on this will not be repeated, as you’ve been sufficiently warned.

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CH 2

HPHPHP

Petunia was sitting at her spotless kitchen table sipping her morning tea when the boy her family had been forced to put up with came in and sat down across from her. She blinked and then chose to say nothing, hoping that by ignoring him that he’d go away. That didn’t happen.

“What was your mother or grandmother’s name?” He asked suddenly. “I mean their maiden names.”

Petunia frowned at him. “Why do you need to know that?”

Harry sighed, having hoped that she would just answer without questioning why he needed to know. “I’ve just received some news that can only be clarified if I know their original names.”

She shrugged and then said, “My mother’s name was Natalie Grimmorning and my grandmother’s maiden name was Agatha Marsh.”

“That’s a strange name,” he observed. “Grimmorning...”

“It was given to her when she was orphaned as a young teenager,” Petunia said. “She told us about it once. Apparently she arrived on the doorstep at the Queen’s Salvation House (…i…) with no memories and only one letter stating that her name was Natalie. She had been wearing a necklace with inter-laced initials NG and it was believed that her last name began with a G. Apparently, the administrators agreed on giving her that peculiar last name because on the day that she had arrived it had been a ‘grim morning’. My mother could never remember anything else before arriving at the orphanage. She was just over thirteen years of age and had full on case of amnesia. She had to re-learn how to read, write… basically re-learn everything that wasn’t considered physical memory.”

She recalled a time when her own sister, who’d just turned sixteen, had asked that same thing. “You know your mother asked me that too, when she was a teenager. Why are you asking now?”

“I received some news,” Harry said leaning forward whispering. “I think it has to do with your mum. Can you tell me anything about what she looked like and did she ever get her memory back?”

Petunia took another sip of her tea. She looked into the family room, her gaze settling on a dark photo album that had never been opened since her move into this house. “Get the album.”

Harry knew which one she was talking about because it was the lone one on the only bookshelf that she ever cleaned. He cleaned all the other shelves around it for years, except for that one. He never knew why and never questioned it believing it to be one of his Aunt’s quirks of behaviour, but he had a feeling that he was about to find out. He came back with it, but noticed that his aunt was heading downstairs to the finished basement. He followed her down to the corner where he had been storing his things and waited.
“You’ve set it up so that ‘they’ can’t see anything,” she said. “I can sort of see your belongings, but most times they are not there.” She sighed, took the album and opened it up to a specific page, full of old colour photos. “My mother had reddish blond hair and green eyes, only they were pale green, not as dark as your mum’s or yours. Yours are even darker, see.” She pointed out a pregnant woman holding a small dark curly haired girl. “She never did regain the first thirteen years of her life, but I believe that she was content with the rest of it. She always said you can’t miss what you never know.”

“That’s you,” he said pointing to the little dark haired girl.

“Yes,” she confirmed. “My mother was having a hard time with her second pregnancy, but holding me helped to ease some of her pain. She had periods of unhappiness and never told me why they happened. I don’t believe she even knew why or what happened either.”

“I don’t think that she could tell you even she did remember,” Harry said, glancing at the area where he had hidden that mysterious scroll. “I believe something happened to her that made her less than she was.”

“What do you mean?”

“Don’t be angry with me, but I think that she was a full witch and I believe that her magic was forcibly taken from her,” he explained. “I don’t know how much more you’d want to know.”

“I don’t want to know anything else,” Petunia said sucking in a deep breath of displeasure. “You can have this picture. It’s from a time before she married my father.”

The image was that of a young woman staring at an apple tree in full blossom. Her dull green eyes were hidden behind a pair of black old-style horn rimmed glasses. She was looking at the flowers as though she was seeking answers from them. She had such a look of sadness that almost made him want to cry on her behalf.

“Can you take me into town in three days time?” Harry asked still focused on the picture.

Three days would be just what he needed in order to come to some of the terms of accepting this part of his unknown heritage. He planned to accept the conditions of the scroll, but he needed the time to absorb the changes that he knew would come from the release of magic locked in seal the scroll. Not that he specifically knew just what he was going to receive.

She turned to look at him and knew that he had just come to a decision some kind. “Very well,” she said. “What about your watchers? I know they are there.”

“The one that will be there in three days will either leave to report our departure or...” he paused and then continued on wary of her reaction. “They might just not be there. He’s not the reliable sort, although if he isn’t there there’s a very small chance that he’d be replaced by someone else. I don’t really care about the matter. We can deal with it when the time comes.”

“Is that why you’re waiting for three days to pass,” she asked.

“Partly,” he answered. “I need to do a few things, but you needn’t worry about bringing me back here once you take me to town. I’ve already gone through my magical maturity and I’ve been re-enforcing the wards on your house with what I learned from some books I purchased before coming back for this summer. Once I’m gone, any memory of your family and your relationship to me will disappear from my World completely. Your house will be protected, but you’ll no longer be in anyone’s memories as having been my guardians, save my own.”
“Why not take us completely out of your memory?”

“What do you think will happen if Dudley has a green-eyed child?” Harry asked and then he explained. “I believe that’s the genetic tell for a magical child in your family line from now on. Although I suspect that it might only come about with a second child. I think that if they’re born with that feature, they may be Witches or Wizards, but I can’t make any guarantee on that count. These are only my suspicions based on the current evidence and... well... I have a strong ‘feeling’ in my gut about it.”

Petunia’s eyes widened. The implications were monstrous and momentous. If she had chosen to have a second child, it might have had green eyes like her sister or her nephew. That potential second child might have been a Witch or Wizard according to her nephew.

“Are you sure?” She asked with a shake in her voice.

“Yes,” Harry said with certainty. “That’s why I don’t want to erase you from my memory. It wouldn’t be fair to that future child should they ever be unwanted because of a magical gift. I’ll be removed from your family’s memory, Uncle Vernon and Dudley will never remember me. I just can’t remove it from yours because of your future grandchildren. I want you to have a viable option for their future. That is, if your son continues to be like his father. I will set up a post box or some legal service which you can use to contact me should anything like that happen.”

His aunt knew exactly what he was talking about. Her husband’s need to be normal and her own personal need to be better than her sister, even if her parents were a little biased towards Lily. She knew that the way her nephew had been treated was not something that she would want for any of her potential, future grandchildren.

“Very well,” she said. “You set that up and I will be cautious. I will even mention it in my Will should I pass on before your Uncle or Cousin.”

Harry nodded, knowing that that was the best he could hope for from his Aunt. “I need some time to get things ready,” he said. “I should be upstairs in time to make the afternoon tea for you and Dudley.”

She looked at him and knew that he would do everything in his power to protect the last bit of his blood family no matter how he truly felt about them. If she was the only one to remember the boy, then so be it. She felt that it was a justified penance for the way she had treated him when he was but a tot.

Although he had been treated, as they’d been instructed to, by that letter he had in his small chubby baby hand when they found on their stoop that November morning. That was not something that she was prepared to discuss with him now or ever. Besides that letter was long gone and she had the feeling that he already speculated on some of the inconsistencies with the way he was raised.

Harry watched her go up the stairs and then set out to plan his next course of action. He would accept Natalia’s request because he wasn’t sure if the fourth generation of her blood could handle it. Anyone later and it would be too late anyway, so re-claiming the magical heritage needed to be up to him. At least this was one aspect of his life that Dumbledore could not have foreseen or anticipated.

A reason for choosing to leave in three days was that he knew who his watcher was going to be. No charm, spell, potion or invisibility cloak could hide them from his ‘new’ sight. He never regretted the forms or outlet that his magical maturity had taken when he had re-directed the influx of magic into the physical pathways of his limbs, sight or mind. He could no longer be deceived by such means anymore. So he had made a list of his watchers and knew who was watching the house and when.
Mundungus Fletcher is one of his most unreliable Order of the Phoenix watchers and he was scheduled to watch the Dursley’s house three days from now. It was a perfect time to go. Meanwhile Natalia’s scroll was waiting for him.

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Three days later he had a backpack over his shoulder and was walking out of the house with his Aunt. Inside the pack was everything that belonged to him, due to several shrinking and compartmentalizing spells and charms. He even had a few things that his Aunt had given him.

They were small things that used to belong to his mother, plus that sad photograph of his grandmother, Natalie Grimmorning, also known to him as Natalia Grindelwald. He didn’t mind these odds and ends of his mother’s life, even if they were girly. Most were photos of a happy childhood with young neighbourhood friends which predominately showed a dark haired boy with distinctive features that tugged at Harry’s memory. However he couldn’t place the boy, yet.

One of the items was a much loved doll. Go figure why his Aunt Petunia would keep anything of his mother’s, let alone some old abandoned toy, but he took it anyway. He had so little from the maternal side of his family that this was better than the nothing he had before.

They were out of the door and just as they were about to get into the car, a familiar and completely unexpected voice said, “Going somewhere Mr. Potter?”

Harry looked around and to his dismay it was Professor Snape and not the idiot Fletcher that was supposed to be watching his house today. He sighed and answered, “Yeah, we’re going shopping. Did you want to join us?”

“You know that you’re not to leave the house,” Snape said with a frown, fingering his hidden wand.

“I have before,” Harry said getting into the car and rolling down the window. “You don’t have to worry about me...” The air outside the car was displaced and a soft crack sounded from within the car startling his Aunt. “Don’t worry Aunt Petunia. We now have an unseen passenger. Let’s go. The plans have not changed because of him. Remember what I told you.”

“All right,” his Aunt said with pursed lips because distasteful magic had obviously been performed in her presence. She didn’t say anything further as she pulled out of the driveway and made her way into London proper.

Harry directed her to a parking facility that she was familiar with, but he directed her to an empty section of the car park. He got out of the vehicle and said, “Give me a few minutes Aunt Petunia. I’ve got to shift our guest. The man has not been awake for the entire ride.”

“What do you mean,” his Aunt asked.

“Remember I told you about the spell that would remove you and your family from the memories of those in my world,” he said. She nodded. “Well once we left the property, anyone who should have been watching the place would have fallen asleep. No harm would have come to them, they’d just be a little disoriented and then they’d have gone back to their normal lives as though nothing happened.”

He then opened the rear passenger door in order to pull out his disillusioned and sleeping Professor. The man had been in a type of sleep stasis ever since they left the Dursley’s driveway.

“Not exactly a light-weight, are you Professor,” Harry huffed to himself. He managed to get the man fully out of the car. He sat him down, leaning him up against one of the pillars in the car park and
then he closed the door to his Aunt’s car. He walked over to her window.

“I’ll write to you when I have set up a proper postal address. Don’t worry. Uncle Vernon and Dudley will never know that I’ve been living there for the past sixteen years. I returned Dudley’s second room back to the way it was. They might have dreams, but I don’t know much about that, however if I ever do set foot back inside your house or your property line they will remember everything. Those in my World never will though and that’s the best certain thing about that final ward I set up. If you move, just write to me and I can set up similar wards at your new house. It will protect you against any unfortunate attacks by the Dark Ones that are causing some of the strange problems you’re noticing lately in the normal news.”

He looked at his Aunt one last time and nodded to her. She nodded back, saying, “Thank you,” and then left him there with an invisible man and only a backpack containing all of his meagre worldly possessions.

Harry looked at his Professor, sitting there, slumped against a pillar in a Muggle car park. Even disillusioned he could see him clear as day. He sighed and wondered if he should just leave him there or ‘enervate’ the man and then leave.

Both options presented a problem for him. He didn’t want the man to wake up wondering what he was doing in such an area of Muggle London. Also he didn’t want any letter from the Ministry of Magic finding him in order to penalize him for use of magic in a predominantly Muggle environment.

He sighed again and then leaned up against the same pillar, although on the opposite side of his Potions Professor. He leaned back in such a way that he looked like he was just standing there waiting for a ride.

It didn’t take long when the other man began to groan and wake up. “What the bloody hell?” Snape muttered out loud and looking around. “Where the hell am I?”

“In a Muggle car park,” Harry replied from his side of the pillar. “You’re also in Muggle London.”

“Why would I be here? Why aren’t you living at...” It was then that the man realized he couldn’t remember where James Potter’s boy was supposed to be living. He did recall his orders to monitor the youth, but the location and circumstances were no longer in his mind.

“I have some errands to run,” Harry said casually. “Now that you’re awake, you may go back to your own errands or what have you. Sorry to have inconvenienced you.” He took several steps to leave the area when his Professor stood up and stopped him.

“Potter,” he said. “Where do you think you’re going?”

“Gringotts,” Harry said in honesty. “There are a few other places I need to go after that and then I’m going home, why do you ask?” He was careful not to mention his Aunt Petunia or the Dursley family. The ritual spell to induce selective memory loss had to take and that would only be finished in the next thirty minutes or so.

“You’re not to go out on your own,” his Professor said. He knew that a spell had taken place and that his memory had been altered in some fashion. He was fishing for the missing information, but the insolent boy was not cooperating. He wondered if he should take the boy back to Headquarters by force or just leave him to his own foolishness.

“I understand,” Harry said. “Did you wish to join me?”
“I believe I will,” the man said standing next to the youth.

‘The Order members would make my life difficult if I didn’t accompany the wilful brat,’ he thought. The boy only shrugged and soon they were on their way to Diagon Alley and the Wizards Bank in London named Gringotts.

Once in Gringotts Harry was pulled to the side away from the general lines and the taken into an office where the managing Goblin told his Professor to wait outside. Snape had no troubles complying with that request. He didn’t care nor did he want to know anything about the boy’s poor finances.

‘Probably has only enough to finish his education,’ the man snorted contemptuously. ‘I don’t care to listen to that drabble.’

However he only stated that he’d wait there and seated himself in a comfortable chair. He pulled out the latest ‘Monthly Potions Periodical’ and continued to read the article that had fascinated him. It was regarding blood lines and a potential for the potions field to help determine whether blood line magic had been transferred to other families during times of war.

Behind closed doors, Harry was getting several shocks of his life. Many of which was documentation related to his current holdings and the process for the ‘Right of Ownership Ritual’. There wasn’t much, but the goblin told him that only someone who had passed his magical maturity could undergo such a ritual.

“I have,” Harry stated blandly.

The goblin blinked at that statement. “You do realize Mr. Potter that magical maturity only occurs in humans after they’ve reached the ages of seventeen or older. It is rare for the occurrence to take place at the age sixteen.”

Harry took a deep breath and then asked, “Do you not have a process from which to tell if someone has reached their magical maturity?”

“We do,” the goblin said. “We usually don’t use it because if the client lies about it, the consequences are unenviable.”

The Boy-Who-Lived smirked and asked, “Do you always inform your clients about that factor?”

The goblin blinked and then grinned, a slightly feral grin, “Certainly not.”

“I must assume that the unenviable results mean that there is some kind of loss, magical or monetary,” Harry observed. “However I’m not concerned about the process and I do firmly believe that I will be one of the few that will pass your process to confirm that I have reached the adequate magical level in order to go through the Right of Ownership Ritual.”

“You are a young man, whose standing in the Wizarding World is such that we try to ensure that you’d be advised of these kinds of consequences,” the goblin said. The boy only nodded his understanding of the situation. “Very well, I will call forth the next Goblin Magistrate scheduled to oversee General Inheritance Rituals. In the meantime, I humbly suggest that you review each and every one of these papers. Please initial each and seal it with a drop of your blood in order to acknowledge the fact that the information has been received and approved by you. I wouldn’t want you to accuse the Bank of neglecting their duties in regards to your finances.”

“What if I don’t approve of the information I see,” Harry asked. “How will that be handled?”
The goblin then looked up and was slightly surprised to realize that the boy might not know anything about the current transactions taking place in his name. He had been assured that when he was hired that everything was over and above board.

“Perhaps you should read each piece of documentation at your leisure and then inform us as to which is unacceptable. We do offer the services of a Lawyer well versed in these matters, however I don’t recommend that you obtain the services of the same one that drew up these papers.”

Harry frowned and then scowled as he scanned through the first five pages of one contract. It was an agreement to allow the Order of the Phoenix to withdraw a specific number of Galleons per month from a Black Family vault in order to maintain what was basically his own house. Not only that, but there was an additional contract attached that transferred No. 12 Grimmauld Place to the Order of the Phoenix under the name of that organization’s leader.

He looked up and said, “Who is my accounts manager? Who authorized such contracts to be drawn up? What difference would it make if I did the Right of Ownership Ritual before or after signing these?”

The goblin coughed and then said, “Prior to that ritual we’d need to verify that you have actually gone through your magical maturity. The...um person that requested that these be drawn up made them conditional in which they were to be signed prior to your magical maturity or else the conditions in them would be denied.”

“Well that certainly solves one dilemma,” Harry said tossing the papers back on the goblin’s desk. “Since I’ve already gone through my magical maturity, these are all moot. You may test me now before I go any further with this drivel. It will be further proof to you, now call forth that Goblin Magistrate.”

“Certainly Mr. Potter,” the goblin said. He took back all of the contracts that had needed his signature and then handed him a couple of ledgers filled with items and information. “These are ledgers to the vaults currently in your name. Please go over them to ensure that any transaction that has taken place corresponds with the monthly statements that you’ve been receiving.”

Again Harry huffed sighed and then asked, “What monthly statements? I have never received one notice from this Bank.”

It was at this point in time that the goblin realized that something wrong had occurred in the bank. He had been hired to do a specific job and he knew that he should have called for a full review of the boy’s entire estate and all accounts connected. This was not the first time that such was needed, but it was the first time in this century. He didn’t like the fact that he had let money influence his quality of work, but he needed to see this through because of the standing of the person who had ordered such bad accounting practices to continue. It needed to be stopped, but he didn’t know how.

“Mr. Potter,” the goblin began. “I believe that we will have to call forth a review of your accounts and your entire estate. This may take some time, however if you happen to have any conditions that you wish us to follow please let us know immediately.”

“First,” Harry said, waiting for the goblin to pull out a parchment and begin a list. “I want you to test me for my magical maturity before any other transaction takes place. Next you’ll employ honest above-board goblins to review the estate and accounts information in all my ledgers or I will do so. I do not want any goblin who’s been employed in this task previous to this date. I want immediate copies of all banking statements and any other correspondence that should have been received and reviewed by me. I want to know who has been accessing my accounts and I want to see all documentation that I may have signed related to their access. I want to complete that ownership ritual
before all else because I have a bad feeling that all of this work will be doubled, should I have inherited a legacy elsewhere.”

“The review will take time,” the goblin said. “Do you wish to call forth a witness or witnesses related to this request?”

“Yes,” Harry said. “I would like Misters Fred and George Weasley the owners of Weasley’s Wizard Wheezes, Professor Severus Snape renowned Potions Master and who’s currently employed at Hogwarts, Dobby De-Chausette (...ii...) currently a non-bonded house-elf employee of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and the goblin named Griphook Bonebreaker currently employed here under the Gringotts’ Vault Security Section, to witness this request.”

The names caused the goblin to pause and consider the sincerity of the boy’s request. He looked at the boy and realized that it really was a young man that he was speaking to; technically he was a Young Lord.

He wasn’t someone that needed to be led around by the nose or kept in ignorance. The fact that he’s calling forth for two magical creatures to witness anything proved to him that the Boy-Who-Lived’s sincerity for everything coming into play at this meeting.

“Might I suggest that the Magistrate witness the process once you’ve completed the Ritual,” the goblin suggested. “As soon as the rituals and spells are completed, we will have a legalized document listing your requests in a simplified format. It will still be official and will be translated appropriately into legal runic language, but such a translation will not alter your requirements.”

“I’d like to see that translation before the witnesses sign any legalized copy, runic or otherwise,” the boy said, surprising the creature behind the desk.

The goblin grunted his agreement, secretly pleased that the Boy-Who-Lived was cautious in the matter. This was conveyed by the speed from which notices were dispatched to Harry’s named witnesses. The notices included a time to appear for later that same day and a copy of the original agreement, plus a self-updating legal and translated version.

Harry waited for the Magistrate to appear in the room. Rituals and spells for testing magical levels could only be conducted by a Goblin Magistrate appointed to their position based on their age and the strength of their inner magical core. He asked, “How long will the Rituals take?”

The Magistrate appeared and answered that question. “It will take about fifteen minutes to test if you’ve been through your magical maturity. The results will not be open to others nor given to your witnesses. They need only know that it will take place sometime today. That’s why it can be done now rather than after they sign the contract. The Legacy Ritual that you’ve quoted will take about half an hour to forty-five minutes after the previous one. It too can be done prior to a couple of conditions in this document.”

“Is there a penalty for doing the Spells or Rituals before this has been signed by my witnesses?” Harry needed to ask. He didn’t want to be in breach of anything, especially a goblin initiated contract. He fully remembered what happened with Ludo Bagman the former Head of Magical Games & Sport. Rumour had it the man still owed the goblins a hefty bundle from that disastrous Quidditch World Cup Match from summer before Harry’s fourth year and was currently hiding out somewhere in Greenland doing as little magic as possible to avoid detection.

“No penalty,” the goblin said. “There might be a charge, but we can come to terms after the Spell and Ritual is completed.”
“How much?” The teenager asked.

“A percentage of your accounts,” the goblin Magistrate began to say.

“No dice,” Harry said. “I pay in advance or we stop this thing right now.”

The Magistrate shrugged. It was a gamble and it was only now that the goblin behind the desk knew that the Boy-Who-Lived didn’t truly gamble in the way that normal folks do. “Very well,” the goblin accountant said. “You can employ any goblin to go over your accounts and estates, but you have to pay them for their time. It can be done on an hourly, weekly, monthly or yearly basis and it is your job as owner of your accounts to interview them.”

“Has any goblin been paid to look after my accounts in the past?”

“Only one,” the goblin said. “They earned a lump sum on a yearly basis and they are, currently, still employed by one Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore.”

“I don’t want that goblin near my accounts,” Harry spat out. “I will interview several potential employees right now. I want a range of skills from each to review.”

The Magistrate looked at him and then said, “Pay me 40 Galleons now and I will test you for your magical maturity. If it is proved, then you gain access to all your accounts. No penalty for doing that spell before the signing of the contract. Employ whatever goblin you wish after the spell is complete.”

It was at this point that there was a sharp knock on the door. “That’ll be Professor Snape,” Harry said. “He accompanied me here.”

The goblin behind the desk opened the door using magic and sure enough there was the man with the legalized runic contract in hand. “Potter,” he said. “Have you lost your mind?”

“Let me see,” Harry said holding out his hand for the papers. He looked over the original in English and then slowly read the legalized version of it. He frowned at some of the wording and then scowled at the goblins seated in this room. “Nice try gentlemen. It looks like I will have to write my own.”

He was still frowning at the documents and was now fully realizing that the goblin in front of him was likely the one hired by Dumbledore.

“By the by,” he continued. “You had better call down your supervisors to attend this meeting.” He said, and both Wizards noted the pallor of the two goblins in the room. He muttered to himself with Snape listening in. “I sincerely hope that they’ve been monitoring this office.”

“Mr. Potter,” Griphook said walking into the room with a copy of the legal document in hand. Dobby was standing beside him holding a copy of the same and frowning. “You were wise in your witnesses and you are correct in your assessment of your situation. I will endeavour to make sure that everything is corrected as your require. Also several goblins and other Gringotts employees, hired for the day, are lining up outside ready to be reviewed and interviewed by you.”

“Thank you Griphook,” Harry said sincerely.

This startled the other goblins in the room because they had long since been convinced that no human could ever differentiate them from one another. Even his Professor had one eyebrow up, wondering how the teenager could tell this goblin from the others in the room.
“You may interview them in the next room,” Griphook said leading the way. He made sure that the interview room was magically secure before going back to the locked room that contained to goblins that were bent on cheating the Boy-Who-Lived out of honest service. He paused and said, “Do you wish your Professor to be here while you make your selection?”

“He can come in,” Harry said and then looked at the man with a mischievous air. “If he can keep his mouth shut during the interview process.”

Severus Snape just ‘humphed’ loudly, conjured an extra chair and placed it just outside the door, but away from the creatures that were milling out there. There was a growing queue of Gringotts workers, some humans, some goblins and some others, like hybrid house-elves that were the result of Dark Arts experimentation and foul entertainment.

“The first one hundred beings need to fill this out,” Harry said out loud, firming up a limited number of interviewees. It would take a while, but he knew how to narrow things down even more. He had a list of questions prepared and looked to his Professor to make duplicates, as he was not yet emancipated due to his magically mature status, which had yet to be determined a Goblin Magistrate.

“Please copy this for me, Professor Snape,” Harry said. “It may still be early morning yet, but this will shorten up our time here too.”

“Very well,” Snape said. “I’ll admit to some curiosity about your process.”

He copied the document one hundred times with a number in the top right hand corner. Many were sent to the individuals waiting in line and the rest was sent it to a table by the door, just outside of the room. There was a sign posted above it and it stated that the questionnaire needed to be answered prior to being called into the room by number.

Griphook noticed that Harry was relying on the darker man to perform spells in the room. It would be faster if Harry had his magical level tested first, so the goblin summoned another Magistrate. This one he knew could be relied on to test the Boy-Who-Lived without seeking a fee.

“Magistrate Ignatia Bonebreaker,” Griphook said. “May I present Harry Potter, the Boy-Who-Lived.”

“Knock it off Grippy,” the wizened female goblin said. “I may be your grandmother, but I know who this young human is. So you need to be tested for evidence of your magical maturity before you get on with gaining reliable estate managers.”

“That was the idea when I arrived here today,” Harry said with a closed mouth, genuine smile.

“Very smart,” the elder gobliness said looking him up and down as though trying to judge his worthiness or something. Harry didn’t mind it. “I will do it.”

“Isn’t that a conflict of interest?” Professor Snape asked. “I mean with the two of you being related.”

He was nodding to Griphook.

“No,” she said. “It’s a matter of skill, age and experience. Plus there is a list of Magistrates that rotate on a regular basis. I was the next in line for such a situation. However the outcome is not yours to witness, so you sir must step out for the next few minutes.”

Professor Snape bowed respectfully to the gobliness and then he took up a sentinel type duty outside the room sitting in his conjured chair. He was curious about the questionnaire. So, on a lark he decided to pick up the last one and actually began to apply for a position.
There was a list of ten questions, but the questions were oddly put. Seven were multiple choices with a small section of lines for which you had to explain your choices. The last three were situational and required longer written and well thought out answers.

Not many of the human workers at Gringotts wanted to answer such questions and therefore they put the questionnaires back only to have them be eliminated magically and completely from the pile. Once a form had been touched by someone with the intent to apply, the process had to occur in full or else be removed completely from consideration. Also there was a countdown clock that removed a number from the top of the pile of applications and banished it away every two to five minutes.

‘Now that is smart,’ Severus thought pulling out a magical quill that automatically filled with ink from the ink pot it had been linked to. It was a contained conjuration spell that he was always surprised that not many of his students caught on to, not even his favoured little Slytherins were familiar with such. ‘He’ll eliminate any form that has been touched so that he has less people to interview. Well done Potter, five points to Gryffindor.’

“Question number one,” he said to himself softly so as not to disturb the others. “You are in charge of reviewing the inventory of your client’s vault. You see something that you would like to own, examine and/or read. Do you, yes or no:

a) Contact your client requesting permission to examine the object: Explain…
b) Contact your client and submit a proposal for the purchase of said object: Explain…
c) Contact your client and submit a request for a loan of the manuscript, book or other: Explain…
d) Answer YES to all of the above: Explain…
e) Answer NO to all of the above: Explain…”

“Bloody hell,” Severus breathed out. It was going to take longer to get the answers out and after skimming the next three questions he knew that Harry Potter was further weeding out some of those that were too greedy or could be cheaters in this line of work.

Pen to paper he began to write his answers when he felt a very tiny ripple of magic flow out from the room nearby. It came in a soft waving flash and was quite an inconsequential sensation.

‘Looks like he has reached his Magical Maturity, although I believe that it was a weak influx, as the result of the testing was barely felt,’ he thought, finishing his answer to number two. ‘I believe that I’ll keep this information to myself at the moment. Blackmail in the form of silence should buy me some time to teach that brat a few things that the Headmaster wants the boy to know.’

Back in the room, Ignatia Bonebreaker was picking herself up off of the floor. She had slid down after being blasted into the far wall of the room and this was after receiving an extremely positive confirmation that the Boy-Who-Lived should have been emancipated at least a year ago.

“Are you all right Ma’am,” Harry said, going over to her in order to help her stand up and check her for injuries.

“Quite,” she said. She noticed that he had contained most of the blast using a wandless, soundless shield and that the actual strength of his magical levels never passed out of the room. “Well done,” she said. “You were well within your rights, but I believe that you may have knocked out the monitoring spells.”

“With good reason,” Harry said. “I do apologize in advance, but I couldn’t allow the full strength of my magical maturity or knowledge of it to be released. It is advantageous for me to keep this information secure, which I sincerely apologize once more, but must be assured that your memory cannot be accessed in any matter.”
“I do understand,” Ignatia said. “It is standard practice for all Magistrates to drink this in order to keep client confidentiality.” She held up a small test tube like vial and explained. “This potion will lock the memory from ‘any’ form of prying for the next hundred years. It is not uncommon for the knowledge of your true magical strength to become known after that kind of time frame.”

“Well by then it shouldn’t matter any way,” Harry said. “I’m okay with that.” He watched her down the potion.

His new sight enabled him to determine that she was telling him the truth. His magical maturity did include a few other elements when he tied most of his magic to his mind. Part of it also included a lie detector kind of phenomenon which allowed him to know truth, partial truth and outright lie told by any person. He knew that she was not lying because he could see it physically in her aura.

“We’ll do the ownership ritual after I’ve interviewed the applicants,” Harry said. “I’m wondering... can I bind a house-elf to me in this building before the interviews?”

“Of course,” Ignatia said. “Best you find one that is reliable and trustworthy. I can oversee the bonding aspect of that too, if you like?”

“Yes please,” Harry said. “I would appreciate that.”

A short while later, he was soon speeding reading through a couple of the applications. Several he had eliminated based on their replies and others on the feeling that he had received when they entered the room to be interviewed. He had a nasty feeling from some that he knew he just couldn’t trust ever.

One by one the numbers were going down. He made a few notations on a few applications that he had wanted to revisit. Those that were eliminated outright had a few objections, until they left the room under a few well placed goblin hexes.

Severus watched as one by one the candidates were eliminated one way or another. He was secretly amused by the various hexes and curses that he spotted. It was an interesting process overall. The numbers called out were slowly reaching one hundred, which was the number on the top of his form.

He turned to the table and noted that the last paper application had just been banished away. The Potions Master was currently one of three remaining to be interviewed and it was all too soon that he was in the hall alone.

“Number one hundred please,” Harry called out of the door.

Severus Snape could hardly contain his amusement, anticipating the expression on the boy’s face when he walked through that door.

HPPHPHP

TBC...

(...i...) The Queen’s Salvation House – a completely made up name and not meant in any way to copy, duplicate or represent any existing facility (should such still be in existence).

(...ii...) De-Chausette - made up name, basically it means “of the socks”.
Harry was standing at the door to one of his listed vaults in order to check the contents and to see if there was anything that it needed in order to get the items within it organized. He certainly hoped that they would already be organized, but the way that Griphook snorted when he said that, gave him the overall impression that the place would be a mess.

The Boy-Who-Lived had been informed which of his Potter Family vaults and his newly inherited “Black” vaults had been accessed the Headmaster of Hogwarts. This one was not one of them. He wasn’t prepared to go see one of those for fear that the wily old man had left some spells lingering in the area or on the doors. He was going to let the ‘young Gringotts Security Goblin’ (yGSG) that he had hired for a six-month contract to cleanup the potential lingering traces and update the security on his vaults, with Griphook as his overseer, do that. He would pay him accordingly to get rid of whatever manifestation of magic may be lingering.

He had a valid reason for hiring different beings with varying strengths and skills to handle his accounts. He couldn’t just trust one person or Goblin to do the job. He wanted to prevent them from falling into the temptation of take advantage of him, which is what happened with the previous manager of the Potter accounts under Dumbledore’s orders.

One of the permanent employees or full-staff member is a hybrid house-elf. She’s a poor creature of goblin and house-elf descent and is the result of one of those nasty Dark Art Revels. She was hired to exclusively deal with the objects in the vaults. Her priority job, at the moment, was to tidy up all the vaults and keep them in order. She’ll earn wages and days off. She’s not limited like a regular house-elf when it came to needs of being bonded to a Wizarding Family, so she had a standard employment contract complete with security and protective spells to support her new position at the Bank.

Another hired employee is a young goblin who wanted to specialize in Vault Security & Inventory Census (VSIC). He was hired on a learning basis and his job description was to monitor the items and objects in all of the vaults, making sure that all items were accounted for, while he cross-referenced the data from the estate account books. He was to work together with the hybrid house-elf, which didn’t bother the young Goblin to do so and that was bonus in Harry’s mind. He didn’t want any conflict among his new staff.

Two other hired workers, under one-year trial contracts were an older goblin and a late-twenties human. Both were hired to take care of the day-to-day accounting and to double check the estate accounts. They were to look into the legalities of every past transaction issued under Dumbledore’s name on behalf of Harry Potter. They were going to be a working pair too.

The trial contract for them was put in place to check their compatibility of being able to work in a pleasant environment together. He told them that working in pairs would help keep them all honest in their duties to him, the employer.

It had disturbed them to some degree to know that Harry Potter, Boy-Who-Lived, can actually detect lies by just staring at them while asking pointed and specific questions. He proved it to them during the employment process and they were all magically sworn to secrecy about it at that same time.
To prove this ability he had handed them five rather simple questions and told them to pick whichever one they chose and give a lie as answer when the question was asked. This small test proved that he would know when they told him the truth, told him a lie or that it was something in between.

Surprisingly he had even hired his Professor in Potions for the sole purpose of being a Private Wizard Counsellor on a part-time basis with a hefty counselling salary paid per hour on the day any counselling takes place.

A contract notification was automatically conjured in Harry’s pockets, keeping track of the hours when activated by the key phrase spoken by the Boy-Who-Lived, “Counsel me Professor Snape.” It ended with a total amount owed based on hours and pay per hour, when Harry said the closing phrase, “Your counsel has been invaluable Professor Snape.”

The man was someone unbiased to the Boy-Who-Lived status that Harry had in the Wizarding World and the man was also someone who was quite willing to tell him the truth no matter how much it might cause hurt feelings. He was someone who could give semi-sound advice about Wizarding things like inheritances, responsibilities and other information on a few of the more obscure goings on like betrothal contracts, etc...

It had shocked Harry to no end to see the man walk in the door with an interview sheet completely filled out, but he had treated the whole matter professionally, despite knowing that it might be a joke on the older man’s part.

It had shocked the Potions Master in turn to realize that his semi-lark was being taken quite seriously.

HPHPHP

Flashback

“Number one hundred, please come in,” Harry’s voice called out into the hall.

Severus Snape wasn’t nervous, but he found himself curious as to how ‘his’ application would be treated. He stepped into the door and had a small inner moment of amusement at the teenager’s completely shocked expression. He allowed it to show on his face in the form of a tiny satisfied smirk before smoothing down to his usual expressionless facade when not in a classroom teaching ‘useless dunderheads’. He handed his application with a calm outlook, watched how the boy would take it. He sat down when he was invited to do so.

Harry blinked and then shaking his head he let out a wry grin. He cleared his throat and then nodded to the Goblin Magistrate in the room. She was there to be impartial, but she also helped him with the spells that automatically changed the answers on the questionnaire into an easy point form manner and easily posted it in magically coloured light against the wall behind the Boy-Who-Lived.

The teenager was smart doing that way because it forced everyone to reflect on their answers by making them stare at them written in spell light. It was a quick way to distract and occupy them while Harry was speed-reading through their actual answers in full. By the time he was done reading, the applicant would sometimes feel shamed and leave without defending their answers or they’d refuse to continue the interview process.

“Interesting method,” Severus said out loud. Sharp green eyes looked up and focused on him. “You put that up there for us to see our answers as you would see them or perhaps interpret them.”

“Yes, well I need to be sure about the applicant,” Harry said. “Are you truly applying for a
“I started answering the questions for fun,” Severus told him honestly. “When I saw how some refused to finish what they started, it left a sour taste in my mouth. I’ll see this through because every potion must be taken to completion, whether it finishes in a failure or not. I’m not worried about gainful employment Mr. Potter. I am, however, curious to know that if I succeed what type of position I may be offered.”

“We’re not at that point yet,” Harry said with a calm easy smile that made the man feel like he was really being interviewed for a job. “Very well, we’ll discuss some of the more important aspects of the questionnaire first. I’ll also ask a few other questions that are not on this parchment. Feel free to ask any questions in turn, should you need clarification on anything brought up today.”

Discussing the questionnaire and getting better explanations related to the answers took a bit of time. The whole process took about half an hour, as it did with the better of the candidates that had applied to work for the Boy-Who-Lived.

“I’ll notify you shortly about a decision,” Harry said, showing his teacher back out of the door. “I need to take care of something else first. I’ll call all those that have passed to draw up employment contracts. It will be a simple list of terms of agreement and that sort of thing. Of course you needn’t stick around for that as I’ve obviously taken up enough of your time today and I can let you know my decision in relation to you by Owl, if you have some other pressing matters to attend to.”

“I have nothing pending, Mr. Potter,” Severus told him. “I’m here regardless of the results of my application because someone has to be here to look out for your best interests. Besides I took over the watch today as Fletcher was unable to do the job satisfactorily, although for the life of me I can’t recall where we were supposed to be keeping an eye on you.”

“I gathered that much Professor,” Harry said, not making any comment about his location or reacting to the Professor’s pointed attempt to get the information from him. “I’ll speak to you in a bit then.” He closed the door as the man stepped out into the corridor and looked back at the Magistrate.

“Well…”

“You have the potential to be a good Master, Lord Potter,” Ignatia said. “I’ve put recommendation marks on all the applications of those that you’ve indicated you’re interested in hiring and a suggestion for that last one.”

Harry recalled twenty of the applicants and weeded them down to the final five. He made sure that there would be no issues about the pairings or the duties expected. He hired Griphook permanently and full-time to oversee and be manager to his other Gringotts Employees or Accounting and Vault Security Staff. He directed his manager to show the others the accounting books and vaults, while he dealt with the last candidate.

It was only when it came to his Professor that he hesitated. He wasn’t sure if the man in the Hall was truly interested, but there was only one potential position that he could offer. It wasn’t one that he had been planning on, but something told him needed someone with a voice or opinion in certain magical matters and it had to be someone that wasn’t afraid to tell him the truth.

He looked out of the door and sure enough the Potions Master was out there still reading the latest Monthly Potions Periodical. He asked, “Interesting reading, sir?”

“A bit,” Severus answered, putting it away.

“Would you come in please,” Harry said. He nodded for the man to be seated and then he began to
explain his situation. “I know that there has been animosity between us and some of it is due to my father’s attitude and actions against you during his school days at Hogwarts. I want you to know a few things about me, but first I want to know if you’re seriously interested in earning supplementary wages. The position I have in mind will have nothing to do with the Order of the Phoenix, Potions; anything related to the bloody Boy-Who-Lived title, Hogwarts School of Magic or the Dark Lord in any way shape or form. It will begin with a six-month trial contract and may be renewed for a longer term, should the position suit you and should you wish to choose to continue being employed in that capacity.”

Professor Snape thought about that for a few minutes and then said, “You’ll need to clear that up. I’m not sure that I understand just what it is you’re asking from me.”

“I’m looking for a Wizard Counsellor,” Harry said. “I hadn’t thought about it much in the past, but I know that I am in need of someone I can trust and it must someone that isn’t afraid to tell me that I’m full shite either. There are other reasons involved for making such a decision. However I’m serious about the position I’m offering you. I can tell when someone is lying to me, so you needn’t think that I will not believe you when you advise me on some magical Wizard matter, but again this whole situation will be based on your final choice.”

“Have you thought about others to fill this role,” Severus asked. “I’m quite sure that any member of the Order…”

“They are in Dumbledore’s pocket, as it were, sir,” Harry said seriously. “I get little enough information or miss-information from them as it is that I don’t need any more that. I don’t trust them to tell me anything truthful or of any actual use. A pat on the head and a handful of sweets will not make me forget the bloody Prophecy that Dumbledore revealed to me at the end of last term or to forget the fact that Sirius is dead because I never received the necessary information to make any informed decisions in the matter. Nor will I forget that some of my ‘House’ and year mates have been hired to spy on me. So… ‘you’, sir, are currently the only one that I ‘can’ trust for this position. If you don’t want it, it’s fine. It wasn’t a pre-mediated post, it was one that I only just considered after seeing your credentials and getting some advice in the matter from the Magistrate that helped me today. That is all. Please seriously take your time to consider what it is I’m asking.”

It was a lot of information to take in, but Severus needed to know something else. “How can you tell if someone is lying?”

Harry performed that same test with the five questions he had asked all his employees. He handed the man a piece of parchment paper and said, “Consider the answers. I will ask each of these questions out loud and I want you to answer any or all with a lie. I will tell you, if your answer is a lie or not. After which we can discuss your potential employment to me as a Counsellor in all things Wizard and possibly some other stuff or else drop the whole issue and move on.”

The dark man read the questions. He thought about the answers and then nodded to indicate his was ready.

“What is your name,” Harry asked.


Harry’s eyes gazed at him with such a staring intensity that it felt worse than the infernal twinkling that the Headmaster used for pretty much the same reason, but this new intensity really impressed him too. The teenager smiled and said, “True. What is your favourite colour?”

Severus paused to look directly at the teenager. He had never once thought that the boy would
believe him and then he said, “Black.”

“Lie,” Harry said with such conviction that the older man was slowly coming to understand that the boy was seeing his truths and lies. “What is your favourite fruit?”

“Red apples,” Severus said.

“Half-lie,” Harry said calmly. “I believe your favourite fruit is apples, but not the red ones. What would be your favourite pet?”

“A dog,” Severus said.

“Lie,” Harry said. He could that one clear as day. “I’ve never pictured you as a dog person. What is your favourite magical subject?”

Severus paused. He had several, but the most interesting to him was a branch that mixed a bit of Transfiguration, Arithmancy, Runes and Potions, “Alchemy.”

“True,” Harry said. His gaze changed from the staring, unblinking intensity to his normal and slightly innocent seeming look. “I can see that one from a mile away.”

“Interesting development,” Severus said. “How long will I have to consider it?”

“All day,” Harry said. “For the rest of today until my financial messes and vaults are finally sorted out. We can begin with a sample contract just for the day, if you like. This is to compensate you for your time and to see how well it works. Also I believe that I will need your Counsel soon.”

“I don’t mind taking your money for today,” Severus agreed with a grin. “I will think about the temporary contract and we’ll discuss the terms later, should I choose to be employed by you.”

He returned to his position outside the interview in order to reflect on this new development.

HPHPHPHP

Flash Forward

The contracts with the Gringotts workers, calling for a review of Harry’s accounts, were signed and witnessed by Harry’s chosen witnesses. The conditions were altered and then they were legally translated in the Runic Legalese and then filed appropriately under various Departments in the UK’s Ministry of Magic. It all depended on the nature of the creatures signing the contracts or else they were filed in Harry’s personal vault. There were no further discrepancies or oddball requests from the former goblins in charge of his estate.

Fred and George Weasley were only too happy to help and keep this secret. They received compensation in the form of standard Muggle joke supplies. They were laughing in delight at the ‘Fake Ice Cube Bugs’, ‘Dribble Glasses’, ‘Chocolate Doggie Doo’, ‘Teeth Tinting Gum’ and others like the ‘Pooping Sheep’, plus various other ‘Pooping’ animals, ‘Whoopee Cushions’, ‘X-Ray Glasses’, ‘Sea Monkeys’, etc....

Dobby was hired full-time to help Winky in the normal household stuff, plus to keep Harry’s secrets. He kept the last name that Harry had given him with a giggle and happy flapping ears. Winky had been hired with a full Family bond because Harry needed a reliable house-elf for household maintenance. He trusted the little female elf because of her loyalty and dedication to her previous Family. She knew that he would not ask her to betray her previous family which is the only reason why she hadn’t bonded to any other Wizard Family before now.
Professor Snape was paid for today’s day of service and was hired on a six-month trial basis, but with additional security spells in order to protect Harry’s secrets should the contract dissolve rather than be renewed after the allotted time had passed. They were also put in place to protect the man from being attacked for these secrets.

This was something that the man never had with Dumbledore. The time-frame would allow the two of them to get a feel for how well they could work together outside of their usual scholastic and war-type interactions.

Once all the contracts were signed, Harry decided to visit a couple of his Black vaults in order to see what they contained. He had the inventory list for each, but he was only going into the ones that had not been accessed by any member of the Order of the Phoenix. There were also two extra vaults down in the bowels of the Bank that Harry planned to visit today because he had to.

These two had not been visited regularly in over seventy or more years. They had been last accessed for a very brief period by a girl of about thirteen years of age. That’s what the goblins believed because they hadn’t seen anyone enter them, but the magic that accessed them belonged to a thirteen year old girl who was a member of the Magical Family that owned the vault. If she didn’t belong, she’d have been harmed for it at the time.

These two vaults were hidden at the end of a dead-end narrow corridor. The two vaults had a crest on the doors that Severus Snape may recognize, but this was a test that Harry wanted to put to the man, so he didn’t tell him anything about who used to own them.

Ignatia had performed the Ritual of Ownership on Harry Potter and discovered an unknown family lineage that was quite unexpected. The Potter and Black lineage appeared as expected based on the existing Wills, but the other…the Grindelwald lineage was completely unexpected and it had shocked the stalwart Gobliness.

When Harry had accepted the task back at his Aunt Petunia’s house, a task that his unknown Grandmother had set for him to accept the fight to re-claim the Family bloodline magic, a box-chain choker type necklace of dark yellow-gold had appeared. It has fancy inter-laced initials of NG in mixed stones of onyx and pearl inlayed on a small charm in the shape of a diamond, with softened edges and of the same golden colour of the chain. He never hesitated in putting it on, as he was aware of the spells in such a necklace were for durability, magical fit, anti-choke, ever-clean, spell protection and anti-theft only.

Ignatia had noticed the necklace, but when the family rings merged the NG logo had appeared in on the bottom corner of one of the three Family shields that made up the boy’s heritage. She knew that something had been changed. Each ring contained a shield normally identifying a particular house or clan, but they never contained a person’s initials before this day.

These types of rings were usually merged magically when Heads of House were joined by marital union or by some form of magical inheritance, like in Harry’s particular case. The shields can change magically to dominate the ring so that only one House insignia appears for House specific related correspondences where the Head of the Family or Clan needs to use a specific Family Seal on the magical wax.

However in gaining all three House rings Harry was allowed to merge them and even let the magic change them to suit him. The magic also changed the diverse family mottos into one made just for him. The motto is transposed to all Family Shields, but the individual look of a Family Shield or Crest never changed. It wasn’t an uncommon practice for new Clan Leaders or Heads of Magical Family Houses to change Family Mottos to reflect their current status, beliefs or what have you.
Harry had suspected that something of this nature would happen long before ever coming to Gringotts this year. He knew it would happen when he chose to claim his Potter inheritance. So, he had put some thought into it and then realized that one motto suited him the best. It was true in a sense, especially since he began his schooling at Hogwarts. He actually lived his motto for the first five years of his magical schooling.

His choice in motto was ‘Omnia Mea Mecum Porto’ which meant ‘I carry with me all my things’. He had heard it somewhere and had taken an instant liking to it. Researching the magical Family mottos, he was fully aware that this one was not in use and had never been in use before.

Philosophically, ‘all my things’ could mean absolutely anything, including knowledge and learning or just plain material things.

Physically this had been very true his first few years at Hogwarts. His old battered trunk ‘had’ carried everything he owned.

This motto was now linked to all of the rings and directly to the Potter Family. Each shield on the ring was linked to all Family vaults. The Family Ring and the Motto were also a higher form of Gringotts’ security and could be seen as work-around solution to vault access, should any of client’s vault keys ever be lost or stolen. Keys could be replaced at anytime, but also it was ideal to have that done anyway, especially when new Heads or Leaders took over any new magical Family estate.

Harry didn’t have any of the keys to his vaults, save the one for his school vault. That was the one vault he had full access to because it was what had been allotted to every Potter child, to aid in paying for their magical education, however they chose to obtain it. He ordered his staff to recall every key, until the full review of his accounts was finished. Vaults that had been distributed by the reading of several Family Wills could never be reclaimed, but the ones still in Harry’s name were going to be severely scrutinized and analyzed.

A tram cart had taken them to the hall of the Black vaults. Many were unused and had never been accessed as they basically ran themselves. These were nearly automated in their functions due to the contractual nature of them. They were opened for business ventures and the results of such were found inside.

The four vaults that they did visit provided them with a clear view of what they needed to organize them and many of the others. They did note that some objects that were listed in the inventory were not there, but a trace of their history, either being lost, stolen or given away, can be done with certain Goblin spells.

Some Black Heads of House were not that meticulous in their transactions and so it was possible that some of their property had been distributed without a notice being sent to their estate managers for proper record keeping purposes. This was not going to be pleasant to those in receipt of said items, as they legally can be recalled to the Family that had given said object to them in the first place.

If the Black Family did this often enough, it was in order to award or reward outsiders for services rendered, but not recorded. However, it was bit like giving them Leprechaun Gold. The person or individuals who received such a gift only to lose it again knew just what their worth or value to the Black Family was.

However, those two innocuous vaults down the hidden corridor, listed among Harry’s vaults... That was related entirely to another Family in his Family ring.

Harry had suggested that the Goblins and Professor Snape perform spells that detected traps, intention, and other potential problems on these vaults. Several had been detected and dispelled.
quickly. His Counsellor advised caution even after the tracking and spying spells had been removed.

The issue of these vaults was a personal matter that, unfortunately, needed to be addressed today. Especially since his Grandmother had been thirteen when she was placed at the Muggle orphanage and that the last person to access these vaults might have been that same thirteen-year-old girl. It could be safely assumed that the girl had been Natalia Grindelwald. Anyone else would have been fried by the security spells in the area.

One vault contained three books and the other contained a ‘Pensieve’ only. The Pensieve was on a pedestal and the silver liquid contents were near over flowing. These thoughts could belong to anyone of Grindelwald descent.

“I’m not sure that I’m fond of Pensieves,” Harry said. “They contain such trouble.”

“I’m sure they do for you,” Snape said with a sneer. Just because he was hired by the boy today didn’t mean that he had to change his personality or forget things from the past.

Harry sighed and said, “I am sorry for what happened during last year. If it comforts you, I never told anyone about that awful hurtful prank. I didn’t even confront my Godfather or Remus about it. If you want to talk about it then we can at a later date or we can just forget the whole thing ever happened.”

Severus blinked and looked away at that comment. He had thought that the boy would tell the mutt and the wolf. He was sure that the boy had approved of the actions that the Marauders took when that incident had occurred. After hearing the teenager’s voice say that with such disgust, it caused the man to look closely at the boy. The green eyes were nearly slits and his mouth was pursed in distaste.

“Thank you,” the man said in relation to the obviously sincere apology. “I do not want to talk about it at this time.”

“Understood,” Harry said. He took a deep breath and then brightened slightly. “I think I’ll go into the Pensieve first. It might contain keys I need to find the possible places where I can hide out for the remainder of this summer.” He took another deep breath and touched the silver substance without another word from his Counsellor in all things Wizard.

Severus Snape was there to counsel the boy, but he hadn’t even been able to voice caution when the brat touched the contents in the bowl. “Idiot Gryffindor,” he muttered. He concern grew, as he noticed that the Pensieve was not what it should have been. “You should have waited until I examined it more closely, you foolish brat.”

It was a ‘Reverse Pensieve’ that poured the memories directly into the mind of the first person to touch them. Memories that didn’t belong to Harry would now become his and he had no choice but to accept them or go mad from their influx. The process wasn’t dissimilar to the one that he went through after having accepted his task from his deceased Grandmother. He might not have been prepared for that when it happened, but he had accepted it.

The new pathways that his magical maturity had created helped the process a lot. He was able to accept and store that influx of gleaming silver magic. The entire process took about five minutes, but Harry received nearly two lifetimes of memories.

Most were from his Grandmother’s short magical life of thirteen years and it included three years of his Great-Grandmother’s pre-marital life, plus a majority of her marital life with Gellert Grindelwald. The memories also contained information on the properties that had been magically sealed with the death of Grindelwald’s wife.
The memories that Natalia had stored in the pensieve included the location of the physical keys for those properties, including the needed spells and magical mental maps to find them. Her memories also included a couple of actual Grindelwald properties that were tied to her biological father. There was only two, but they did contain books, magic items and a few other ‘rare’ things that could only be of use to someone of Grindelwald descent and of the Grindelwald magical bloodline.

As soon as Harry was finished with the Reverse Pensieve he immediately sat down, leaning against the pedestal, breathing hard. It wasn’t just memories, but the strong emotions behind them came through too. He had tears in his eyes from being overwhelmed by them, but he was not ashamed to have taken these memories. They were a form of strength for him and would help greatly in his future task of taking down the current Dark Lord, more commonly known as Voldemort.

“Idiot boy,” Snape said again, in a tone that indicated his concern more than his irritation. He handed the weeping boy a clean handkerchief. “You should have waited until I told you about this particular type of Pensieve.”

Harry grinned through his tears and said, “I take it that you knew what would happen.”

Severus huffed. “Of course I did,” he said. “You hired me to counsel you in such matters, why didn’t you ask?”

Harry ruffled his hair and rubbed the back of his neck. He looked up into the dark concerned eyes of his Counsellor and said, “I had already suspected that something like this would happen. Give me a few moments to sort the memories completely and then I’ll collect the books in the second vault and be ready to leave the Bank.”

Severus nodded and stood back to watch the process that the Boy-Who-Lived took to organize the new memories. He wished that he could use Legilimency to view the process, but he felt that it would be wrong at this time.

‘Although.. ’, he thought. ‘I’m going to have to see if he’s improved in Occlumency in order to protect his mind against the Dark Lord and the Headmaster’s meddling ways.’

Harry grinned knowing the direction of his Counsellor’s thoughts, but didn’t say anything. He was busy putting the memories away in a location in his mind that secured them from being accessed. Even ‘Veritaserum’ couldn’t drag these out of him. No one knew about this and his Counsellor is fully protected to keep even this secret now from everyone who’d want to pry.

To Snape the time it took for the young man to sort the memories should have been longer, but the teenager stood up after only a few minutes. The boy pocketed the kerchief with a mumbled, “Gonna wash it.”

They walked into the second vault where Harry commented that it was a lucky thing that they didn’t try to remove the books until after gaining the information from the Pensieve.

“Why,” Snape asked.

“They’re blood protected,” Harry said. “They can only be removed by someone who is directly blood-linked to the family.” He used his well-sharpened penknife to nick his thumb and then he pressed the pooling blood onto specific runes found on the spines of the books, causing them to glow in red and blue colours.

He healed himself with a bit of wandless magic while waiting for the spell light on the books to dissipate. Once the light dimmed enough, he picked up the books and placed them in his backpack.
They returned to the vault with the Reverse Pensieve at which point he did another bout of wandless magic and destroyed the magical object completely.

“Why would you do that?” The goblin accompanying them asked. He was one of Harry’s new employees named Thundercraw and is quite young, for a goblin, but extremely willing to learn, hence his open non-judging tolerance of his mixed house-elf partner.

“It was too dangerous to leave it here and I couldn’t take it with me,” Harry explained. “There are methods to extract information from Pensieves even when they are empty.”

“Mr. Potter is right,” Severus told the young goblin. “This particular type has one function. It removes all memories from a person until they are completely without knowledge of their past, their learning or any other information. The person would basically be able to function with the basics of learned behaviour, like dressing, feeding, etcetera, but he or she would have to begin again with their scholastic or memory learning.”

“If someone wanted they could have retrieved copies of the memories from this device even when empty,” Harry said. “I know from particular information given to me that the person who had submitted their memories did, in fact, have extreme amnesia because of this and never regained any memory of their past life.”

“Thank you for explaining,” Thundercraw said. One of the main reasons that Harry had hired the younger goblin is because he had room to grow and learn. This was the best path for a magical creature who’s curious about humans and the objects that humans chose to store in these vaults.

“Sir,” the young goblin said getting their attention. “What do you want us to do with these vaults?”

“Change the security level on them,” Harry said. “I want them to remain empty for now. We’re also going to increase the level of security on the rest of my vaults too. While that is being done, I’m going to review the adverts for any property available for sale. I cannot access any new properties that I just found out about because of the magical security surrounding them at this point in time.”

“I’ll guide you back to the office that you used for your interviews,” Griphook said.

Mandolin the female half-breed began making clean and accurate notes of the kind of storage the vaults would need, as her new employer and Counsellor, plus Griphook, returned to the tram cart and to the main Bank. Meanwhile the other employees began the process of organizing, securing and cross-referencing the vault data and ledgers.

Later that day, Harry had three places that he wanted to check out before concluding his business with Gringotts. Snape was surprised that Harry didn’t want to go home, not once realizing that the Boy-Who-Lived had just left home and would never be returning there.

A few more time-consuming hours and soon Harry was now the proud owner of a currently non-functioning Water Mill in a small industrial town in the northern area of England. The goblins and his own hired workers were happy to provide the needed security spells in order for Harry to be secreted in this location, effective immediately.

There were three different standard types of ‘Notice-Me-Not’ spells placed on the Water Mill and on the couple of hectares of land surrounding the area that had been part of the sale too. The house-elves and goblins added supplemental wards that would prevent intrusions from all humans, not just Muggles.

They added four wards that would allow Harry’s magic to be undetectable to the Ministry of Magic,
not that it mattered because he was fully emancipated now. Still most of the wards also prevented his wand from even being registered as active in a known Muggle area, until his paperwork had been properly filed for his new home. This would allow him the chance to practice his magic and to fix up the place just like he wanted.

Snape was surprised that Harry had selected this location and town. It was his hometown. In fact his own personal house was at the end of a tatty cobbled street known as Spinner’s End. He didn’t enlighten the boy about it, but he figured that he could eventually convince Harry to allow the addition of the ‘Fidelius Charm’ for greater protection to this place. However he wouldn’t be surprised if Harry declined the use of that charm based on his past experience with it.

The ‘Olde Water Mill’ was a favourite myth for the folks in this Muggle town. The kids used to have dares about who was the bravest to try and enter the place. This kept happening until about 13 years back when the town’s Historical Society had chosen to preserve and conserve it legally.

The property reverted back to the Crown two years after that and now it was for sale to whoever had the money to purchase it and do whatever they wanted to it. Putting up wards was nothing, but additional charms and spells were added to clear out muggle rubbish from the part of the river that now belonged to Harry. Those spells were complicated to think about.

Severus then suggested that all waste products be automatically banished to their appropriate Muggle recycling and waste facilities. Those that couldn’t be recycled or disposed of without harming the environment could be transfigured into new materials in order to improve the domicile. This proved to be an excellent idea and the counsel was highly appreciated by the Boy-Who-Lived.

They figured out a way to automate the process so that any future waste would not contaminate his water. They even managed to get full Muggle scientific testing permits to declare the area a testing site for water treatment. Of course this was done with the use of magic to speed up the process, but the Muggles who noticed that the books had gained additional payments didn’t care.

Money was money and this was a lot of money so they were inclined to forget the anomalies regarding the purchase and speed at which the permits were issued, including the length of time that the permits would be in existence. This way if the water downstream eventually changed or became clear because of some bit of magic further upstream, Harry would be covered legally in both worlds.

The standard wards and charms were mainly the base ones that are added to all Wizarding homes. It must be noted at this point that these are the same protections and charms that the Weasleys enjoyed. They may have had to add a couple of more wards overtime due to their eldest practicing his warding skills, but basically this was all the protection that they had when the Boy-Who-Lived visited them in previous summers.

Harry was already planning to strengthen the wards a short time later, when he had a chance to review some books on the matter and find more shield stones. He knew that he had the strength for it. He just needed the knowledge to proceed and as soon as all the standard protections were added plus the requested extras it was time for all of them part company.

“Thank you guys,” Harry said to the goblins and the house-elves that had added the protections. “You too Sir, for some of the legal advice regarding the Muggle part of purchasing this house. Your counsel has been invaluable, Professor Snape.”

“You’re very Welcome Lord Potter,” Severus told him, accepting a copy of the tally of his working hours, while Harry kept one for his private records and one was sent to his accountant’s desk.

Professor Snape had made up his mind to call the young man by his title whenever he counselled
him as that would distance the image he had in his mind of a spoiled brat and that of the Gryffindor Golden Boy that troubled him at Hogwarts. “I would advise you not to stir from this location for a while. Perhaps until the day you need to venture to Diagon Alley for your school supplies.”

“I will keep that under advisement,” Harry said. He knew full well that he would be heading to some kind of magical shopping alley for some things that he needed. He also knew that he would be laying down a ‘Localized Forgetfulness Spell’ that centered on the Olde Water Mill. This would ensure that even his Professor could not find him. “I’ll find a way for us to communicate on Wizarding Matters, but for now would you allow Hedwig permission to deliver my correspondences to you?”

“She’ll be most welcome, but I don’t recommend that she linger,” Professor Snape said. “She’s quite distinctive, don’t you agree?”

“Yes, but since she was my first ever birthday present, I believe that I’ll keep using her,” he said. “I wouldn’t want to offend her by getting another owl at this time, but then again she may wish to have a bit of freedom to breed at which point I will consult her about getting companions for an Owl Roost that I’m planning to have in the upper loft of the Mill.”

“Sensible,” Severus said. “I look forward to advising you in future Wizarding Matters.” He walked a few feet into the coming night and apparated away. He was being called to the Dark Lord’s side, but he wasn’t concerned about it.

The other magical creatures returned to their quarters near Gringotts Bank. Winky and Dobby were quickly keyed into the Wards of the Olde Water Mill. It was with relish that they began to clean out the building.

Harry cautioned them in their enthusiasm. “We’ll make plans first, but we need to definitely need clean out the fireplace and kitchen area first, so that we have someplace safe to eat tonight. We are not going to hook up to the Floo Network; it’s not needed at the moment and it’s too dangerous right now to let anyone know that I’m connected that way. We can sleep on cots for the next couple of days until room functions have been defined. I don’t mind the outdoor toilette, but we will be discussing a magically and environmentally friendly containment and disposal method for the waste.”

Winky started with the kitchen, while Dobby showed Harry how to magically check the foundations and the structure. They already knew that it was sound. However they were looking for other problems like possible wood rot, wood-worms or other potential things that needed to be fixed before adding onto the structure.

Harry’s summer before his sixth year had already improved greatly because of this day.

HPHPHP

TBC...
Harry was outside tilling a bit a land in order to prepare it for a vegetable garden planned for the next year, when he heard a hooting sound above his head. It was his beautiful Snowy owl coming back from delivering a request for the Professor’s company to go to one of his Grindelwald properties today or hopefully within the next couple of days.

The property that he was looking into visiting was nearby in the sense that it was located in a neighbouring country, although Spain couldn’t exactly be known as a direct neighbour it was still a close enough country to go visit. It didn’t require travel over an ocean to get there and he wasn’t daft enough to go on his own. He knew that there were still some things that he needed to do, like find out about getting travel papers and such, especially to get to a location just north of Buron, very small town in Spain.

He also needed to ask the man about some of the activities that Voldemort had done in past. According to the new memories he carried it seems like the Dark Lord was the one responsible for the actual death of previous Dark Lord Grindelwald.

‘Maybe defeat does not mean death,’ Harry thought. ‘I know that Dumbledore had been honoured with the defeat of Grindelwald. I wonder what really happened to my great-grandfather, maybe the German Ministry of Magic knows, but I’m not going to go to them for the answers I need, not at this time anyway.’

Harry’s owl had delivered a letter earlier in the morning asking his Counsellor, if they could meet in the local village at a coffee shop.

Severus replied with a time to meet. It was several hours later when the two met up and the man agreed to accompany him to this new unknown location in a few days time, as Harry did need to obtain proper magical travel papers first. Plus they would need to plan to camp for a couple of nights, if they couldn’t locate the property quick enough once they got there.

They arrived on the Grindelwald land five days later fully prepared to spend several nights out of doors, if they couldn’t access the building known to be on the property. On site and upon the first view, the both thought that it was a strange place to visit. The fields were dark and sparse. It was as though the land had no life left in it and yet Harry could feel the pull of the magic in his blood calling out for healing.

Even Severus was surprised at the look of the area. Apparently years ago it had been a place rumoured to have been in the middle of some Muggle War, but it felt like it had been a magical war that had affected the area. “Perhaps these were the grounds of some battle never mentioned in the annals of Muggle or Wizard history,” he said in speculation the younger man at his side. “I’m positive that battles have taken place in other areas around the world and have never been recorded. It would hardly surprise me that this was one such location.”

“That is certainly true,” Harry said walking forward. He was cautious because it looked like some
places might be bogs or oddly enough quicksand. Quicksand would be odd because they were a significantly higher elevation. He couldn’t decide which, but he and his Counsellor made the decision not to step in any of the sandy or muddy patches that dotted the near barren land.

Severus knew that the young man would be following some kind of internal magical map, as Harry had already told him that there wasn’t one written down. ‘At least I’m getting paid for all of this,’ he thought. ‘Why the brat feels the need to keep an open contract for this trip, I don’t know? I do understand his need at the moment to find out as much as he could about his mother’s family, but I wouldn’t have charged him for the time to escort him here for Lily’s sake. However when I do think about it, he might not have the presence of mind to ask for Counsel if he is in the middle something that requires his absolute attention. I will wait and see what happens.’

The older man was watching and waiting. He followed the green eyed, messy haired youth past three concealed foot traps, a couple of man-traps already filled with the remains of idiots and one dangerous looking bulbous plant that Harry told him not to even think about getting near to investigate as a potential potions ingredient.

“Why not,” Professor Snape had asked, still looking at it with curiosity.

“Transfigure this into a humanoid figure that can walk,” Harry said to the piece of thick stick that he had picked up. A complicated charm had a humanoid faceless figure appear in place of the branch. “Now direct it to walk towards the plant.”

They both watched as the near formless golem walked towards the bulb and that’s when Snape saw something he had never seen in his whole life as a Wizard. A large oversized tongue snapped out of the top of the bulb, wrapped around the golem and then snapped back into the bulb taking the humanoid golem with it. There was a bunch of crunching sounds, followed by a loud gulp and then a thunderous belch, which released a yellow-green spore filled cloud.

“You can gather some of that cloud,” Harry advised his Potions Professor. “I’m sure that the building will contain a book detailing that…” He was pointing to the plant. “Whatever that is? I’d be careful about letting any of the spores land on you, but I’m quite certain you can use your magic to call them into a few of your collection jars.” He smiled when he noticed his Professor doing just that.

“Excellent idea Mr. Potter,” he replied with a dry tone and a small smirk. “I don’t believe that I would have thought of that.” He did look like he wanted other parts of the plant to test for its potential in potions, but he knew better than to approach it without the proper tools or knowing what that plant-thing might be or how to properly subdue it.

“Don’t worry Professor,” Harry said, getting the man’s attention. “I’m quite certain that there are books in the building. We’re a little over half way to getting there.”

Snape looked up and didn’t see anything. “I suppose that I’ll have to trust your judgement a little while longer, Mr. Potter, as I cannot see anything in the distance.”

“I’m sure that you can’t,” Harry said. “I see it clear enough, but I think that the traps are about to become more interesting.” His teacher didn’t respond to that, but only motioned for the young man to continue their journey.

‘Interesting didn’t describe it accurately,’ Severus thought to himself. He was currently sitting on a portable muggle nylon chair, which was surprisingly comfortable. He nursed a couple of scratches on his arm that he acquired while defending himself from some large cat-like creature that had popped out of one of the sand spots in the ground.
‘At least I wasn’t slimed with mud,’ he thought with an internal chuckle looking at the sorry figure of a mud splattered Potter walking around an invisible perimeter. The boy had been slimed by mud balls being thrown by large tentacles that emerged from the mud holes the closer that they came to the end of their journey.

‘It’s obvious that he’s looking at something, but how to get in,’ Severus thought while taking a sip of fresh water from the canteen that Harry had provided him with. ‘The boy came with complete picnic lunch items too, clever, but I’ll keep that observation to myself.’

Harry had suggested making such provisions, ‘Just in case’, and Severus did take him seriously. However his version of provisions were magical in nature and what he carried the most were empty vials and collection items rather than an extra canteen or two of fresh water. He didn’t believe that it would take that long to get to the main house or building or whatever was to be found on this desolate piece of forbidding property.

“Ah-hah,” Harry said out loud. “There you are.” He was elbow deep into the ground, but didn’t seem to be worried. His arm splurched up and in his hand he was clutching a small tin pail with a secure lid. He quickly wiped it down. “This is what we need.”

“What is it,” Severus said.

“I don’t know,” Harry replied, which caused his Professor to make a noise of exasperated impatience. “I just know that I need it. I suspect if you hold it you can see the place.” He was holding it out to his Professor for the man to examine.

“I’ll wait,” Snape said inching slightly away with his wand out. He was unsure about running a diagnostic scan of the item for Dark Magics and therefore just sat there waiting for the young man to make a decision.

“Of course, sir,” Harry said with a smile. He looked in his pack for a towel that would wipe away the grime. He had Winky and Dobby get anything that they thought he would need for this trip, when he produced a list of thing that he wanted for this trip. He’d been sure to mention something that would wipe away sweat and stains.

They came back with three very fluffy hand towels made specifically for Magical Archaeologists. They told him that he needed more than one to rotate their use. Basically the towel worked to remove accumulated dirt and sweat by spell absorption. At the end of the day the towel was to be laid out to dry and the following morning it only needed a couple of good shakes in the open air and that was supposed to render it clean and ready for use once more. They were supposedly good for only a month, but the house-elves figured that Harry might need an extra one for his travelling companion.

Severus watched the cleanup in fascination. “How are you getting all of that grime out so quickly?”

“Special towels,” Harry told him. “Winky and Dobby found them for me.” He then explained how they worked.

“I wonder if they have something similar for infirmaries,” Snape said out loud taking a closer look at the clean one that Harry had handed him. He used it to wipe away the blood smears from his minor injuries. A couple of potions took care of the potential for infection and scarring from the scratches he had received.

Harry only shrugged at the comment. He wasn’t someone with a medical background, but then he thought about the ‘NEW’ label and showed it to his Professor. “Here sir,” he said. “Have a look at the packaging on this one. It looks to be a new product, although it’s very handy.”
“Too true,” Snape said examining the package of the un-opened towel. “I wonder if they make bigger ones.”

“It would be useful in potions,” Harry commented. “That is if they could pick up ‘all’ spills rather than just body fluids, dirt and dust.” He looked at the tin box and wiped it clean with the last clean corner of his towel. He had to smile at the picture on the box because it came with a fond memory that belonged to Natalia or perhaps her mother. ‘Barbie!’

“What?” His professor said out loud.

“Look,” Harry said pointing to the old fashioned figure of a doll with a perfect figure and dressed as 1920’s or 1930’s housewife. That was strange because he knew that the doll was not available in the 20’s, but in the 60’s, which didn’t make sense age-wise to belong to his grand-mother, unless the doll came out in the Wizarding World first and then of course it made perfect sense.

“That doll has unrealistic proportions,” was Snape’s only comment, but it was one that had Harry in stitches with laughter.

A short while later, after Harry had calmed down and after they finished taking their break, Harry was ready to attempt the opening of the door. The tin contained simple instructions.

They had to walk in a ritual pattern, three times clock-wise, six times counter and five more clock-wise before the door would even appear. The Gryffindor had to knock on the door following a musical pattern which caused him to smile and his professor to frown. The magically preserved note gave him the clue and he suspected that it was Natalia herself that had changed it to something that perhaps only a Muggle-born would know.

Her suspicions were true, as it was fact that her offspring were raised in the Muggle World and they would know about this particular little seven note tune. Her note had been clear, “Remember the cost of a ‘shave and a haircut’ my child,’ she had written. “It’s always ‘two bits’.”

The tune was bugging Harry’s professor, but he knew that if he asked the boy, he would tell him about it later. Meanwhile, Harry had to be careful when he was knocking to make sure that the te-tock toc sounds of his knock match the tune of old American radio jingle.

There was a deep cha-click sound and the door opened, creaking all the way like the worst of the B-movie horror films. They couldn’t see into the darkness of the entrance way.

Even though Severus had not been able to see the building he had been able to feel it when they walked around it. Once the door was revealed and opened, the invisibility of the tower was completely removed. However the inside was still blacker than pitch.

Harry pulled out a muggle torch and flicked the switch, hoping that it would work in what was clearly a magical environment. He was surprised and pleased that it was working. He had no expression on his face when the light shone in a small circle and landed on something he didn’t want to think about just yet.

He rotated the light to get a clearer view of the interior and then returned it to the spot that had him pursing his lips in sadness. He rotated the light again and then using a muggle lighter he lit a small torch in the torch sconce by the side of the door. This had the effect of causing all candles and torches to light up in the entrance room.

Candles began to float in the air and seek out the flames from the scones, but all seemed to have been directed by Harry’s need and only three larges and two smaller one were lit. The three large ones
were floating in strategic positions to provide maximum lighting in the area and the two smaller ones were stations just above and to the right of each man’s head. Harry turned off his muggle device, hoping to preserve the batteries, just in case.

His professor had been waiting for the boy to move, but knew not to rush it, in case the landing or floor had pressure traps. He too had a similar expression on his face when looking at the location where the light had first landed. He watched as the torches and other magical light take action, lighting up the entry way and spiralling up the obvious stairs circling ever up. ‘Clever,’ he thought. ‘That has to be magical fuel or a pre-planted potion or spell that supports the flame from a muggle lighter.’

Harry looked closely at the floor and then he closed his eyes seeking a memory of this place and its possible traps. He sighed in relief and stepped into the entrance room with confidence and held up his hand to stop his professor from following him.

“Professor Snape,” Harry said out loud. “You are welcome in my home as my Teacher and Counsellor.”

“I thank you Lord Grindelwald,” his professor answered using the correct name for this particular property, not wanting to offend the magics in the location by naming another Family as owner. He was surprised by the formality, but then he reflected that it might be a form of protection against possible hostile or lingering magics. “My advice is yours to use as you see fit and my knowledge is freely given.”

Harry paused as he felt the magic evaluate that statement.

Severus was surprised to feel the magic scan him, but he let out a tiny sigh of relief when he felt the pressure preventing him from entering, let up. He raised one eyebrow at the young man indicating that he expected an explanation at a later date.

Harry just nodded and said, “Please come in Professor Snape.”

“Thank you,” Snape said stepping into the entrance way. He walked up to the Gryffindor and they were both startled when the door slammed shut with a bang after they had both gotten clear of it. The large clacking sound of a lock sealing the place indicated that they might be confined for a bit. “Interesting…”

“Yeah,” Harry said. “Creepy too, I bet Fred and George Weasley can make a product that does that.” He pointed his unlit muggle torch back to that one patch on the ground that bothered him. “What am I going to do about him?”

Severus sighed and then said, “We can give him a proper burial, but for now we can wrap him up in a sheet, if you can find one, and we’ll move him out of the way.”

“Good idea,” Harry replied.

The Gryffindor looked quickly around the room, located a closet based on his memories and found a white sheet to wrap up the body. His professor had him open up the sheet and then he used magic to wrap up the dehydrated body of the old house-elf that they found in the main entrance.

They moved the body to a side wall. The same thing was going through their minds. ‘How many more bodies are we going to find?’

Harry went to the closet and pulled out a small stack of surprisingly, clean white sheets. He put them in his backpack, just in case they would need them. He took a deep breath and realized that the air
was clean and breathable. That made him wonder what had happened to the old elf.

The hall was a perfect circle. Round with high-arched thin windows going up into the tower’s other rooms. There were several doors, not including the main one, which led to a dining room, a kitchen, two basement doors on opposite sides of the round hall and a few wardrobe, linen and coat closets too. They didn’t enter the rooms, but opened the doors and made a note of what they contained.

They did this for all seven levels of the tower. It seemed that the building was definitely a tall tower, larger on the inside than outside, but each level had a specific use. The second, third and fourth levels or floors were obviously living quarters and guest quarters. The beds and wardrobes were dead giveaways as to this fact. They even had fully function water closets attached to most of them, but they were basic loos with a small sink and mirror. Each of these three floors had a room with three shower stalls and another room contained full bathing room with a tub for a full body cleaning.

The fifth level contained a wall to wall trick library that had bookshelves in the form of spokes on a wheel or slices of pie. Each ‘pie’ section contained a category of books, like history, biography, potions, etc… The trick of it was that once you stepped into a ‘pie’ section the floor would rotate and lead you to a larger space with hundreds more books of that same category and the difficulty or trick was getting out again.

Severus had difficulty not only in leaving, but leaving without taking any of the ingredients or potions books that he noticed because he had never seen them before. “Potter…” he said gaining the attention of the boy who was activating the ‘wheel’ to bring him back to the starting point. “Would you mind…”

“Not at all Professor,” Harry said. “…but not today. I need to figure out what is here and how it’s catalogued first. Who knows maybe some of these books are in the Restricted Section of Hogwarts or would be considered banned by the UK Ministry of Magic and I wouldn’t want to lose them just because they were brought into the Commonwealth without knowing the law regarding them.” He paused and then took one book off the shelves of containing plant information and handed it to the man. “You may want to read this one while you’re here.” The Potions Master raised one eyebrow in question. “I believe it contains answers regarding the bulbous thing out on the land.”

Severus sighed, looked longingly at the other books and said, “Very well and thank you. I’ll concede to your younger wisdom in this matter. But if I may… why would you think that some of your books may be banned by the UK Ministry?”

“Well,” Harry began. “Not knowing the local law can get a lot of individuals in trouble when traveling. Muggle News will sometimes contain stories of people who don’t know the particular laws in the different countries that they are visiting. The worst News stories are the ones when someone deliberately does something stupid and then they complain when they get caught because they find they can’t leave that country without serving time. It has something to do about no Extradition Treaty in place or some other law that prevents them from leaving.”

Professor Snape snorted when he heard that. “Foolish,” he stated. Harry just nodded and shrugged at that.

They continued their exploration of the tower. The sixth level contained a ritual room that the Gryffindor had never seen before as they didn’t study magical rituals in school. The sad part of this room was that the last ritual performed in there was still written on the walls, floor and ceiling, including a pool of disturbing stains that were obviously from body fluids.

“Rituals are conducted under strict measures and the UK Ministry of Magic has a ‘hands-off’ policy regarding many of them,” Severus explained in answer to Harry’s question about rituals and their
place in their society, while he mentally made notes on the contents of the room. “Some are strictly regulated, but there are many minor rituals that are passed down internally in Families that are not. These are done in varying stages and depend only on the level of magic of the caster, the knowledge brought to the rituals and what the particular Wizard Family wishes to pass onto their offspring.”

“Which ones are strictly regulated,” Harry asked. “How would the Ministry know that someone did a banned ritual? Is there some kind of alarm that sounds at the Ministry?”

“No alarms,” Severus said. “The only way that they would know would be based on the results of in-depth and thorough medical scans. Any rituals that are considered ‘Regulated’ or ‘Banned’ are the ones that involve young children in sex acts or involve the death of a person... Ritual animals don’t count because they are not considered sentient. However there are exceptions for creatures that are listed under the Ministry’s Banned Magical Creatures for Ritual Use.”

Harry frowned and didn’t want to go further, but he had to ask, “Taking the Dark Mark was a ritual that the Ministry never caught, right?”

“That is correct,” Severus said. “Even if they did, it wouldn’t fall under the banned or regulated ones because it was basically just an ‘Oath of Fealty’ that had changed configuration many times over the years based on culture and the rulers of those times.”

“That’s something to think about,” Harry said. “Do you believe that it can be removed, if it was based on a Fealty Ritual or maybe transferred?”

“The Headmaster has looked through different Fealty Oaths and their history,” his professor told him. “I don’t know that he was altogether successful in finding the correct one because the Oath was done in Parseltongue and I do not know the spells ‘He’ added to the original spell or which one was used.”

“We can look in the library here for those, maybe all you need to do is transfer your Fealty to a new Leader or Master and then you won’t be summoned anymore,” Harry observed. “If you wish, maybe you can guide me through one of your memories of a marking Ritual. I could translate the Parseltongue that way.”

That had the Potions Master twitching because Dumbledore had told him that transferring Fealty could only be done by someone willing to accept him. The Gryffindor noted the twitch, but didn’t say anything because he had his own suspicions on why the Professor’s Dark Mark hadn’t been altered.

“Only one more level to inspect, but I suspect that the main door in the entrance hall will not open until we have inspected all levels including the sub-levels. I also suspect that we might have to spend the night here.” He looked away because he wasn’t sure what the older man’s reaction would be.

“We have the equipment to stay overnight,” Severus told him. “I have no pressing engagements, although I do hope that this Tower will let me leave should I be called to the Dark Lord’s side.”

“If you can sense ‘His’ call,” Harry muttered while walking up to the last visible level of the tower. At the top of the stairs there was an observatory, complete with a huge old fashioned telescope pointing to the night sky. There were shelves of books and various optical lenses lining the walls on this final level.

“Oh, wow!” The Gryffindor said. “This is so awesome! I’ve never seen anything like this outside of Hogwarts and the one we have at school is a lot more modern, but this one is just cool. Wonder where the Owlery is for this place?”
They both looked up at the hoots of a few owls that were penned in a corner of the rafters. The pen was almost based on a similar pattern to muggle chicken wire, but it was obviously magical as it allowed that section to rotate when the telescope rotated. The openings above the owls automatically shut when the tower room rotated and others opened up to allow the owls the freedom of movement.

Three owls were looking down at the two wizards from their roosting spot. One was a large Barn Owl, the second was a Snowy owl, but it was not Hedwig. The final owl was hidden in the shadows of the beams and it looked like it was sitting on a nest. This one was black and its eyes glowed with a green light.

“A Sooty,” Severus whispered softly so as not to startle them. He was staring at the black owl that was hidden in the rafters.

“Hmm,” Harry mumbled while looking back at his memories for the owls. “I think that they are either third or fourth generation.” He looked up at them and then said softly, “I can’t tell if they’re regular owls or magical.”

“Magical,” his professor said after pondering them. “They’d not be able to live in this place if they weren’t. Let’s leave before they decide that we’re intruding. That Sooty is clearly nesting and because we are strangers, they may attack.”

“Agreed,” Harry said. “Let’s pick out a couple of guest rooms to stay the night and take the wrapped bodies down, as we go.” They had found two more bodies of house-elves, one in the library and one in what they suspected had been the master bedroom.

“Very well,” Professor Snape said, following the young man.

At the Ritual Level, Harry pointed to the walls and had paused to ask, “Do you happen to know what that Ritual was?”

Severus did suspect that he knew what the ritual was, but he wasn’t absolutely certain and didn’t really want to let the boy know. However he did promise to do his best to provide any information regarding the Wizarding World even if it wasn’t to render an opinion or advice on something. He sighed and said, “I strongly suspect that the last ritual was some kind of magical siphon. Most of the symbols on the floor and ceiling support that, but there seems to be another component having to do with the mind. I cannot tell you more until I research it.”

“That’s all right Professor,” Harry said with a scowl at the markings on the walls. “I have an extremely good idea of what happened here.”

“Really,” Severus said. He was curious as to how the boy would know, but he didn’t press the point.

“I may tell you one day.” Harry said, leaving that room and level and heading down to the second floor. They had collected the bodies of the old house-elves and soon they were setting up for the night.

Severus had cleared their selected rooms of the dust and grime using magic while Harry hunted down something to use as clean sheets and pillows. It didn’t matter if there were no sheets because they had brought along sleeping bags and they could always transfigure something into pillows.

The evening prior to the sun setting was uneventful. They continued exploring the Tower’s sublevels and found an underground garden and a potions lab. The underground garden had a similar wheel configuration like the library, but in the case of the garden it was different climates and environments, rather than different subject matters.
Settling in for the night the two Wizards fell immediately asleep as soon as their heads touched their transfigured pillows.

They were awakened several hours later by awful sounds and noises coming from all floors of the building. There were sounds of heart-wrenching sobs, angry mutters, creaking floorboards and grunts of a copulating beast. Bursts of screams and howls echoed in from the distant fields, all of which awoke them both from a sound sleep.

Harry sighed rubbing the sleep out of his eyes, he mumbled, “This can’t be happening.” There was a knock at his door and he knew that it was his Professor. “Come in, sir.”

Professor Snape was at the door in his old fashioned nightshirt and a robe covering it. He had a small potion vial in his hand. “I thought you might have woken up too. Did you want to investigate the noises or have a bit of ‘Dreamless Sleep’?”

“I’d love to have the Dreamless Sleep, but I can’t,” Harry said. “I’d be wondering what the noise was tomorrow morning and then we’d have to stay another night in order to investigate it. Couldn’t we just check it out now and then maybe take the Dreamless Sleep after if we figure it out, even if we find nothing?”

Snape nodded in agreement. He too would have been curious to know what the noise was in the morning, should he have taken the potion before finding out what the raucous was. “Very well then,” he said. “I’d best get changed to something more conventional for exploring the premises at this time of night. I’ll see you in a few moments.”

Harry nodded as his door was shut. He got up quickly and put on a pair of sweat pants and top with long sleeves to keep the chill out, clean warm sock, plus a comfortable pair of indoor trainers. Most of the noises were above him and he had a bad feeling that it had something to do with the ritual room, but he knew... instinctively he knew that he had to start at the bottom in one of the sub-levels rooms. He strongly suspected that during their previous exploration they might have missed a door down there.

He carried the muggle torch in one hand and his wand in the other. This Country didn’t penalize under-age Witches or Wizards, but they knew that he wasn’t strictly a member of their Country and his legal status of Adult in the UK didn’t matter here.

Spain’s Ministry of Magic gave him a Writ permitting him to use his wand in a limited, emergency capacity and they told him that once he was on the privacy of his own land, when that land accepted him, they would never take action should he use magic. Magical property laws being what they are and all that followed with owner paperwork. Of course he had a copy of their statement on file and handy, just in case, as advised by his Counsellor.

Therefore Harry didn’t use his wand at all during their trek through the land, but he certainly was not going to wander this building without it tonight. That would have been a supremely foolish move on his part. He met his Potions Professor in the hall who was also prepared, but not dressed in his usual robes. He too had a torch and wand in hand, but his torch was of the magical variety and in the form of a small palm sized globe of flickering light that floated on its own. It was almost as if it contained a candle from the way that the soft light flickered inside.

“Shall we,” Snape asked the boy who just nodded. “Lead on, I will follow you.”

“We need to begin at the bottom,” Harry said. “I think I know what is going to happen, but we must remain quiet throughout or else we will disturb the Shades.”
Severus blanched. ‘Shades,’ his thoughts shuddered. ‘By Merlin’s hairy balls, the boy thinks that this place is haunted by Shades.’

Shades were not ghosts in and of themselves. They were from the spectral family, but they did no harm to anyone, but were very famous for re-enacting an event that may have taken place in a particular domain. They were basically the magical recording or spiritually residue of an event. Usually the event recorded depicted the most heinous of crimes. Magic had to have been released during the act of committing something foul for any Shade to be created.

“Are you sure,” Harry’s professor asked. His voice was not too steady for he had never seen a Shade and never knew anyone to have a good experience from the witnessing of such creatures or their recorded acts.

Harry had a sad look on his face and stated honestly, “I strongly believe so, sir. I need to ‘witness’ this event in order to lay them properly to rest, but you needn’t. You can feel free to remain in your room for the remainder of the night. I will not fault you for that choice, sir, because I’m fairly certain that I already know what I’m about to see. The Shades will only confirm the information from memories I have acquired from that Reverse Pensieve.”

“I would never let you face these Shades alone,” Severus told the Gryffindor. “You may need someone to confirm that the event had taken place. At the very least you’ll need someone to understand what it is that you will be witnessing.”

“I do not know how much your opinion of the Headmaster will change if you were to witness these events,” Harry said. “I do not want to cause a rift…”

“Do not be ridiculous Potter,” Severus told him in a gruff tone. “My opinion is my own and I’m certainly adult enough to handle a few harsh truths. That is what a Shade is commonly known as... The Ghost of Truth.”

“So be it,” Harry said and walked down to the lower levels of the basements.

Sure enough they had missed a door, but only because it had been bricked up and made to look like the other archways lining the corridor that linked the two sub-level rooms together. Only now the door was visible in ghostly pale light and shone through the brick work visible as long as it was night.

“Stand back, sir,” Harry said ducking into one of the archways. His professor followed his course of action and was glad of it.

Coming down the hall was the ghostly figure of an angry and much younger Albus Dumbledore. He was stalking through the corridor and had a look of determined rage on his face. He immediately opened the ghostly door that appeared through the bricked up archway and hauled out a young girl that looked to be in her very early teen years. He had her by the arm, causing a purpling bruise in the shape of his hand. It was clear that she was very thin and had been undernourished on purpose.

“You’re coming with me,” the Shade of Albus said. “I have invested too much of my precious time in searching for you. You will pay for the insult and the humiliation that I endured. Have you made up your mind?”

“Yes,” the transparent girl said spitting in his face. “I will live and I will destroy you.”

“Hah,” Dumbledore said wiping away the spittle with the sleeve of his robe. “I sincerely doubt you’ll ever be able to mention these events without killing yourself in the process, my dear.”
He tugged harshly on her thin arm and walked her quickly in the direction of the stairs leading up the tower. He was heading in the direction of the prepared Ritual Room. The writings were already on the walls and she was not ignorant of what was about to take place.

She had a plan though. She was going to endure the indignity that would be visited upon her unprepared and under-age body and she would strike such a blow that the man inflicting his rage on her would never remember. She hissed the entire time between the screams and yelps of pain.

Harry and Severus could only stand by and watch as the old and revered Headmaster of their school physically, magically and mentally raped the girl. Harry had tears in his eyes, but he paid close attention to the sounds coming from her mouth.

“Parseltongue,” he whispered. “She’s speaking Parseltongue.”

Snape was scowling furiously at the scene. His first thought was to remove Harry from the proceedings, but he was fully aware that the boy was the only one that could cleanse the building because he owned it. His eyes gleamed with rage against the man that held the respect of so many in the Wizarding community. “He’ll not get away with this,” he whispered back. “He’ll regret such actions.”

Harry put his hand on the man’s arm, squeezing gently, to get his Professor’s attention. Once those dark eyes locked with his, he whispered, “She’s speaking in Parseltongue. She’s casting spells in Parseltongue and he doesn’t even know it.”

Severus blinked and then quickly looked back to see the events unfold. It was disheartening that the foolish actions of youth could lead to bitter ends or result in bitter people. He regretted his actions in joining the Dark Lord, but to know that a man that had earned his respect had acted this way in his younger years, it was near unbearable to acknowledge.

However he would never regret his decision to view the Shades’ actions because without such knowledge the young man, known as the Boy-Who-Lived, might have become overloaded in emotions. Without someone to discuss these events with, someone who would believe him, the young man might have cracked from the pressure and knowledge of this crime.

They both watched the violation continue and they were horrified by all of it.

Albus had used certain spells that guaranteed the girl would enjoy the act, but it was a false act. Those spells had a way of infiltrating the psyche and it twisted her round the inside, making her feel responsible for it and guilty because she had no control over what was happening to her. Her future liaisons with men would be forever altered because of those spells.

Her magic was slowly seeping into the man that was taking her virginity repeatedly.

They watched as a bowl, not unlike the Reverse Pensieve appear behind the unloving coupling that was occurring. Silver fluid appeared as a drop, slowly increasing in size and soon the flow increased with the morbid tempo of the ritual taking place. Parseltongue hisses were interspersed with the grunts of the rutting man and the bowl filled more swiftly until it was almost overflowing.

Once it was near full the Shade of a young female house-elf silently popped into the room, absorb some of the Human magic from the man and the girl. She took hold of the bowl, transformed her appearance to match that of the thirteen year old Human girl and popped away quickly before the red-haired Wizard noticed any of it.

The girl’s deep green eyes were noticeably dulled in appearance, her hair turn fine and stringy. She
was squinting at the man who finished his business and she dully asked, “Are you done yet?”

This was not the response that Albus had been hoping for. He sneered and said, “Not quite.”

He repeated the process two more times, this time violating her mouth and violating her from behind. He wanted her to bleed and from the pain-filled cries of semi-ecstacy and actual pain he drained most of the remains of her magical core.

Albus never once suspected that he didn’t get all of the girl’s magic during the Ritual of Siphoning, but he had gotten enough of it to make her barely a Squib for life. “Now my dear,” he said at the girl whose vacant stare focussed on the location of where Harry and Severus had been observing from. “Obliviate!”

Before the spell hit her, she let out a small wicked smirk at the men that watched the horror happen. It was a look that Albus had never detected and she hissed, (...You first, Obliviate...) before the old Wizard’s spell hit her, hers hit the Headmaster first. It was faster due to the snake language and it struck him with a viper’s lightning speed.

The two observers watched the results of the dual Obliviate occur. Both spells had knocked out the two participants of the Siphoning Ritual.

Albus Dumbledore came to himself and was horrified by the blood and other fluids that he found on his genitals. He looked at the room and walls in confusion and at the girl whose mind he suspected had just been Obliviated. He didn’t want to believe that he could do such a thing, but a few quick tests showed him that the girl was now a Squib and that her memory was no longer there. He didn’t recall much of her name except that it began with Natal. So he believed that it was Natalie, as in the standard Anglo language.

Albus quickly and quietly washed and dressed the both of them with magic and then left the building carrying the girl in his arms. As soon as they were out of the building, the tower disappeared from sight. The land boiled and bubbled, changing from a green healthy lushness to the devastation that Harry and Severus had trekked through earlier that day.

The Wizard, that was obviously the future Headmaster, Apparated away with the Squib girl. He chose to run from the events of this place and from the small bits of memory that he had upon waking up, from what he knew was at the end of a Ritual that he never remembered conducting. In time he came to believe that he had stumbled across the girl and never once truly recalled his own state of dress in the matter.

The two observers watch as all the house-elves took their own life with a potion that would mummify their remains on the spot where they were most happy in their lives. They died without pain and with the hope that one day someone would find the tower and cleanse it, preparing it for proper occupation once more.

Harry and Severus were stunned. They were then suddenly startled as the sounds started up again. “I cannot watch this a second time,” Harry said gagging on bile as his emotions were in flux because of the memories that the Shades brought to the front of his mind. “How can I put these… these Shades to rest?”

“Cleaning this room would be a start,” Severus told him. “It must be done while the Shades re-enact the sequence of events that led to their creation. I believe that this repeats every night, so perhaps some Dreamless Sleep for the remainder of tonight and we can better prepare to deal with them in the morning.”
“Cleaning this room has to be one of the last things we do,” Harry said firmly convinced of it. “I think that we’ll first have to un-brick that door in the sub-level and blast out the walls of that room. We can do that one tonight. Perhaps we can take care of scrubbing most of the rooms and floors in order to clean up some of the lingering spiritual taint during the next day, maybe with a proper Spirit Cleansing potion. I believe that the last thing we should do is to give the house-elves a proper burial. This room can be done just before we lay them to rest.”

“I agree with you,” Severus said. “Did you want to call your house-elves to assist?”

Harry looked at his professor and then told the man his suspicions that no other being can enter without invitation by the Tower. The Tower had accepted them because of Harry and his blood and that once they were in, they would not be able to leave until the Shades of the past were put to rest.

“You can try leaving, sir,” Harry said. “But I cannot guarantee that you’d be able to open the main door or any door for that matter.”

“I will check that out while you reveal that prison doorway in the sub-level,” Snape told him.

It was a matter of minutes to avoid the Shades climbing the stairs and heading up to the Ritual Room. It took Severus only half a second to know that he couldn’t open the main door, even using his magic.

Harry headed immediately down into the sub-levels to the spot where the bricked up doorway was more defined because the door was opened. It was a ghostly outline behind the bricks. A couple of third year spells allowed the mortar between the bricks to dissolve and his first year levitation charm was essential in floating the bricks out of the way.

Professor Snape assisted him with moving the bricks to a minor storage room in the sub-level. The door was slowly revealed with its dry wood and rusty hardware. There was even a key still in the door, as though whatever or whoever had done this didn’t want anyone to have another form of access. It couldn’t have been Dumbledore unless the man came back over time and took care to hide the evidence of the cell.

Opening the door for real revealed the Shade of the girl crouched in a corner. The walls were nearly filled with scratching. Calculating the scratches and double-checking his memory, Harry said, “A year and six months.”

“What,” his Counsellor said looking at the markings, easily deducing that they represented days.

“She was here for a year and six months,” Harry said. “She had succeeded in being free, hiding from the Wizarding World for that same length of time before she was imprisoned here. This Observatory Tower belonged to her mum and her biological father didn’t even know about it. I wonder how Dumbledore figured that one out.”

“She’s doing something in that corner,” Severus told the Gryffindor.

Harry walked over to the corner. He heard the hissing and watched her hand dig in the dirt looking for something. He listened to her words.

(…Magic to my land…Magic to my land…Magic to my land…The King and the Land are one… Magic to my land…Magic to my land…Magic to my land…The King and the Land are one…) 

“The King and the Land are one,” Harry said softly in English.

“What was that,” Snape said sharply.
“That’s what she’s saying in Parseltongue,” Harry explained looking back that the man standing in the doorway. “The King and the Land are one, well that and Magic to my land.”

Severus walked over the corner and looked closer at the girl. He inhaled sharply when he noticed the small sliver of copper thread magic leave her hands. Her hands were wrapped around the root of a plant that was planted near the base of the Tower. Her magic was slowly going into the land and the land would be affected by her health at the time of this occurrence and in the future.

“How is she saying the spell,” he asked the young man who understood her hisses.

“Magic to my land is repeated three times followed the line of the King and Land,” Harry said. “Is that important?”

“Yes,” Severus told him. “It will be for you because you share her blood. You can reclaim some of her magics by reversing this effect, which will also allow the land to heal. I suspect that the creatures in the pools will also revert to their natural form or they may die, but you must realize that they are not natural creatures of this world anyway.”

“I kind of figured that,” Harry said. “A sea creature should live in the sea and cats should not live underground. It’s possible that she has seen one too many bad B-Movies while she was on the run in the Muggle World. I know that cinemas showing those kinds of movies are easier to sneak into and that would have provided her with some physical shelter while she was on the run from Dumbledore.”

Severus snorted when he heard that. “Possibly,” he said. “Or maybe she’s read too many bad novels?”

“Maybe,” Harry agreed. “Please step outside of this room, sir.”

His professor stepped out and then watched as the boy cast a spell that would super-clean the room. The walls were sandblasted. The meagre furnishings of a cot and chair were blasted into splinters and burned. The remains of the debris were banished and a slight breeze flowed through the room with the scent of freshly cut grass.

There was nothing that they could do for the remainder of this night. They both were grateful for the invention of the Dreamless Sleep potion because there was no way that they’d have been able to go to sleep after what they had witnessed and not dream disturbing things.

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The next morning when they were breaking their fast they made plans. Harry was going to use cleaning and scouring charms beginning in the sub-levels, while his Counsellor worked from the Owlery and Observatory on down, skipping the Ritual Room to keep it for last. The Gryffindor told him that he was better suited to ensure that the books would be safe during that particular cleaning process and the Potions Master could not dispute that. He had the knowledge regarding book preservation and would not do anything to damage the valuable knowledge within the aging bindings.

Severus did show Harry the spells for the books, just in case there were some in the Potions Lab, but they had been in the lab long enough to know that no ingredients remained viable for use. “You may as well clean up the lab and cauldrons while you’re down there,” he said with his smirky Professor-type smile. “Merlin knows you have enough practice from your detentions with me.”

Harry huffed and said with a grin, “Whatever. I don’t plan on getting anymore this year, but that
would entirely depend on whether things change in class or not."

“I doubt that things will change in class,” Professor Snape said. “You only need to listen when instructions are being given.”

“Yeah, yeah,” Harry said waving off the friendly banter. “I’ll go down and once I have a few of the cauldrons clean we can use those as containers for water to clean the Ritual Room and prepare the ‘Spirit Cleansing Potion’.”

“Good idea,” Severus told him. “By the way Mr. Potter, what is the name of this Tower or land?”

Harry smiled because he liked the name. “The Tower is called Galileo’s Spindle,” he said. “I’d have to look into the Mossenberg Family archives to find out if we were actually related in some way, but somehow I don’t think so. That telescope could have been a gift, though.”

“It might be in your records,” Snape said. “That is providing that you can find all of your Family’s records. Now let’s get to work.”

Harry nodded and they cleared up their morning rubbish. It took all day, but once the night arrived, the Shades began to tell their tale once more only this time they were partially visible. They were less like silver-grey ghosts and much more transparent like vapours. It was evident that the cleansing of the Tower was working.

The two Wizards worked quickly to wash the writings off the walls, ceiling and floor of the Ritual Room. As soon as they were done, they heard a loud click like all of the doors of the Tower were just unlocked at the same time.

North of the Tower was a large outdoor garden with four small glass greenhouses at the end of a maze path. A rose tree had been planted close to the tower, with sister trees on either side and behind them were the long climbing vines of sweet-roses that were slowly beginning to bloom in the night as the magic that suppressed their growth was being slowly absorbed through the soles of Harry’s shoes.

He was aware that this was happening, but he didn’t care. The magic belonged to him now and it would flow in the veins of a Grindelwald descendant once more. The bodies of the house-elves were magically interred and three round rocks of green marble rose from the ground. Not knowing their names, but knowing their date of death, the following was carved, “Ever faithful and loyal, October 31. 19...”

“Always a Halloween,” Harry observed patting one of the stones. “Something bad always happens on Halloween.”

The Potions Master looked at the Gryffindor and then he said, “It is a powerful night for Witches and Wizards.”

“Samhain,” Harry stated. “I can understand that.” He looked out to the land and then he removed his shoes and socks in order to be able to absorb the rest of the magic more swiftly. He looked to the man who had accompanied him and asked, “Do you mind if we stay here for another day? I’d like to set up proper wards and get my house-elves keyed to them.”

“Not at all,” Severus told him. He smiled and said, “I’ll take this time to explore the library here, if that is all right with you.”

“Your counsel has been invaluable Professor Snape,” Harry said, concluding their actual business. “Feel free to browse the library, sir. I don’t mind. You can call Winky and Dobby to come and stock
the kitchen here with basic staples that won’t expire quickly and we can come back whenever you like.”

“Thank you,” Snape said. He was there to observe the young man and ensure that nothing happened to him. He watched the flow of magic seep into the youth with soft copper tones. The process promised to take some time. He snapped his fingers to call forth the house-elves that were instructed to respond to him whenever he was in Harry’s presence.

Two soft pops nearby didn’t distract Harry from channelling the magic along similar, yet dried up paths in his veins. It was as though a river had dried and yet it was gaining a new source or perhaps a source that should have been there all along.

The process was not unlike his magical maturation so he was quite familiar with it. He took the magic and let it flow into his limbs and mind. More gathered into his primary magical core and some was stored in his memories to live with Natalia in order to bring forward any hint of a memory that existed and could identify the gifts that came with the Grindelwald and Mossenberg bloodlines.

Severus asked the house-elves if Harry had any stationary prepared for his duties as a Lord of several family lines. “We need to send formal correspondences to Gringotts about this place,” he explained. “Wards need to be put up on this land and we need to have something to send to the officials of this Country in order to properly register the accepted ownership of this building and land.”

“I goes to gets them,” Dobby said, popping away.

The Potions Master turned to Winky to explain that Harry requested that the kitchens be stocked with the basic staples for their time here and that anything perishable should be limited. “I believe that we will stay here for another night and day,” he told the little female house-elf. “So bring us two jugs of milk and some fresh fruits. You might want to take a look in the kitchen here first to see if there is anything missing appliance wise.”

“As yous be wishing P’ofessors Snapey,” she said popping away to the completely scoured kitchen of Galileo’s Spindle.

Snape called forth the book that he had been reading in the Tower and one of the muggle folding chairs. He set up a comfortable spot under the rose tree and kept an eye out for Harry as the boy absorbed the magic that linked him to the land.

‘That spell has not been used since the times of Feudal Kings,’ he thought back to the girl hissing this spell in the corner of her cell. ‘I wonder if it will affect his properties now or just affect him.’

Harry was unaware that he was being watched, but it wouldn’t have mattered to him. He removed all of his clothing in order to sit on the grass and allow more of the magic to flow freely. The vines of the climbing roses reached him in order to give him more of the magic had been waiting for someone of the bloodline to claim it.

Severus had never seen anything like this before. It was like he was being re-introduced to the world of magic. He shook his head in wonder, took up the book he had summoned and just kept an eye out for Harry, in case the young man needed his assistance. He did note that the Boy-Who-Lived had a number of scars that should never have been found on the back of a pampered child and yet they did not detract from the young man’s physique. It was natural to see the human form when magic of this type was performed, but as the young man’s Professor he relegated his observations to a far corner of his mind and chose to not think about the boy’s desirability.

He had the patience to wait for time to do its thing and let the boy mature. He wasn’t sure if there
was some underlying unresolved sexual tension because of James Potter rather than his possession fixation for Lily and her honest eyes.

He shook that away with a shudder. There was no way he had ever been remotely interested in James Potter. Lily Evans yes, but a physical sexual interest in James Potter… never, and if had he wouldn’t admit, not even for the privilege of licking Merlin’s feet.

He looked at the young man and knew that this was not the same as his views on Lily. Yet it would definitely be interesting to see, if the interest could be returned sometime in the far future. However he could wait for Harry to grow-up a few years and besides a Potions Master without patience was not a good Potions Master and he was known as one of the best. His patience would be near infinite in this case.

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TBC...
Harry received an Owl from Ron a week before they had to catch the train for the first of September in order to begin their sixth year at Hogwarts’ School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. He was graciously being invited for a back-to-school shopping day on August thirty-first and a stay over for only one night at the Burrow, in order for all of them to catch the train together as per their usual back-to-school routine.

‘I think his mother is making him invite me,’ Harry thought with an inner snort of upset, as his friend had not written to him at all throughout the whole of the summer. ‘I wonder if Hermione is there and I hope that Ginny has truly gotten over her crush or else I’ll be hard pressed to keep the peace on that matter. Something strange has been going on for a while now. First he’s my friend and then he turns on me and then he’s my friend again. Odd!’

“What do you think?” He asked Winky and Dobby for their opinion on the letter. “Should I go?”

He had asked their opinions several times during the summer after they had both chosen to be fully bonded to him. He valued them and they knew it because they could feel it along their magical bond links. In so knowing this, they provided him with usually the best advice they could. Because of that he knew that he couldn't ask for a more loyal set of friends, even if the Wizarding World could only see these amazing creatures as ‘the help’.

“He being your Wheasy,” Dobby said.

“You go,” Winky told him. “You go doos yous shopping first and then goes to Wheasy’s.”

Dobby nodded because that was a good idea. “Keepies one or twos stuff for school to buy, but Master Harry be getting most before going with the Wheasy’s’ Mum. Not makin’ ‘em jealous.”

“That sounds like a good plan,” Harry said. “I suppose I could spend a day in Diagon Alley or Muggle London before meeting up with them. Do either of you know if there is another Inn that I could stay at, instead of the Leaky Cauldron? It’s too public and has too much people traffic going through it.”

“Pink Elephant on Trampass Way,” Winky said immediately.

Dobby agreed and then he said, “That or Hanging Donkey down a ways from Pink Elephant.”

Harry blinked at the names of the Inns. He shook his head and said, “I guess it would be a good idea to look at both before deciding. Are there any others?”

“Winky be going with Master Harry and helping with Master Harry’s shopping,” she said decisively. “Winky be taking care of Master Harry, so Winky be going with yous. Once you with the Wheasys Winky be packing and taking everythings to school and puttings them in yous new room.”

“Thank you Winky,” Harry said. “I’ll pack an overnight bag and something for the school shopping. Dobby you’re coming to the school too, right?”
“Yes Master Harry,” the excited house-elf said. “Dobby be closing up the house first, whiles you and Winky be shopping for school.”

“Why don’t you close up Galileo’s Spindle too,” Harry said. “Let the owls have the freedom to come and go as they please, but if any wish to seek me out in order to start being Magical Post Owls again, have them come to the school and I can negotiate terms with them. Hedwig will be there and she’ll have to agree their addition to the household.”

“As Master Harry wishes,” Dobby said with a bounce in his feet. Work was work and the closing up of buildings to prevent rot or moths did take wonderful working time.

Dobby had to make sure that the fresh foods wouldn’t spoil, so he went to Potions Master Snape to ask if he needed anything before giving the food to a couple of out-of-work house-elves that he knew. They weren’t disgraced like Winky and he had been. Their Masters had passed away naturally, but had left no information as to the care that the house-elves were to receive upon their deaths.

He was nervous because he wanted to approach his Master or Master’s Wizard Counsellor about them. The weather was going to change quickly now that the Magical School was starting up again and these neglected house-elves needed homes to be working in. He was planning to bring them up to his beloved Master Harry soon and to see if he’d would be willing to approach the Potions Master on their behalf. Of the three neglected elves, two had worked in the employment gaining speciality training in the gathering of potions ingredients while the other was the best help a Potions Master could want because it had been trained to assist in the tedious preparation of nasty ingredients and it absolutely loved doing it too.

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Winky showed Harry the ‘Pink Elephant Inn’ and the ‘Hanging Donkey Lodge’, both of which were very different and slightly more upscale than the Leaky Cauldron. In the end he stayed the night at the Pink Elephant Inn because he confided to his female house-elf that it looked cleaner and that it was the one that she had suggested in the first place.

Winky blushed a bit and let out a twittering giggle with the flutter of her ears. However as soon as they were settled in a room far from the other customers and in a more exclusive section of the Inn, she pushed him out the door reminding him to buy more underwear and thick socks for school. This caused him to blush, but he nodded his head and then he made his way to Gringotts to meet with his workers and take out some money for the necessary purchases.

Harry shopped for a new wardrobe of basics, like new jeans, shirts, everyday robes and also robes indicating his station as a Lord of several prominent Wizarding Families. He got most of his school supplies leaving only the little things like a few potions ingredients he was running low on, quills, parchment and notebooks for school, etc...

He found and bought a portable lectern or lidded desk for his Lordship stuff like letterhead and magically watermarked parchment paper. The watermark being the same as the full Crest on his ring and could be altered per family so that the Black coat of arms would be the watermark or it could remain as Harry’s full crest that had been created upon his accepting the responsibilities of his Family’s wishes.

He had a larger seal created to match the full coat of arms and Family Motto on his ring. His ring could be used as a seal, but when he rolled up letter or sealed them he wanted something that would show the full coat of arms clearly. These were placed in the lectern with different coloured wax sticks, which were used for sealing various types of correspondence in the Wizarding World.
The lectern had retractable legs and a securable cover that was keyed specifically to Harry’s magic and a combination of keys and trick locks. There were several slots for paper and drawers that could contain pots of ink. It had a hidden latch underneath that hid a small stool which also had retractable legs for ease of travel. This was again created for those Wizards that liked to travel and have everything they needed in order to be able to maintain their proper correspondences.

It was like having a portable desk and Harry liked that because there never seemed to be enough tables in the Gryffindor Common room for study nor in the library when it was time to study for exams. Strangely no additional ‘empty’ classrooms were made available to students during this time, as it seemed to be the ‘tradition’ to force the students to ‘make do’ with what was available.

Harry had stepped through to Muggle London on the day before he had to meet the Weasleys and found an electronics store that catered to Muggles and Wizarding folk alike. It seemed that the store had a Muggle front, but in walking through the store, parts were accessible only if you had magic. This sometimes resulted in ‘lost’ children, but this was only the case when the lost child turned out to be a Muggle-born.

He managed to obtain a computer net-book completely set up to work in a magical environment. He was also able to purchase a small device that held a lot of music that could be downloaded into it provided he had the appropriate accounts and paid them on time.

The sales clerk took the time to walk him through several very useful programs and showed him how they worked. He was shown websites that catered only to Witches and Wizards. They were not Muggle based sites.

Harry now had access to online libraries from the Americas, Africa, basically any place that had a Human Wizarding Society. The net-book was loaded with a few translation programs and programs that could hold books that were ‘borrowed’ from those libraries or even hold books that were web based only and could contain them indefinitely should Harry choose to buy them.

That little computer was about to become Harry’s best friend from now on because one of the things that he did was set up several different email accounts, locking his screen names and passwords inside his impervious lectern. The various accounts were set up to receive news from around the world and to receive different subscriptions to publications that might contain some ideas on how to defeat a Dark Lord, plus anything else that could be remotely interesting to him. It was better than getting the Prophet or any kind of magical paper Wizarding subscriptions.

Harry was also fully aware that he’d have to go over his choice of career for his future, but without knowing his own personal interests, he couldn’t make that decision just yet. Besides there were a few things he’d need to discuss with his Head of House in order to make some drastic course corrections. It seemed that he had been given a list of courses available in order choose from based on what the Headmaster decided he should be trained in rather than a full listing of all courses available for his sixth year.

He had a meeting set up with his Head of House to take place after the evening meal and his Potions Professor would be there in the capacity of Counsellor. The man had already agreed to be there for the meeting barring any unforeseen incident like a call from the Dark Lord.

August thirty-first, Harry was sitting in a booth near the floo waiting for the Weasleys to show up. He had a privacy screen up that prevented people from bothering him as he was using his new toy while waiting. The floo had been activating on and off for most of the morning, but there was no indication that the Weasley Family had even come through yet. He had asked Tom, the barkeep, that
before sitting down in the corner booth near the floo.

There was a burst of soot and a cough nearby.

“Bloody hell,” Ron grumbled shaking his general over robe. He looked around and heaved a sigh that he didn’t see Harry. Another cough and a sneeze announced Hermione’s arrival. “I don’t see the prat,” he told her.

“Quiet you idiot,” Hermione hissed. “You know he could be anywhere around here and hidden.”

“What ever,” Ron grumbled. “It wasn’t my idea to invite him.”

“No it was your mother’s,” she replied. “She’s right to do so. The Order hasn’t been able to track him all summer so they don’t even know if he’s alive. But since we sent the letter and it obviously was received because we got a reply, we know he’s fine.”

“You hope,” he said. “You what the prophecy says. It’s him or You-Know-Who. I’d rather they both do themselves in and that way we’re rid of both of them.”

“Shush Ron,” Hermione hissed. “Not everyone is in the ‘know’. How about we go to the Eeylops to pick up some treats for Pig? Maybe Harry’ll be there getting some Owl Nuts for Hedwig, you how she likes those things.”

“Fine,” the tall red headed youth, sighed and followed her out of the Leaky Cauldron.

‘I hope that the prat won’t be there, but that’s not going to happen.’ Ron thought to himself. ‘I never believed him when he said that he liked our home and now the Order is worried about him because they couldn’t remember where he was supposed to be living. I bet he did something to wipe their memories.’

Harry sat there stunned at what he had heard. He let the privacy screen fade away as he put away his muggle net-book. He quickly stepped out into Muggle London to catch a breath. He walked into a convenience store nearby and picked up a few magazines and word puzzle books, plus mazes and a thick Sudoku book. He wasn't really looking when he made his selection. He just picked up the ones that had interesting covers. This was to give him some time to calm down from what he had just heard.

‘There’s something wrong with Ron,’ he thought. ‘It is definitely worse now, but are these his true feelings or is something causing it?’ He sighed and then vowed to be careful during the school year. ‘I’m just going to have to suck it up for now, as I’m committed to stay overnight at the Burrow.’

He tucked his purchases into his backpack and then returned through the doors of the Leaky Cauldron to make it look like he had just arrived, instead of being there the whole time.

Another interesting item that he had picked up at the same time that he acquired his new lectern was a magical enhanced backpack. The pack was keyed to him and his magics too. It has four pouches on the outside and several inner pockets. It had a large main pocket that could hold something the size his cousin Dudley had been when the boy was seven and therefore it was large enough for his reduced lectern. The charms on the pack were similar in that it could become smaller or larger at will and it including a standard featherweight spell that lightened the load considerably. It was in this that he carried his overnight items too.

The floo activated as he walked back into the Leaky Cauldron, only this time it was Mrs. Weasley and Ginny.
“Hello Mrs. Weasley,” he said getting the woman’s attention and walking up to her. “Ginny,” he nodded to the girl who was now getting moony-eyed in his presence yet again. It made him want to roll his eyes and it did cause him sigh silently.

“Harry,” Mrs. Weasley exclaimed loud enough for part of the patrons in the bar to notice him there. She was giving him a slight shake before she clutched him in a solid hug. “Where have you been child? We’ve been worried about you and just where did Ron and Hermione get to? They should have arrived before we did.”

“I’m fine Mrs. Weasley,” he said, stepping away from her as she let him go.

“How are you doing Harry?” Ginny asked hoping that he would notice the changes in her. She had filled out more this summer and felt that her ‘new’ endowments would render her more attractive to the boy of her dreams.

“I’m doing all right,” he said with barely a glance in her direction. “I don’t know about Ron or Hermione because I just walked in here from Muggle London.”

“They could have gone to Eeylops,” Ginny suggested. “Why don’t we go meet them,” she said putting her arm through his hoping that he’d hold her hand or let her leave it there.

Harry pulled away and said, “I don’t need anything from there.” He looked to Mrs. Weasley, who seemed to be frowning at his actions against her daughter. He looked at her questioningly and said, “Why don’t we head out and see if we can meet them coming out of the store?”

“Good idea,” the matriarch of the Weasley herd said. “Well come on dears we don’t have all day.” She quickly hustled them out of the doors of the Leaky Cauldron, saying, “We need to make a stop at Gringotts, Arthur has been too busy lately to stop by on his way home from work.”

“I don’t need to go in there today,” Harry said. “How about I meet all of you at Flourish & Blotts? I have a couple of books left to buy and maybe a few potions ingredients and tools from Potions Plus to get, then I will be fully kitted out for school.”

“What do you mean you have most everything?” Ginny asked. “Headmaster Dumbledore said that the owl with your school list returned to the school without successfully delivering it.”

“It did?” He asked and then he shrugged, explaining. “I got my list from Professor McGonagall when I asked for it. It came to me directly from her with Hedwig. I was looking up the allowed independent housing within the school for sixth and seventh year students. I requested it and that’s when she sent me my school list. I was working my way on picking up most of it slowly so I wouldn’t be rushed today. I’m mostly going to be browsing in the stores and buying things that look like fun.”

There was nothing that Mrs. Weasley could say about that and it was clear to Ginny that Harry wouldn’t be around most of their time here in the Alley. He wouldn’t have to follow them around, if he didn’t have to buy most of his school supplies.

’Spoiling my plans for showing him off as my boyfriend,’ she thought. ’We’ll just see about that.’

The trio met Ron and Hermione coming out of Eeylops and their emotions at finding Harry were clear on their faces. They were hoping that Harry wouldn’t show up, but since he had been invited and the plans had been made they had no choice, but to accept that he would be around during their last day of summer.

‘It’s only for one day,’ the two of them thought at the same time.
‘I wonder if he did his homework,’ Hermione thought. ‘I’m going to have to make some corrections to his essays just to be sure that I remain ‘Top of Class’. I can’t believe he hasn’t figured that my corrections are actually in-corrections.’

‘I bet Hermione’s wondering if Harry did his homework,’ Ron thought. ‘I’m going to have to pick up a couple of Spell-Check quills from my brothers’ shop… I wonder if Harry would buy them for me. He’s got enough money for it. Doubt it! He’s stingy!’

Their thoughts did not bleed through to their facial expressions that much. It was a good thing too because Harry might just have changed his mind about staying overnight at the Weasley's.

The group made their way up and down Diagon Alley when Harry spotted Malfoy Junior looking shifty and suddenly turn to go down Knockturn Alley. He wondered if he should follow him or stick with the group. It was going to take some time because the Weasley's were hunting down second hand robes for Ron and Ginny again.

'I might as well go and see what that little Ferret is up to,' Harry thought.

He let Mrs. Weasley know that he was going to the store next door and said that he meet them at Flourean's for a spot of cold ice cream when they were done. It was the last place that they were going to, the Weasley's Wizarding Wheezes and she knew that she'd need her strength to keep an eye out on all of her children there.

Even though the shop belonged to Fred and George she still felt that they were only ‘working’ there instead of being the actual owners. She still held onto the feint hope that they would eventually finish their education at Hogwarts and get their N.E.W.T.s.

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Harry followed the blonde Slytherin down the Dark Alley only this time he knew what to expect there. He walked with purpose as though he owned that Alley, which in fact he did. He owned more than half the businesses and land in that Alley because of his Grindelwald inheritance.

That had been a really interesting fact to find out. The shop owners had been notified that their leases were currently in the hands of the new Lord Grindelwald and that he would visit them from time to time to review their selling practices and the items they sold on and off the books.

The Lord, one Harry Potter, had been down there a few times, but this was usually in the company of his Wizard Counsellor. The shop owners were quick to recognise him and they were quick to never hide their true business practices from him because he always knew when they were holding something back. This was part of that new ‘seeing the truth’ magic that he had incorporated during his magical maturation.

Anyway because this new Lord was curious about what the Young Lord Malfoy was doing in such a Dark and suspicious Alley, he followed him to one of Harry's favourite Dark Shops, Borgin & Burkes. It had all manner of oogie things that gave him a chill up his spine, but because he owned the shop the proprietor always gave him first crack at purchasing stuff that were kind of… sort of… non-classed by the UK Ministry of Magic. There wasn't much in there that was completely harmful or that could be classed as completely Light magic either, but that's why the store was opened in the first place.

Harry had had a long debate with his Counsellor about the different types of shops and eventually the new Lord agreed that a balance must be maintained in the Wizarding World. So he allowed many of the shops to remain among his list of properties, although he did dissolve the ones that he found
intolerable to his moral consciousness.

He foreclosed on brothel that specialized in children prostitutes, a bar that dealt lethal drugs openly in the Dark Alley and a few other small businesses that were sliding too far behind in their rent and were resorting to awful methods to be able to meet their monthly payments. Those shops were boarded up for the time being and proposals were making their way across Griphook’s desk to lease the buildings for various businesses.

The Goblin had been surprised when Harry had told him not to limit the creatures that wished to open up a shop. If they had the funds and their idea was sound they should be considered for a two-year business trial and supplemental loan. Lord Grindelwald would be the majority stock holder until the business took off and then he was reasonably willing to maintain a fraction of the shares to the tune of thirty-five to forty-five percent depending on the business and the business managers.

Right now though, the Gryffindor watched Draco Malfoy enter Borgin & Burkes and then he shrugged and openly followed him. "Whatcher Malfoy," he said fully startling the other youth. This caused him to laugh and say, "Not aware of your surroundings, that's dangerous business especially in this Alley."

Draco couldn't believe that he had been easily startled because he hadn't really been paying attention to his surroundings. "Potter," the blond Slytherin hissed. "What do you think you're doing here?"

"Checking up on an investment," Harry told him semi-truthfully. "And you?"

"None of your sodding business," Draco stated with venom in his voice. "Now will you bloody well leave so that I can finish my business here?"

"Nope," Harry said with a cheeky near un-kind grin. "You're up to something and I'm here to see to it that you fail."

"You can't," the blond said with his face falling and blanching at the prospect of not succeeding in his quest for the Dark Lord. He was an idiot, but a magical Oath made to protect his mother was the only thing that he knew he could do to keep her out of this war. At least he was Dark Mark free for now, but the Oath was binding in its own awful way. "Potter, please you can't ruin this for me."

Harry’s face sobered quickly and he looked at the youth closely and carefully. There was something in that young man’s voice that stung of desperation. That he said the word 'please' in such a tone raised the Gryffindor’s ‘helping people flag’ up a bit. One eyebrow rose to let the Slytherin know that he was aware that something was up, but he decided that no action would be taken today.

"Ah, Mr. Potter," a voice said coming from the back of the store. It was oily and disgusting, but there was nothing he could do about it. "What can we at Borgin & Burkes do for you on this day?"

Harry hated going into a shop and not buying something, but everything in this store was dangerous in varying ways. He looked to the side of the counter, not quite paying attention to the Slytherin and that’s when he remembered that strange cabinet that he had hidden in, when he first accidentally Flooed to this shop before his second year of school.

"That cabinet," he said pointing to the black cabinet with the pearl inlay motif. "How much is that?"

"That," the man said in a surprised tone while quickly glancing at the blond boy who was paying attention to the whole conversation. "That is 1000 galleons and non-negotiable even for you Lord Potter, it’s a genuine ‘Vanishing Cabinet’ after all it’s complete and has valid magical authentication papers.”
Harry raised his eyebrow at that line because everyone in this alley had, for some odd reason, only ever called him Lord Grindelwald. It was like they wanted that Dark reminder of just who was in their store because of his ownership. The name Black was too common in this area of the world, but Grindelwald was something else altogether. Hence, the Boy-Who-Lived’s current surprise at being addressed as plain Lord Potter right now.

He shrugged and then pulled out a bank draft and wrote out the amount to the name of ‘Cash’, as he didn’t want the trace of this purchase to be registered until he had a chance to properly record it by way of the shop’s business receipt. It was an obscure method of recording purchases, but the Wizarding World Gringotts’ bank drafts could only ever be made out to ‘Cash’.

Business receipts contained a company’s letterhead or logo and signatures of the owners when money changed hands. This method kept many businesses as honest as possible, although ‘other names’ or ‘subsidiary company names’ were sometimes given when a business was taken over. The new owner’s of that business could use any of the old names instead of its current, ‘proper’ name. It was much like the amalgamation of Wizarding Families and their multiple choices of family crests.

Harry waited patiently for Mr. Borgin to get the receipt set up properly to include all of the company’s names. This was part of his Counsellor’s advice when they came to this alley to review some of the businesses that he was legally linked to. As soon as the receipt was ready everything was transferred accordingly and then he was able to take his purchase with him.

Shrinking charms were dead useful, but the fact that Harry was the one doing the spell told Draco Malfoy everything that he needed to know. He watched with detached curiosity now, as the Gryffindor opened his backpack and tucked away the small cabinet that had been labelled as a ‘Genuine Vanishing Cabinet’.

Harry looked back at the Slytherin and then slipped a concealed note in the other boy’s pocket as he brushed past him on his way out of the store. The emotions that he had seen had made his earlier summer decision to help the boy out however he could, easier. The letter was simple and special as it would destroy itself once it was read. Whether his assistance was accepted or not would be another matter to be dealt with or not based on the blonde’s decision.

Draco turned back to the proprietor and observed the man’s mannerisms more closely. His was oily and rude, but there was something about the fact that Harry Potter had been in this store without caring what kind of store it was.

“Do you have what I ordered,” the Slytherin asked the man.

“Yes, sir, Young Lord Malfoy,” Mr. Borgin said. “It’s in the back. I’ll just go get it now.” He pulled his wand and executed a short wand wiggle with no words in order to turn the sign at the door of his shop from ‘Open’ to ‘Closed’. This was about the only soundless spell he could do, but he still needed his wand for it.

Draco nodded his head and waited while the man went to his hidden back room. ‘I wonder what Golden Boy is up to? ’ He thought, but his thoughts were interrupted when he felt the note in his pocket next to the bank draft he was prepared to use. ‘What in Morgana’s dark Hell?’

He huffed when he realized he’d have to wait until he was completely alone to read it, but then again there was something about the sneaky way that the Gryffindor had delivered it that made him smile slightly and feel a little bit of hope that there might be help for him.

‘Because there’s no way that this can be anything other than an offer for help,’ Draco surmised. ‘A prank set up on the off chance of seeing me here is stupid and unlikely. Besides, I can feel a Family
seal pressed in magical wax on the note which means that it was pre-prepared?'

His attention was drawn back to Mr. Borgin coming in from the back holding his special order package…

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Harry quickly met up with the rest of the Weasleys at the ice cream shop. In fact his order had just arrived when the others finally showed up. He didn’t miss the disappointment on Hermione and Ron’s faces regarding the fact that he had already served himself.

It had taken them longer than normal looking for robes and there was nothing that they could do about the fact that he ordered his treat before them. He’d had the time to go visit Borgin & Burkes, the store he told Mrs. Weasley that he was going to visit and had actually been sitting for a full five boring minutes before making his decision to order something to eat.

A short while later they were all on their way back to the Burrow, after having visited the Weasley’s Wizarding Wheezes. Harry had purchased the Wizarding equivalent of ‘Fake Ice Cube Bugs’. The boys had taken the idea and created real chill-your-drink ice cubes that never melted and were complete with wriggling colourful bugs trapped inside the ice. They were only good for about three to five uses once the package was open before the ice fully melted and revealed that the bugs were a type of sweet candy to be eaten.

He also came out of there with several Spell-Check Quills, a few other pranks that were ‘converted’ to a Wizarding equivalent and three very tiny Pygmy Puffs. The twins didn’t know how that had happened, but the three Puffs could never be separated either, so they had to be sold together.

Harry had never had a pet, but they reminded him of small gerbils with long tails, so he also bought a cage for them and some toys. He planned to build them their own gerbil like maze and was hoping that they would be fine with it. They were extremely cute too, so he blamed the female memories in his mind for those thoughts and the need to buy the fuzzy chirpy little things.

When they had finally returned to the Burrow and had been there for a while, he actually had to raise his voice in order to get some peace from Hermione’s nagging. “That is enough Hermione,” he said loudly. “I do not need you to look over my homework. I will pass or fail without your considered help and that is the end of this discussion.”

“Harry,” she hissed. “You’ve always asked for my opinion and assistance before now. What’s changed? Where were you this summer that has changed you so much?” She was fishing information regarding his whereabouts, but she wasn’t doing any better than Mrs. Weasley or Ron.

“I was at home,” Harry said. “As for your opinion and assistance regarding my schoolwork, I think it’s better if I start standing on my own two feet. I should have been taking responsibility for my own scores in school rather than relying on you to help me out with my studies. I’m truly sorry that you now feel like you have a responsibility to make sure that I’ve done my work, but I feel that I might have gotten more out of my O.W.L.s if that had not been the case.”

“It was all a matter of studying,” Hermione said.

“Yes, but it would have been better if I had used my own notes,” Harry said. “I’ve come to a decision that because we only have two more years of school left, I will be working on my own in order to determine the career I wish to take.”

“What do you mean by that mate?” Ron said with a chocolate frog leg sticking out of his mouth.
“Aren’t you going to be an Auror like your father was? Like we planned?”

“I don’t know about that,” Harry said with a sigh. “I really haven’t had that good a look at what’s available in the Wizarding World career wise. I really don’t want to follow my father’s footsteps just because he was my father. I want to be able to make an informed decision about potential careers before ever stepping into one that I’m not even sure that I want.”

“Why, Harry?” Ron asked, all of his plans going down the drain about following the Boy-Who-Lived into the Auror field and gaining fame and glory that goes along with it. If he had been truly honest with himself, he’d know that he wouldn’t have made it on his own and that’s why he was hoping to apply with Harry.

Harry looked at Ron and asked, “Why did you choose to be Auror rather than something else? You must know loads more about the different career options that are out there.”

“Yeah, well of course I know.” Ron said, even though he was lying and everyone in the room could tell even without a magically enhanced sight. “It was the best idea at the time.”

“Because of Umbridge,” Harry nodded, even though he was still trying to get used to the number of lies he’d been receiving all day. Almost every little comment flashed as a lie to him and he was slowly getting a headache because of it. He pinched the bridge of his nose and said, “I can’t keep that decision, especially after I read all about the other courses available at the school.”

“What other courses,” Hermione asked. “There are no other courses listed.”

“I’m talking about the ones that don’t have a Ministry N.E.W.T. attached to them,” Harry said. “I’ve set up a meeting with Professor McGonagall about it. We’ll see what type of work I’m suited for, instead of just being a ‘Defender’ for the Wizarding World.”

“That’s not what an Auror is all about Harry,” Hermione interjected.

“Yeah, I know.” Harry agreed. “However that’s how everyone looks at me sometimes and I don’t want that to continue. So I’m going to explore my options before it’s too late to do anything about it.”

“Whatever,” Ron said. “Mum when is supper going to be ready?”

“It will be ready soon,” she said puttering over the cooking tools in her kitchen. “Ginny please set the table, the rest of you wash up for the evening meal.”

They had a lively discussion of things that were happening in the Wizarding World and just as the desert was about to served Ginny shrieked in pain. She stood up quickly from the table, but everyone could see that the fingers of her left hand were trapped in some kind of multiple, finger trap where three of her fingers were being pinched and were stuck together.

“Get this thing off of me,” she turned accusingly to Harry who was stuck sitting next to her because of the girl’s manipulation with the tablware.

“Not until you apologize to me,” Harry said with a glare in his eyes. “You apologize to me and you tell your parents just what you were about to do.”

“I wasn’t doing anything,” she said her face red and furious.

“No,” Harry drawled. “Then why were you trying to feel me up? Did you think that if you took things far enough I’d do something about it, like become involved with you? I...don’t...think...so!”
“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Ginny said waving her hand in front of his face with the trap attached. “Now remove this thing.”

“Nope,” Harry said and then explained. “It’s a truth trap. It will stay there until you tell everyone here the truth. You lie and it will zap you with a small static shock in really uncomfortable places, like your backside.”

“Really Harry,” Mrs. Weasley said. “You shouldn’t have used any of the twins’ toys at the dinner table.”

“I didn’t get this from the twins,” Harry told her. “I invented it because I figured with my political and social standing in the Wizarding World changing as it did this summer I’d have to be very careful of unwanted attention.” He glanced meaningfully at the offending had and said, “Especially of that kind.”


“I’m also Lord Potter and Lord Black,” Harry said. “I have first tier seats under those names at the Wizengamot and I can vote on Magical Legislation or appoint someone to sit in those seats on my be-half. As for my social standing, I’m the Boy-Who-Lived and my name has been in the papers for like almost ever, if that isn’t social standing then I don’t know what is.”

“Harry’s quite right about that,” Mr. Weasley said. “Ginny, if you want that thing off your hand, apologize and tell the truth. I have a feeling that it was modified based on something your father had created back in school, wasn’t it Harry?”

“Actually it was my mother who created it,” Harry said taking some desert from the tray that was now on the table. “She was concerned about a particular rat that was forever snooping outside the girl’s loo.” He shuddered at the thought of Pettigrew trying to peep at his mum and other girls at Hogwarts.

Hermione frowned when she heard this and said, “But the spells...”

“They only protect so much,” Mrs. Weasley said. “I remember at the time some pictures were making their way around the boys’ dorms, much to the scandal of Hogwarts. The culprit had been caught and made to compensate the three girls involved for ruining their reputation. They left the school and the family had to move to another country because of it. The boy that was the cause of it was expelled and sent to Azkaban for three years on a sexual offence.”

“I don’t believe that,” Hermione said.

“You should young lady,” Mr. Weasley said. “A Witch must always take care of her virtue especially before and after her magical maturation or else she’ll lose her powers to those that would siphon off her magics for their own gains.”

Hermione quickly looked at Harry’s face to see if the term was a surprise to him and she was surprised to note that it didn’t affect him one way or the other. He was just eating his desert without making any further comments.

“Is there any references on the subject,” she asked. “I’m curious to know about it.”

“All references would be given to you this year,” Mrs. Weasley said. “Although I believe that the Professors were supposed to mention this to you last year just in case some of you may have experienced a magical influx.”
“Last year was a mess,” Hermione said. “I don’t believe they were ready for what happened when Professor Umbridge was there.”

“Well as you all know, when a Witch or Wizard reach the physical age of sixteen or seventeen, there is a period of magical growth, termed Magical Maturity,” Mr. Weasley began. “It is during this time that Witches and Wizards are more vulnerable.”

“It certainly doesn’t help that hormones make things even more difficult for a young witch or wizard either,” Mrs. Weasley said.

“Mum,” Ginny blushed, mortified that her mother was about to mention something private.

“Hormones are a natural part of life Ginny,” Harry told her blandly and without emotion. He wasn’t embarrassed to mention it like the other teenagers at the table. “What’s this about hormones affecting Magical Maturity? What is Magical Maturity?” He asked fully pretending befuddlement at the term.

“Magical Maturity is a term used in the Wizarding World,” Mr. Weasley said. “It’s usually just an influx of magic into a person’s body and that allows the Witch or Wizard to direct their magics internally. Most focus on improving some of the natural gifts that they receive and others like to use it to bring about physical changes, like height or hair colour. Sometimes they use it to influence their education by increasing their knowledge in areas that they are generally failing in.”

“Above all that,” Mrs. Weasley said. “It is a personal choice about how the new magic is incorporated into your body through your magical core. All of you should have no worries about this and I believe that it is a mandatory session for those in your year.”

“That’s pretty interesting,” Harry said. “What happens if someone gets their Magical Maturity before taking that course, do they lose the magic or the chance to learn about it?”

Ron and Hermione were keeping their mouths shut because as far as they knew Dumbledore hadn’t planned on letting Harry attend that particular session, although Ron was confused about why Harry shouldn’t attend such a course. It just wasn’t strategically sound to let someone with that much magic, not learn about re-directing it during that invaluable growing process.

“It has rarely happened that a student will go through that process before taking that course,” Mrs. Weasley said. “Usually it only affects pure Wizards. I’ve never heard of a Muggle-born going through it.”

“Well then why would any Muggle-born have to take that course,” Hermione asked.

“Just because I’ve never heard of it, doesn’t mean that it doesn’t happen,” Mrs. Weasley said. “Besides it’s impolite to talk about it if someone is supposed to go through the process or not, because not all Purebloods are strong enough to accept any influx of magic either.”

Ron was snickering thinking about Neville, when his mother glared at him, but it was his father that said, “It’s impolite to think about anyone who may not be strong enough to go through the process, those of us that do have a higher potential in our society. You will find that it’s not in your best interest to ever make fun of those that don’t experience an influx. You never know if you’ll be able to go through that process or not either, Ronald, just keep that in your mind.”

“Of course I’ll go through it,” Ron stated. “I’m a pureblood. Why wouldn’t I go through it?”

Harry just shrugged and was about to excuse himself from the table, when Ginny stopped him. “It doesn’t matter Ron,” she said and then she turned to Harry. “You take this off me right now.”
“I can’t,” Harry said. “The conditions are that you tell the truth. Tell them all what happened and you accept that I will never consider you for any kind of relationship.”

“Harry!” Hermione exclaimed. “That’s not how you talk to your betrothed.”

Harry glared at Hermione and then turned it to Ginny. “I’m not betrothed,” he stated. His anger was clear in his tone. “I have never once signed any contract for a betrothal nor am I likely to pick someone like Ginny who I’ve always only considered to be a little sister to me and nothing more.”

“Harry!” Ginny said with a gasp and tears in her eyes. “The contract was signed this summer.”

“It can’t have been,” Harry said. “I’ve gone over all my accounts and made sure that there were no outstanding contracts and that there weren’t any betrothal obligations before I took on the Mantle of Potter and Black.”

“It was supposed to have been signed just before your birthday,” Ginny said in a near fainting whisper. The redness in her face blanching as the truth of the matter was becoming clear. Her bragging letters to her friends were lies.

“Albus said that he couldn’t get it signed unless Harry was aware of it,” Mr. Weasley told his daughter. “Your mother was aware of that and should have told you about it. Molly?”

“I was hoping that Harry would have agreed to it once he had been found,” the woman said. “Albus said that he was going to speak with you about it, but he couldn’t find you. He then said that he’d talk to you about it at school, but if that is how you truly feel about Ginny we won’t push for this matter anymore.”

“Thank you Mr. and Mrs. Weasley,” Harry said. “I didn’t know anything about it and I certainly would not have signed away my choices like that.”

Ron was furious that Harry didn’t want to be a part of his family by marrying his sister. He was sincerely hoping that Harry wasn’t one of ‘those’ Wizards. He didn’t care about a person’s sexuality per se, but it gave him the willies to think that Harry might prefer one of his brothers or Merlin forbid... him.

“You’re not gay are you Harry,” Hermione asked in a casual tone, again fishing for information to use against him.

“Don’t know,” Harry stated just as direct as he could. “I’ve never really thought about it, but from learning about the Magical Maturity thing, I’m guessing that’s one of the reasons that Witches and Wizards marry young or have those betrothal contracts in first place, right?”

“That’s one of the reasons,” Mr. Weasley said. “Another is that the magic has time to seek out a matching resonance between two people. It’s rare that it never happens, but then it does help to regulate the magical population in some fashion.”

“Matching resonance, that’s like a soul mate, right,” Harry questioned.

“Not quite,” Mrs. Weasley said. “But that is close enough to it.” She paused to look at her daughter and said, “Ginevra, I suggest that if you want that thing to be removed you tell the truth and apologize to Harry right now.”

Ginny was truly embarrassed. She turned beet red, but eventually mumbled out, “Sorry! I was trying to feel you up while we were having supper in order to gain favour.”
The trap released her hand. She stood up again from the table and ran to her room. Everyone looked at her and shook their heads about it, although Ron wanted to laugh, but there wasn’t anything really funny about the poor girl’s situation. He was just being big brother about it and they laugh, poke and make all time.

“I suppose you should all go pack your things tonight so that you don’t have to rush in the morning,” Mrs. Weasley said. “Off you go now, I’m sure that you do have things to talk about.”

The Gryffindor Trio really didn’t have anything to talk about, but they were good with small talk. Hermione kept trying to find out where Harry had been living, Ron kept trying to get Harry to turn the talk towards Quidditch and they all ignored the sobs coming from Ginny’s room down the hall.

HPHPHP

TBC...
The train ride to school was largely uneventful. The trio wasn’t even bothered by Malfoy and his bunch this year, which was a relief to everyone that had taken up room in the same car that Harry had chosen to sit in. He was getting just a little put out about it, but then this gathering was expected behaviour from the usual Gryffindor lot.

He didn’t know how to get away from his other House mates, but as soon as he could and this was basically when all the Prefects left for their in-train meeting, he took his backpack with him and left the others there. He registered their reactions, but they weren’t students in his year and those that were, were currently in other cars. They also knew that by now Harry was going to revert back to his school mode of protecting his belongings with spells and hexes. It would have been foolish to do anything less with this bunch.

Harry walked up and down several of the train cars and soon found one that had only one other occupant. To his surprise it was Draco Malfoy sitting on his own. He was about to knock on the door, but there was something about the way the other boy was sitting that stopped him from interrupting the blonde’s brooding stare out the window of the train car.

He looked left and right and noticing that no one was really paying attention to him, he managed to slip into the compartment with the blonde Slytherin. He spelled the compartment to seem fully occupied without that being the actual fact. It was spell mix of illusion and confundus that worked very well when Harry had needed time to himself in the past.

He pulled out one of his puzzle books and began scratching away with a muggle mechanical pencil. He chose not to say anything in order to wait and see if the blonde Slytherin would even notice that he was there.

Draco was fully aware that someone had joined him in the train compartment, but he wasn’t prepared to face whoever it was. He sincerely hoped it wasn’t anyone from his House. Even being just the two of them in the car, they were not disturbed for the longest time by any other students, which made the Slytherin curious as to who was there and why they were not being disturbed. He looked up from his contemplation of the passing scenery only to be surprised to find that it was Harry Potter.

Harry had long since finished his puzzle and when he noticed that the Slytherin was still ignoring him, he had shrugged, pulled out his portable desk and began reviewing his online accounts for the newly posted articles that were slowly streaming in. He was very lucky in that the clerk that showed him how to use the machine also showed him how to recharge the device using magic and a few different types of spells, not taught at Hogwarts.

Draco listened to the soft pings coming from the machine, but couldn’t see it, so he stood up and sat next to the Boy-Who-Lived. He looked over the Gryffindor’s shoulder. Harry only spared him a slight glance, but didn’t say anything. The device was strange looking to the Slytherin’s mind. He recognized a typewriter-type keypad, but this was different. It had some kind of screen in place of paper and there was an article on the properties of the Greater Redwood trees and other flora found in forests that predominately had Redwoods.
“That’s not right, is it?” Draco asked when he read about the pulp from the mashed root of the Redwood trees mixed with Black Forest Fungus. “I’ve never heard of that combination.”

“Redwoods are primarily located on the West Coast of North America,” Harry read out loud. He then turned to Draco and said, “Why would they be wrong? This article was published in three or four of the known Potions Web Sites, including in the International Potions Plus - Monthly Magazine.”

Draco paused, frowned a bit because he was confused and then asked, “What are web sites?”

“Ah,” Harry said. He logged off his personal accounts quickly and then showed the Slytherin a few things that he had learned only a couple days ago about the World Wide Web. “See this device is called a net-book, but this one acts like a personal computer with independent access to the Internet rather than an extension of a personal home computer. I just got this a couple of days ago, so I’m really still learning about it.”

“I see,” the blonde replied. “How do you look something up?”

“See this is empty line up at the top of the page, it’s call the Address Bar,” he squiggled the cursor arrow to point at the location and continued his explanation. “In there I could type up what I’m looking for or ask a direct question. I can also call up specific search engines that will only look at sites that I’m interested and I have to use a specific search engine if I’m going to look up anything related to the Wizarding World.”

“How?”

Harry showed him how by telling him to ask his question about the Redwood Trees. He showed him the general, Muggle search engines first and then showed him the differences by using the Wizarding World’s search engine called ‘www.googlemagics.wiz’ (....). That particular search landed them on web sites that listed potions that took different parts of a Redwood Tree and how the ingredients basically interacted with others.

Draco was simply mystified by the answers and he wondered if there was a way that he could find out from his godfather, Severus Snape, if these answers were true. “Is there a way to get a copy of that information on paper,” he asked. “I’d like to research this information.”

Harry looked at him and nodded. “Sure give me a moment,” he said. “I’ve never used this yet, but the clerk in the store assured me that it would work just fine as long as I used the correct scroll paper for it. I bought case of the paper I needed for school work, just in case.”

He turned to his backpack and fished out a strange little thing, about the same size as his net-book, but thicker and taller. It had two lids which popped open. He linked it to the net-book with a cord of some kind that’s all the Slytherin could see. Then he pulled out a roll of scroll paper. He inserted a thin metal rod in the middle of the scroll, placed the whole scroll at the back of the device and closed that far lid. He fiddled with the scroll pulling it through a section of the other lid and snapped that front lid in place. It had reminded Harry of old paper calculators.

Harry hit a couple of keys on the keypad and then there was a soft whirring sound, followed by a dzip...dzip...dzip sound and the paper was being written on by some hidden ink bottle that Draco couldn’t see. “It’s testing the connection first,” he explained to the curious Slytherin. “See it’s only printing up nonsense right now, but the clerk told me that was because it would test the letter and character formation first. Once it finishes a test page, it won’t be repeated, unless there’s something wrong with either machine and parts in it need to get replaced. He did tell me that it would do this whenever I have to replace the ink in this printer too.”
The sheet did indeed have nonsense words on it and a funny little image in black and white. The Gryffindor handed it to the Slytherin once he cut it out of the machine with a tearing sound. The paper was solid and unchanged by the process with the exception of the writing on it. The tear was very clean, as though a paper knife had been used, like it looked when they were using parchment paper for schoolwork.

“What information, do you what me to print,” Harry asked.

“What,” Draco said looking at him confused.

“You said wanted a copy of the information from the web page,” Harry stated. “What do you want me to print up?”

Draco pointed to the screen and said, “That one and the one we read before it. I’d also like to see one with the potions ingredient interactions too, if it’s possible?”

“Sure,” Harry said, specifically highlighting the sections that Draco wanted. He only printed the selections because he didn’t want to print every little thing from the web pages. The clerk had advised him to print in this manner because he had mentioned that printing a full web page used up a lot of ink. The Gryffindor had bought two cases of ink for school work, even though the clerk thought that he might have over done it a bit.

The pages and information were printed up and handed to the Slytherin who looked at the whole thing with a dazed look on his face. “I don’t believe it,” he said. “It’s the same as it was written on that thing.”

“It’s called a screen or monitor,” Harry said. “I’m about to turn it off, did you want me to look up something else before I do?”

“No,” Draco said. “I’m going to see if the school’s library has this information and if they have a copy of the International Potions Plus - Monthly where you say this article can be found. I’m going to have to see my Head of House about this too.” He rolled up the information and placed it in his own backpack.

Harry nodded and logged off his little computer. He shut it down completely, but not before making a mental note that he would have to re-charge it before using it again.

Draco watched as the Gryffindor put the device in a secure cushion drawer of the portable desk and then noted that it was locked by weird looking keys and a couple of very strong locking spells. The legs of the little desk retracted and it was put away in the backpack at the feet of the Boy-Who-Lived.

“Can I send you questions by owl,” Malfoy asked, curious to know how long he could impose on the Gryffindor’s generosity.

Harry looked surprised, but he nodded and said, “Sure. I’ll look them up when I have the time or we can set up a time and a place to meet and then you can use it, if you like?”

“Why don’t you tell me where you bought it instead,” Draco said. He was hoping that it would be available by Owl Order, but he was severely mistaken when he heard the reply.

“I bought in Muggle London,” Harry told him and watched as the Slytherin frowned. “You have to go there physically to make the purchase because they key it to you and your magic alone. It’s a measure of protection should it ever be lost or Merlin forbid stolen.”
Draco huffed and admitted, “I’ve never been to Muggle London. I’ve never even visited the Muggle World.”

“I’ll admit I haven’t seen much of Muggle World either,” Harry said truthfully. “This will help me to make plans for my holidays though and I’ll definitely see more of it then. I did go to Spain this summer and it was an interesting place to visit.”

“Live in your own protected little corner of the world Potter,” Draco said in a semi-sneering tone. “Didn’t bother to see what else the world had to offer?”

“And you have,” Harry asked in an equally patronizing tone. “I sincerely doubt that you saw anymore of the world than I did. I’ll give in on the fact that your parents would have shown you exactly what they wanted you to see of it, but no more than that.”

“How dare you,” Draco said standing up challengingly.

“What’s the matter,” Harry asked calming down when he noticed that the Slytherin was getting anxious and it obviously had nothing to do with who saw what of the world. “Truly, what is the matter? We were fine until...”

The Slytherin deflated a little and sank down in his seat, “We’re almost at Hogsmeade.”

“Oh,” Harry said. “Is that all?”

“Is that all,” Draco exclaimed. “Potter, are you insane? We can’t be seen together, it’s too dangerous and you’ve been here unconcerned all this time.”

“What makes you think that ‘they’, whoever ‘they’ are know that we’re in here,” Harry said. “I spelled the windows of this compartment to look like it was fully occupied by second and third year Hufflepuffs and Ravenclaws. When we leave all we have to do is temporarily charm our robes and features to blend in with the crowd of small ‘Claws and ‘Puffs. Once we’re far enough away from each other we can change them back to our own House colours.”

Draco blinked. He looked away and then back at the Gryffindor, who now had on a robe of Hufflepuff colours. He had temporarily glamoured himself to seem like an innocuous wide-eyed second year ‘Puffer. He blinked again and smiled a sincerely amused grin at the other boy’s shocked reaction.

“I knew it,” the blonde said grinning right back. “You really are a ‘Puffer in disguise.” He changed his robes to match the Ravenclaw House. He glamoured his features too, in order to hide his Family’s distinctive colouring.

“Only because you’d never believe that I could fit in with the Ravens,” Harry said chuckling. “I make the House colours fit me, not the other way around Malfoy.”

“Draco,” the blonde said. “Call me Draco when we’re alone.”

Harry looked at him. He nodded and then said, “Harry, just... just call me Harry... please?”

Draco nodded his head. He pulled out a book to read and noticed that the Gryffindor wasn’t even offended by that action. In fact he looked at the book with a wry, fond smile which turned to a small disappointed frown, but he pulled out his own book and began to read too. The Slytherin was aware of enough of the goings on with the Gryffindor to know that the disappointed look had nothing whatsoever to do with him.
An hour later when they arrived in Hogsmeade, they had no trouble fooling those around them. They quickly headed into their own House crowds, found empty coaches to climb into and change back into their own self, before heading towards their sixth year of school.

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Harry was met by a distressed Winky at the entrance of the school. He moved out of everyone’s way and quickly got the rundown of how she had not been able to set up his rooms because no one would tell her which ones were going to belong to her kind Master for the year. He comforted her and then told her to wait until after the Sorting and evening meal was done. He had a private appointment with his Head of House and he was going to sort that out with her then.

“Go down to the kitchens and wait there,” Harry suggested. “Or else find Hedwig and see if any of the owls from Galileo’s Spindle are with her and see to their needs for me, will you? I trust their care to you.”

Winky glowed with the praise and decided that she’d go to the kitchens for a bit before going to the Owlery. “I’s be going to kitchens first,” she said. “Winky visit Hedwig when youse be eatin.”

“Thank you Winky,” Harry said hugging the house-elf briefly, before he stepped into the Great Hall with the last of the students and before the Sorting was due to start. He wasn’t able to sit with his supposed best friends, but that didn’t matter to him. He was glad with the delay that allowed him to sit more closely to the seventh years rather than the sixth years.

The Sorting Hat still went on and on about House Unity. It told of the qualities cherished by the Houses and then the little ones were soon integrated into Hogwarts’ bizarre House and Point System.

The students around Harry were all having a strong discussion about Quidditch, School and general News that occurred in the papers that summer. Katie Bell asked, “Harry will you be playing Quidditch this year?”

“I was banned last year,” Harry said. “I don’t know. I have a feeling that I’ll be too busy studying this year.”

“Will you be starting a Defence Association again,” Luna asked, looking over from her House table. “I learned a lot during those.”

“That will depend,” Harry said. “I’d like to open it up to all Houses, but it wasn’t an official club or anything to begin with. It was just a gathering in order to learn the missing practicals for Defence Against the Dark Arts.”

“I’d join again,” Katie said. “I think that there are several of us seventh years who’d love to have a refresher course of the previous years and who better then someone who knows what they’re doing.” Some of the other seventh years nodded their agreement.

“I’ll have to think about it,” Harry said. A note appeared near his empty desert plate. It contained a meeting time with his Head of House in her office. He looked up at Professor McGonagall and nodded to indicate that he’d be there. He then scratched a note on it and spelled it to pop by the Potions Master of the school.

Professor Snape wasn’t surprised by its appearance. He noted the time and then he signalled for one of his House Prefects to take a message to the others about his delay. He’d be there to ‘Welcome’ the new Slytherin students, but he’d be slightly delayed and therefore he instructed the Prefects to sort the little ones into rooms before he arrived. He then sent a slight nod to the Gryffindor to indicate that
he’d be there.

Half an hour later Harry was standing outside his Head of House’s primary office. He was pacing and waiting for his Counsellor. The man was in the shadows wondering why the boy didn’t enter the woman’s den.

“Mr. Potter,” Severus said.

“Thank you for coming,” Harry said. He had been aware that the man was there, but it was up to the Potions Master to decide when he appeared. “Counsel me Professor Snape.”

“My counsel is yours, Lord Potter,” he replied formally.

“Let’s, shall we,” Harry knocked on the door.

“Come in,” Professor McGonagall said. “Harry…and Severus!” She turned a stern eye onto the Gryffindor and asked, “You haven’t done anything to lose points or gain a detention have you?”

“No Professor,” Harry said. “Professor Snape is here in order to provide me with the best counsel possible. I’m curious ma’am. Did you not receive my request for private quarters for the remainder of my school years here?”

“I did,” she said. “That’s why I needed to see you. “ She sighed and looked away, which to Harry was a clear indication that someone was ‘meddling’ again. “The Headmaster has stated that you’re not to be on your own and therefore you’re to remain in the tower dorms.”

“He can’t do that,” Harry said. “Arrangements like this are between the Head of House and the students in the House. That’s what the school charter says.”

“The boy is correct Minerva,” Severus said. “Why must Mr. Potter be exempted when the others are not?”

“The Headmaster stated that the rooms in the tower were not fit for anyone to reside in them,” she told them. “Albus feels that you need to have someone to support you this year so he’s arranged for you and Mr. Weasley to stay a one of the extra Prefect rooms.”

“No,” Harry said right away. “I refuse to room with Ron. Others of my House have taken too many of my belongings over the years and I refuse to room with anyone in there anymore.”

“Do you have proof,” Professor McGonagall asked.

“The spell problems that some of the Gryffindor students had for the last two years were in part from protection spells on my belongings,” Harry said. “My rights as a student of this school are going to be violated if I have to room with someone when I specifically made my request for private quarters. Your reply was clear and the money had been accepted for those rooms and now you’re telling me that I’m going to be paying for two people when I need privacy to do my business as an Active Member of the Wizengamot.”

Professor McGonagall frowned. “Mr. Potter the Headmaster was very clear…”

“Minerva,” Severus interrupted. “Albus has no say in these matters, unless there has been a drastic change in the school charter regarding the options permitted for the older students, he can’t dictate that any student to reside with another if money has already been paid. Has the money been exchanged, Mr. Potter?”
“Yes,” Harry said. “I even have a full Hogwarts receipt stating that I was going to be getting a suite of rooms. The rooms were listed as: one for sleeping, a separate sitting/entrance area, a room for my house-elves, a full bathroom and a second room that was authorized to be converted into a small kitchen with breakfast or snack area.” He pulled out the receipt with the details as proof. “Is this incorrect Professor McGonagall?”

She took the paper and looked at it. As soon as she touched it, she realized that she had been confunded to follow Albus’ skewed view what was best for Harry. “I’m terribly sorry Mr. Potter,” she said sincerely. She sighed and then said, “This is clearly the correct information. I have something different on file,” she pulled out the boy’s file and showed him. “Yours is the proper one because this one is missing the exchange of moneys and any mention of house-elves. It’s also a proper receipt. Could you please make me a copy and I will add it to your file, it will supersede this one. I will make the appropriate corrections right away and make sure that Mr. Weasley is returned to the regular sixth year dorms, although he is a Prefect and entitled to be in the Prefect suite of rooms. Don’t worry, I’ll make the proper corrections and you can have that suite.”

“Professor would it be all right to have a different set of rooms from the ones that Ron has possibly been shown to tonight because I know that he’s already up there,” Harry said glancing at the clock ticking on the wall behind the professor. “I’d rather not have an argument with him about having ‘taken over’ a set of rooms that he may have been told would be his for the rest of the year. I’d rather this whole thing look like a clerical error, which is technically what this situation is.”

“If the boy makes any loud noises about it,” Severus said with a look that clearly stated that, ‘of course that hot-headed idiot would. ‘ “You should inform him of the cost of such accommodations. Move him in with the other Prefects and see how that will work out for him.”

“You are quite correct, both of you,” Professor McGonagall said. “However there is still the issue that all of the supplemental rooms in the tower are not ready for occupancy anytime this year or next. Severus, do you happen to know of a place that will meet these particular requirements?”

“There are a couple near the Hufflepuff Tower, one by the Ravenclaw entrance and four in the dungeons with the Slytherins, although they are located further down and in different corridors,” he said. “I’m quite certain that there are alternative routes that Mr. Potter could take to get to his classes, should he choose to reside there.”

Harry walked to the window and looked outside at the stars lighting up the sky. “I think I’d like to be near the Hufflepuff tower,” he said. “It’s lower down than the other towers and it’s not in any immediate route commonly used by the Gryffindors or the Slytherins.” He turned to give both the Professors a mischievous smile. “Maybe I’ll get less detentions if I’m not anywhere near the students of those two Houses.”

Severus snorted and Minerva hid her smile behind her hand. It wouldn’t do for the boy to know that he had just zinged them with a reluctant truth that they had long since accepted about their respective Houses.

“I believe that this set of rooms will perfect for you Mr. Potter,” the Potions Master said. “Being near the Hufflepuffs might teach you something other than looking before you leap, as their Head of House practices the Art of Patience by being an Herbology expert.”

Harry gave the man a part nod, part bow in acknowledgement of being zinged back. He looked at the parchment with the rooms and then pointed at a set of rooms near the Hufflepuff area of the school. “What about these ones?” He looked to both the Professors and explained, “They look to be half in the dungeons and half with the Hufflepuff sections. I’d say they look to be the same distance to the offices of either Head of House, should I have need of immediate assistance.”
“I would think that you’d still turn to your Head of House, Harry,” Professor McGonagall said with pursed lips at the thought of one of her students seeking out another Head of House. “Should you have any problems?”

“Of course I would,” the young Gryffindor said with a proud huff. “I was thinking more of emergency accidental type situations, although at the moment an example escapes me.”

“Very well,” she said. “Now do you have your list of courses figured out?”

“I do,” he said and handed her a copy of the results of his summer spent reviewing the long list of classes available. “I realize that you might find it objectionable, that I’m requesting to study Defence Against the Dark Arts independently, but I feel that my time would be better served if I didn’t confine myself to just the course materials on the matter.”

“But Harry,” she said trying to find something that would keep him in the class with his year-mates.

“Professor,” Harry said looking at her directly. “Nearly every year I’ve had to study the subject independently and after receiving a double O on my O.W.L.s I feel that it wouldn’t be fair to the other students to be constantly held up as an example. I have a greater need not to be confined to dealing with only Dark Magical Creatures. I need to learn a bit more about strategic battles, using my resources or combat knowledge wisely and maybe I could learn this by scheduling time in the Room of Requirement?”

Professor McGonagall knew when a situation was lost and she knew that Harry was correct regarding the expectations of Professors when a particular student was gifted in a specific area of study. She had her favourites and she was quite certain that Professor Snape had some of his own too.

“Very well Harry,” she said. “You’ll receive your schedule in the morning. We’ll see if you can test out of the third and fourth year pre-requisites for Runes and Arithmancy before placing you in with the fifth years.”

“Thank you Professor,” Harry said.

“I’ll lead him to his new suite of rooms and help him to set up proper passwords and protections,” Severus told the Head of Gryffindor and held up his hand stating. “I’m heading in that direction anyway and it will take only a few moments to set it up.”

“Very well,” she said agreeing because she had plans to go greet her new Gryffindors.

She pulled out a large key, about the size of her hand and gave it to Professor Snape. It needed magical approval from two Heads of House before being tuned to the student’s magic. “This is the key to those rooms.” She turned to Harry whose eyes had widened and stared at the size of the key. It was like one of those ‘Key to the City’ types. “The Professors will require access to the rooms, but only to the main room. Your house-elves can announce us, if you’re in a private area of the suite.”

“You must keep a hold of that key until we reach the rooms,” Professor Snape advised, giving the key to Harry so that the magic of the school could link the young man to the suite of rooms that had just been assigned to him. “A door guardian will be chosen by Hogwarts and once it’s in place it will absorb the key. You’ll have to set up your personal passwords and instructions with it.”

“I understand Professor,” Harry said holding the large key clenched in his hand.

He felt the tingle of magic and knew that the key was linking itself to him and to the rooms. He was able to sense this and it did help that this was what he had to do for a number of the Black and Potter
properties listed with his accounts, even if he hasn’t been able to go and physically inspect some of them.

Professor Snape held the door open and Harry said to his Head of House, “See you tomorrow Professor McGonagall.”

The two walked silently down the halls of the school. Some of the students were lingering in a few of the places before curfew, even if it was the first night of school. Some noted that Harry was walking near Professor Snape and all sorts of wild tales came from it, but none were even near to the truth.

They stopped at the end of a short corridor, which was at a top branch in a T-section hallway and just off the main section of the Hufflepuff tower. “Going down this hallway will lead you to the dungeons and going back will lead you through what we passed and in that direction you’ll reach the main school corridors and classrooms. You should be mostly on your own in this area of the school, but we’ll make sure that this section is not visible or inviting to the other students.”

“Thank you Professor,” Harry said. “So we’ll set up a keep-away ward here or a little further down.”

“Further down, I should think,” Professor Snape said. “We’ll set up a false wall here for you.” He proceeded to cast various spells that Harry had never heard of before, but that didn’t matter. It only took several minutes for another wall to appear. “Come on,” his professor called out to him as he walked though the newly created false wall.

Harry stepped through, registering nothing, but a slight magical zing as the wall wasn’t really there. It was just a really complex illusion spell. They walked the short way to the door and soon two pillars rose from floor to ceiling. On each pillar was a series of rune symbols in various languages and a slot opened in one brick of the wall between the pillars to allow the key to be inserted.

“Wicked,” Harry said. The runes on the pillars twinkled with his comment, but as soon as the key was absorbed into it, the wall the gained a few stone guardians.

Small dragon shaped gargoyles formed at the tops and bottoms of the pillars, laying down in a lazy yawning fashion. Several etchings of ravens flew under the top gargoyles, followed by low flying silhouetted griffons. Above the bottom gargoyles were long stems of grass with badgers and snakes slithering through and creeping up the shape of a tree that was in the centre portion of the pillars. The trees on each pillar were huge and had nesting places for each of the animal carvings.

Harry smiled and said, “Thank you Hogwarts.” His professor was looking at the pillars in stunned fascination and he turned to look at his student with a question in his eyes. “I told someone today that I make my House colours fit me,” he shrugged and continued. “I thanked Hogwarts because it’s obvious that all of these are the representative of the Houses under her roof and the school motto is quite clear by the gargoyles it chose for the columns.”

“Draco dormiens nunquam titillandus,” Severus whispered. “I wonder which idiot actually tickled a sleeping dragon to figure out that it was a bad idea.”

“Must have been a Gryffindor,” Harry said with mischief in his tone.

“Obviously it must have been one,” Severus said haughtily with a smile.

“Of course no Slytherin could be accused of selfless bravery,” Harry nodded sagely.

“Of course not,” Professor Snape narrowed his eyes at the young man wondering just what could possibly be going through his foolish little head. “What would make you think of any such thing?”
“I wouldn’t know how to begin explaining my thoughts on that matter,” Harry said, clearly thinking about a certain spy. He was staring that the arched door that formed from in the brickwork in a manner similar to the Diagon Alley entrance found through the Leaky Cauldron.

“I love magic,” he stated.

He watched as a stone griffon from one pillar detached itself and flew to the arch above his door. A stone snake did the same from the opposite pillar and squiggled into the stonework at the base of the doorway which was about a foot up from the ground. It was about the same difference in height as the doorway to the Gryffindor tower entrance so the young man was quite used to stepping over such a distance.

Before they could step into the room the brickwork closed back up and within it an alcove formed. The images of a stone griffon and the stone snake merged into a mixed inlaid marble crest. The shield’s border had all other forms from the pillars, but inside the main shield form was a tri-sectioned shield where the image on the right was a standard rampant griffon opposite the section containing the coiled readiness of a very large serpent. Under the two combatants was the image of a large stylized tree with a large eagle sitting on a top branch and an equally large badger nesting at the tree’s roots.

“Interesting,” Professor Snape said. Between the three sections of the shield circle appeared with a hand print shape in its centre. “Place your hand on the shape and state your password.”

Harry thought about it for a moment. He slowly put his hand on the recording device and hissed out in Parseltongue, (...I make the colours fit...)

The snake looked at him in wonder and the griffon looked shocked. (...My primary password is ‘I make the colours fit’ in Parseltongue. The password for the Professors is going to be ‘Slytherin Bravery’ in regular English until the Christmas Holidays, agreed? ...)

They watched the griffon huff, but nod its head. The snake hissed his own opinion in the matter, but also nodded its head. The other animals on the pillars and as part of the door crest were doing a damn good impression of laughing at the disgruntled actions of the two main guardians.

(...I make the colours fit...) Harry hissed this time with the purpose of actually going into the rooms. “I have two house-elves that will be taking care of me and these rooms. Dobby, Winky, please come to me now.”

The two Potter house-elves were brimming with excitement. They were eager to fix up the rooms for their beloved Master. “This is Winky,” he said to the guardians. “This is Dobby de-Chausette, both of whom are free to come and go as they wish in all these rooms.”

Dobby bowed and Winky curtseyed to the door guardians who acknowledge the little helpers. The two house-elves popped away in order to quickly prepare their Master’s rooms. The main room and his bedroom had to be done immediately and they were well aware that Harry would forgive them for the lack of the snack nook until they could fix it up proper.

“Only the Professors of this school are granted access, at this time with the password being ‘Slytherin Bravery’,” Harry told the Potions Master. “It will be valid until Christmas Holidays, of course.”

“Oh course,” Severus said. “I’ll leave you to sort yourself out and I’ll notify the others during the morning staff meeting. Do remember that you must be in the Great Hall tomorrow morning in order to receive your course schedule!”
“Yes, sir,” Harry said. “Your counsel has been invaluable Professor Snape.” He handed the man a copy of the day’s transaction.

“Mr. Potter,” Professor Snape said with a slight nod before twisting around, striding down the corridor to go meet with his new batch of baby Slytherins.

Harry smiled a positively evil grin of mischief for having chosen that particular password for his Professors. However he turned around and stepped into his new rooms for his sixth year of school. He heard the bricks slide back and then he began the fun task of exploring his new surroundings with his magic.

“Winky,” he called out. The little female house-elf popped in and listened to her Master’s instructions. “Please use a pale yellow for the walls of the bedroom with various shades of blue for the coverings,” Harry told her. “This room should be in the darker shades of green and red, with gold and silver accents in the forms of the pillar guardians. Tastefully done please?”

Harry turned to take a look at the main door to his room and noticed that the pillar motif was reflected on the inside of room too. He smiled at this and then began to use magic to install non-functioning pillars in the four corners of his room. This gave the room a Romanesque feeling and he kind of liked it.

Winky checked the main room and then decided on a gingham checked pattern for the pair straight-back, but very comfortable chairs. One in dark blood red with pale shades reds and the opposite in dark forest green with pale greens to off-set the darker colours. There was the loveseat in the middle in dark plain solid cotton fabric of dark brown for the back, but the seat cushions plus the pillow accents matched the colours of the two chairs.

The walls blossomed in the same pale yellow colour from the main bedroom and all accents took the form, just as the Gryffindor requested. It was a very different room from the usual plain brick walls. There were dark brown wood accents everywhere to match the legs, tables and other furnishings in the room.

Harry was pleased with the look and complimented his house-elves. “You guys are wondrous,” he said. “Thank you very much. You two can take care to set up your own rooms before tackling anything else here. Dobby, tomorrow I’d like you to look for a desk that I can set up in this room, if not I’ll set up my portable desk in one of the corners. Winky, just make sure that the bathroom is ready for me to use in the morning, but don’t get too fancy and please, no talking mirrors if you can find one. The breakfast or snack nook can take time to get set up properly because I have a strong feeling that for the first week it will take me a while to remember that I’m no longer living in the Gryffindor tower.”

The two house-elves nodding in understanding and Winky waited for Harry to hand over his trunk so the she could finally unpack his belongings for the first time in years. She was going to take charge of his things, especially in the matter of laundry service and this would guarantee that he wouldn’t lose his personal things.

Quick as a blink or as a snap from the fingers of a very determined house-elf, Harry’s belongings were put away in properly in their drawers and hung in a wardrobe. His school robes and uniform were pressed and ready. All that remained was to see what his course schedule would be like.

Of course he’d have to defend his choices and put up with the sulking that Ron was sure do be doing since he had to be returned to the regular dorm rooms after his bragging about independent accommodations on train, not that Harry knew about any of this until the first day of class.
(...i...) www dot googlemagic dot wiz - Completely made up, I never checked the web to see if it exists and I don’t want to, since I’m not a Witch of the Harry Potter world. I also do not know if I had ever seen this in any other Fanfiction. It’s highly likely since I read a ton of stories, however I really do not recall where I could have read it and therefore I send my sincere apologies to the originator, however if no one claims it, then I do. ; - )
The first month of Harry’s sixth year was a mess. He still forgot sometimes that he no longer lived in the Gryffindor Tower. However he was still permitted to visit with his friends in the common room, only the password had been changed a couple times a week because of Ron’s pissed off mood.

Prefects were permitted to change the common room password if they felt that it had been ‘compromised’ in some fashion. Unfortunately for Harry he never found out about it until he was barred from entering. After the last time of being refused entry due to a sudden password change, sometime near the end of September and complete with a bucket of water cold water being dumped on him, Harry stopped going to the Gryffindor Tower, altogether. Instead he chose to study in the library or one of the many study halls that were supervised. If he was really desperate to study away from other students, especially the Gryffindors, he’d stay in his rooms in order to successfully complete his assignments.

During the second week of October he received his exemptions for third year Arithmancy and Runes, but he was advised to take fourth year runes with extra independent study for the fifth year syllabus, as that would still allow him to take the O.W.L.s for Runes at the end of the year. He needed some practical lessons that the fourth year had in order to succeed with the fifth year program. He passed the fourth year Arithmancy, so he was placed with the fifth year O.W.L. students.

His fourth year classes for Runes were with Hufflepuffs and Slytherins, while the fifth year Arithmancy was with Ravenclaws and Slytherins. He was surprised that the younger year students didn’t quite see him as a threat and they were happy to seek out his advice when they had questions about Defence Against the Dark Arts.

There was a gradual exchange of information that occurred when Harry had sought tutoring in those classes in order to catch up to the younger students. He sought them out during a period of study after the classes finished.

The students from these two classes chose to meet once a week in a study hall that usually contained either the Arithmancy Professor or the Professor teaching Runes. Both those primary Professors had been approached and agreed that during that particular period the mandatory silence would be suspended, but only when they were the teachers assigned to the room. The students were sternly told to respect the other Professors’ requirements for the study hall, should another be assigned to the task due to circumstance.

The Professors usually rotated and during a regular Professor meeting they had learned of the extraordinary study methods taking place in that particular room. Most refused to disrupt anything that could lead to school unity. Eventually the student’s luck would run out and much sooner than later regarding the particular teacher overseeing that Study Hall.

Professor Snape was in an irritable mood due to a meeting with the Dark Lord the previous night and now he was assigned to watch a study hall filled with fourth and fifth year mix of Slytherins with the two other non-combative Houses of Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw.
‘At least it’s not the sixth or seventh years,’ he sighed silently. ‘Not a Gryffindor in sight, thank Merlin.’ He had that thought too soon!

“No that’s not quite right,” Harry Potter’s voice drifted into the study hall. “The Patronus spell is an offensive spell and a defensive spell. It’s usually used against Dementors, but you have to really be focussed to call forth a Patronus at a young age. It defends against the effects that Dementors have on you and it will attack the creature to chase it off.”

“We heard that you managed to call one in your third year,” a fourth year Slytherin said. “Is that true?”

“Yes,” Harry agreed. “I was extremely motivated to learn. Now can someone please help me out with Engle’s Runic Table of Russian - Gaelic, it just doesn’t look like there’s a common rune among them, so why is this known as one of Rosetta Stone Tables of Runes to be used.”

A fifth year student, this time a Ravenclaw said, “It’s supposed to be used in conjunction with Fargoth’s Table of Norse - Early Anglo. They’ll make sense if you put the tables side by side.”

Harry frowned, but then set up his ‘Rune Table Charts’ of common word matches, as instructed and was surprised by the connections he could see. Even if his mind had a photographic memory now, it didn’t help if things weren’t viewed in a certain manner. He could memorize all the charts he wanted, but the logic of putting them side by side to note the similarities and differences never once occurred to him.

“Bloody brilliant,” he said grinning at the fifth year Ravenclaw. “Thank you Winchester.” He pulled out his wand and the students watched as he pulled the words with spell light and lined them all up to match their common translations with extra Rune words forming at the bottom of common words currently translated. They had nothing in common to any other on the chart. Then he sent the words to the far wall and asked, “Does anyone have another table that I could add?”

Four more were given to him for his spell and then a voice interrupted him and startled the students that were watching the process with curiosity. “Mr. Potter what do you think you are doing,” Professor Snape asked. He had been told that this study hall was one where students were permitted to speak and interact, but he couldn’t understand why Potter was there. “Why are you even here?”

“Sir,” Harry said looking up from one of the Rune Tables. “I’m sorry if we’re disturbing you, Professor Snape. These are my classmates for fourth year Runes and fifth year Arithmancy. This won’t take long, if you’ll allow me to finish?”

Severus looked at the young man who was at ease in a room full of younger students with the majority House being represented by his Slytherins. There was only a smaller mix of Hufflepuffs and Ravenclaws.

“Very well,” he said. “I’m curious to see just what you hope to accomplish with that.”

‘That’ was a massive table of Common Rune Words, with the language alphabet listed at the top in proper order. It was painted in spell light on the wall with the common denominators or words or rune letters highlighted in a copper glow.

The four volunteered tables were added and soon the students were mesmerized by the image and the knowledge that it could come together like that. They had been studying the various independent tables and learning the origins of various Rune Alphabets and the most common words found in old texts, but this was like having one massive ‘cheat sheet’. It would definitely cut down their time trying to find a word on one particular Rune Table when it was clearly on another Table for another
Harry then paused to consider the students in this hall. They were not his true year mates, but they had welcomed him to their classes. Even the Slytherin students were slightly welcoming because he didn’t immediately do what the older year Slytherins had always accused him or other Gryffindors of doing. It was like the Boy-Who-Lived did not care that he was a Gryffindor and generally he acted like he had no House when he was with them in class.

He nodded at his own thoughts, ‘Despite the advantages or disadvantages they have with their families, these children are here to learn and this will help them.’ He paused and then shrugged his shoulders. ‘They are my classmates for this and perhaps for next year too, so Family status or political association shouldn’t count or matter, especially in a school situation.’

Harry came to the slow realization that, ‘I would have done this for the any other student in the same class that I’m taking. Plus there is one big bonus to displaying my magic like this, especially to those inclined to only follow someone they believe is powerful.’

He smiled and then pointed his wand at the wall. He cast a spell at it with his thoughts and intentions clear in his mind.

The students in the room knew that he was powerful, but most only knew it in the abstract because he was known as the Boy-Who-Lived and they believed that he should be powerful although they never saw proof of it. They knew that he had abilities that they hadn’t achieved yet because he was older and they also knew that he was somehow involved in the fight against the Dark Lord... You-Know-Who.

Still the magic that they were witnessing was beyond what they had ever heard of from their parents, siblings, family or friends. It was something else entirely, to actively know that Harry Potter was ‘that’ powerful. Even their Professors have never mentioned anything like this to them before.

Harry had just conjured up the largest piece of parchment that they had ever seen, lined it up behind the floating runes in spell light and then he transposed the spell-writing onto the paper. It was complete with the highlighted common words or symbols and the supplemental rune words or those that had nothing in common were placed at the bottom of its particular language table. All words were separated by dotted and faded lines. The faded lines were formed under the words and looked like they extended passed the word, stopping at some unseen limit.

The front and back of the wide parchment were clear of any tables except that more small faded and dotted horizontal lines appearing. The parchment then folded itself like a Muggle map, fan wise on the long end, with each language table hiding in its own column or fold. The whole thing then it folded over and over more compactly for carrying purposes. The front and back cover, included an extra fold of the paper, thickening into solid covers. The covers hid the lines which were added for taking and making notes when needed.

He then did a series of complicated wands movements and hissed a few Parseltongue words that had the students looking at him in surprise because of it. They were never witness to the events of Harry’s second year duelling disaster when Lockhart had been the Defence Professor. They knew he spoke the snake language, but they had never heard it before today.

(...Copyright, Theft Defence, Complete Copy, Conjure Copies Times One Hundred, Permanency-preservation, Duplication Prevention, Permission Personal Note Addition, Magical Claiming one time only and Total Preservation...) He hissed, pouring great magical power into his intention, focussing on the creation of something that might be considered brand new to the Wizarding World.
Due to the form of the magic and the words used in the spell it could never be duplicated or claimed to have been created by anyone other than Harry Potter. Also it must be noted that the format of the device having been ‘copyrighted’ by the Boy-Who-Lived, which meant that should a company or business have the need to use the same device then monetary compensation would be required. The Goblins were going to have a field day when Harry had the time to notify them about this. The idea would garner attention and might be requested for use in new Rune Texts, but that is not for the here and now.

Stacks of ten began to appear beside the original document that Harry had created, until he had ten stacks of ten. He was sweating profusely by the end, but he had a slightly pleased smile on his face. It was a great feeling to know that he had successfully done a complicated working of magic and that it turned out just like he wanted.

He took the original, plus a second copy that he planned to work with and then using his wand in a sending motion, he distributed a copy to each of the students in the room, plus one to a very surprised Professor Snape. He put away the extras in his backpack because he planned to keep them until someone complained about the lack of fairness to the other students. He was also planning to give his Runes Professor a copy, but the others technically belonged to him because of the ‘Copyright’ aspect incorporated into the spell.

Harry looked at the shocked students’ faces and then said, “Sorry about the Parseltongue, that is if you guys were disturbed by it. It was just the quickest way to cast the spells and to get the result I was looking for. If you use your wands like a pen and mark your name on the top cover of the parchment they’ll become yours permanently, but they are not transferable to anyone else.”

A couple of the Hufflepuffs did it and watched as the spell light marked the papers with their names. One of the brave Ravenclaws opened it up and noticed that it contained all of the tables that they currently use. “What are the lines for?”

“Notes,” Harry said. “You can either use your regular quills or your wands to make permanent notes. You could also choose to use a Muggle lead pencil before making anything permanent and that way you can make sure that your notes are accurate before making them a permanent part of the parchment.”

“Why would we need to make notes,” one of the Slytherins asked.

“At the bottom of the table for each language on this sheet are some Runes or words that have no common connection,” Harry explained. “I just thought that with the dual-language dictionaries in the Library we’d be able to look up the literal meaning of the words after we figure them out and could make notes about them.”

“Bloody brilliant,” one of the Ravenclaw fifth years said, looking over his sheet and beginning his school-work. “This is truly brilliant! Now I don’t have to go through those different books to find the table I need.”

The Potions Professor was astounded by the sheer power that Harry displayed so freely to a group of fourth and fifth year students, especially to his Slytherins. The Gryffindor then had the audacity to turn and wink at him, as though he had sensed his thought, when all of the students were looking over the parchments and writing their names to claim them magically.

‘What is that brat up to,’ he thought scowling and then turning his attention to his own copy. It was compact and not at all cumbersome to manipulate. He decided to sign his name too because he didn’t want to lose something unique like this by any means. It just wouldn’t be Slytherin of him to outright deny the ‘gift’. If he were to lose it because he refused to claim it, well that was just plain foolishness.
in his mind.

He turned to look at the Boy-Who-Lived and noticed that he was absorbed in the chatter of the students. The Slytherins were looking at the Gryffindor in a new light and it was clear that none of the younger students were scared from the display of powerful magic that they had just witnessed. It was like nothing that they had ever seen before, but the Gryffindor was putting them all at their ease and leading the students back to their school-work by asking questions that required their input.

‘What is he up...’ he paused in his thoughts and really looked at the Gryffindor.

Harry Potter was fully accepted by these younger students. Even the Slytherins were accepting of him and his uniquely non-Gryffindor ways, like the snake language.

The teachers had praised the boy’s alternate view points and the fact that he asked interesting questions during those classes. The boy was taking all of the students’ questions about Defence Against the Dark Arts, answering them correctly, while asking his own regarding their shared classes of Runes and Arithmaney.

A question from one of the Hufflepuffs caught his attention. “Do you think you can do one of these for the Arithmaney Tables?”

“You don’t really need one for Arithmaney, do you Gregson,” Harry returned. “The texts and resources are more complete for Arithmaney. In fact, there is a book on the market called ‘Arithmaney Structure & Tables by Level - written by Maximillion Tremont’ (...i...). It contains all of the known Arithmaney tables in it, even some that have not been used in years. It’s nothing like the Rune texts, which are all language specific and varied, plus they change every time a new word is discovered or a new meaning is found for the same word. I only put these six Rune Tables together because we’re using these ones right now in class, but I’m quite certain that in the New Year during the new semester that the Rune classes will make us use different Rune Tables or Charts. I might have to create a different chart or else figure out how to add more to this one.”

“How did you find out about the book by Tremont,” Gregson, who was a fourth year Hufflepuff, asked. “I was looking for something like that, but no one was mentioning it. Is it available at Flourish and Blotts or some other book seller?”

Harry paused and then said, “You know what, I’m not sure that it is available in Diagon Alley. I’ll have to look that up and see where it can be ordered from, but I do know that it’s not out of print so it should still be available to the public. Why don’t you talk to the older years about it and see if they know about the book? Maybe Madam Pince will have heard of it or know how to acquire a copies for the school. She’d be able to find out where they can be ordered from and if you ask her nicely, she might tell you her sources?”

The students turned back to their schoolwork and continued working on the essays. All of those in Harry’s Runes class were using their new charts and only a few were double checking to see if the information was transposed correctly.

By the time the study hall session was almost over every student using the new Rune Table Chart or Sheet, had noticed a strange mark in the form of a small letter c inside a circle. It was in the bottom right hand corner of the parchment followed by the letters HP and today’s date. Only those students who were Muggle-born and Muggle-raised knew what that meant. The students had also noticed a large watermark over the whole of the parchment in the form of a Family Crest, which was strange to see.

“Potter, why are there additional marks on the parchment?” A fifth year Slytherin asked.
“Hmm, gimme a minute,” Harry mumbled finishing up the last sentence on his essay for Runes completely written in Runes just as the Professor had demanded from her students. He shook the drying powder on the paper to seal in the ink. It imbedded the ink in the parchment and prevented smearing when the parchment was rolled up. He looked up and noticed that several were looking at their new table again. “What was the question?”

“Why are there additional marks on the parchment?” The question was repeated.

“Let me see,” Harry said taking his secondary copy and that’s when he noticed that the copyright logo was there in the right hand corner with the date. He smiled and said, “I’m glad it worked. The small letter c inside a circle is to indicate that something that belongs to the author or originator of whatever it is you have. Copyright could be used for names, places, books, types of parchments like maps or this table. Since no one in the Wizarding World had thought to protect their idea and I was the first to put this together in this different form and protect it, it technically means that these belong to me and cannot be duplicated without being compensated for them.”

“What about the watermark in the form of a Family Crest?”

“What watermark?” Harry questioned with his eyebrows furrowing in confusion. “Show me.”

A couple of the students opened up their parchments in full and sure enough in a very faded ghost-like image, there was a watermark of his complete Family crest. This he had not expected, but then again this past summer he had taken things to the Ministry of Magic to a special Department in charge of Magical Family Names and their Protection. It included the prevention of his personal name being used to promote items, objects, people etc… His own name, Harry Potter and any variation of it, was now Copyrighted, for all legal purposes and that process included ensuring that his new family crest was protected in the same manner as well. He had checked with the Wizard Family census and found that his name was entirely unique in the Wizarding World.

Therefore he copyrighted it completely and in doing so would prevent its use in any Wizarding paper, magazine or article. This law also protected the term Boy-Who-Lived as it was deemed to belong to him and he was the only designated as the Boy-Who-Lived and therefore that too was protected from further use in the media. He couldn’t wait to see how the Wizarding population and media hounds would react to the stretches of black bands that would now overwrite any use of his names or titles.

“Sorry about that,” he said. “I guess that it’s linking these originals to the House of Potter. I didn’t mean for that to happen.” He rubbed the back of his next in sheepish shyness. “I don’t know how to correct that, but I’m guessing that this is what happens when something new is introduced to the Wizarding World.”

“That has happened a few times in the past Mr. Potter,” Professor Snape spoke up without any menace in his voice. He explained the situation to the students in the room. “It certainly looks like an appropriate spell is cast to protect against the infringement on the originating creator and the item created. Things like a Family Crest of the original caster will appear on objects or in the form of a background watermark, until it is altered for sale en masse to the general public. Your Family Crest seems to have changed quite a bit since I saw it last.”

He was lying, of course, because he had seen it on every correspondence that Harry had sent to him this summer. Still if he hadn’t mentioned it now, didn’t believe that many of his Slytherins would notice the Black Family symbols or the incorporation of a third Family symbol into the new crest.

The Slytherins had noticed the family crests, but upon looking at it again they realized that Potter was in charge of a known Dark Family and yet he didn’t seem to enforce their known practices of
Pureblood tyranny. “You added the House of Black,” one fourth year Slytherin stated. “You added them to the Potter crest, why?”

“It’s just the form it took when I claimed the Family and House,” Harry stated as a matter of fact. He shrugged, which was a clear indication to the students that he didn’t believe this to be of any significant value. He then said, “I didn’t know how it would look, but I accepted the responsibility for that House when I accepted the one for the House of Potter. Is this important for some reason?”

“Taking responsibilities for the any Magical Family or House means that you can basically dictate how the other known family members behave in society and it will indicate their place on the Social Ladder,” a fifth year Ravenclaw stated.

“I’m already considered to be at the top of the Social Ladder without having claimed any Family House,” Harry simply stated. Many of the Slytherins realized that this was true and were shocked by his next statement. “However I don’t care about that rubbish. As for any true Family members, I don’t have any that I know of that are currently linked to the Potters who could be considered immediate, so what possible influence could I have on rest them? As for the Blacks, those that were disinherited have to remain on the outside the familial, social influence and those that are on the inside, well from what I know about what’s left of them, they just suck. I might just disinherit them on the same type of prejudicial whim that dictated the expulsion of those who didn’t follow the old Black motto of ‘Toujour Pur’.”

The chimes sounded in the room to indicate that the period of study was now over and that those that had classes had to go to them, while others like Harry moved to another location for more study.

Harry was anxious to get to the Room of Requirement because he was looking forward to exerting himself physically in learning hand-to-hand combat and in learning more about falling without getting hurt in the process. He was also learning to tumble again which he remembered as a fun activity when he was a kid in primary school and that had been before he was stuck taking classes with Dudley.

He had given all of his classmates something to think about. Even his Professor for Potions was curious about the reasons why that infernal Gryffindor winked at him after he had cast his spell. He managed to catch a few of his fifth year Slytherins’ conversations which slowly made him understand that something or the reason.

‘Potter’s getting to them,’ he thought, listening to one of them comment about the power that had been displayed.

“Did you ever see such power,” Mathias Durmontly said to his fellow snakes.

“Do you think he has the power to defeat You-Know-Who,” a small fourth year by the boring name of Amelia Thompson, asked.

She was usually quiet and unassuming, but when questions needed to be asked of a serious nature, she was the one that nearly always did it. There was something in the way that she spoke that made the Slytherins of her year think before answering. It was now catching on and being accepted by the older and younger years that asking such questions meant that an alternative answer could exist, even if it opposed the standard, automated familial upbringing or political leaning.

The question made them pause a moment and then another fifth year said, “It might seem like it.”

“But...” Amelia asked.
“I guess it depends on his magical training and what he actually knows,” Mathias said. “From what I understand and from what the older years have said and believe, Potter was never once given any additional training or supplemental classes to improve his combat spells here at Hogwarts.”

“He had remedial studies last year didn’t he,” a fourth year Slytherin by the name of Raphael Tattersall asked. “What was the class he needed remedial studies in? Could that have been a cover up for an actual class in something else?”

“I think it was in Potions,” Burijas, Raphael’s older brother said. “I don’t think it lasted that long though so he must have been shite at it.”

“Language Mr. Tattersall,” Professor Snape said to his students, hoping to stop their reflection about the ‘Remedial Potions Studies’ that failed when the infernal Gryffindor had looked into his private pensieve. “If all of you gain a detention for dawdling in the halls when you’re supposed…”

He didn’t have to say anything else as the remaining Slytherins apologized to him and took off for their next class, leaving him to stand there in their wake. He slowly shook his head and then internally he debated on whether to bring up the idea of Occlumency with the Boy-Who-Lived. He didn’t want to, but he felt that Dumbledore was going to ask him to teach it to the brat again.

‘Perhaps it’s better to find out if Potter wants to learn that technique first,’ he thought, heading in the direction of his office. He had a stack of six year potions essays to slog through, plus he needed to be there in case his Slytherins came looking for him.

‘Next time I see him in my capacity as Wizard Counsellor, I might suggest it.’

HPHPHP

The Room of Requirement was quite a unique room. In order to find it you had to know where the door was located and then you had to pace in front of it three times thinking of the type of room you’re looking for.

Harry’s school schedule was drawn up to his specifications and he received permission to use that Room for his independent study in the Defence Against the Dark Arts. He used the Room to call forth a Muggle gym with a cushion floor mat to use for tumbling and his hand-to-hand training. There was one complete wall of books related to Defence in many different forms, including Muggle defence in the forms of various martial arts, strategy books and games of war.

The games and books related, he wasn’t too sure about, but because of his improved memory he could essentially memorize the layouts of winning strategies before he even thought of playing against some opponent. There were boxes of magazines related to the games too, all dating back many years, depending on the Country that the game originated in.

A fine example would be the Japanese board game called GO which originated in China with the name Weiqi approximately 2000 years ago. He liked the fact that a game of this nature was actually older than Hogwarts, but it did raise some interesting factors in his mind regarding these kinds of games.

The room acted like his net-book when he chose to study a game like that. His plan was to read the books and learn the moves using his memory and then have the room create a faceless ghost player that helped him to conquer the game or at least learn it with some competency that allowed him to realize the style of play and strategies most commonly used.

He used this knowledge to build a strategy to potentially use against Voldemort. The Dark Lord is a
festering pustule in his mind and he strongly disliked the fact that this was the kind of stuff he should have been learning all along.

He was currently learning a dive and roll tumbling routine that would get him out of the line of enemy fire when there was a knock at the door to the Room. He finished his roll with a twist to avoid the spell light being fired in his direction by the Room’s ghostly opponent.

“Pax,” he said out loud. It was the word that he figured would never be used during a battle unless someone planned to surrender, so he programmed it into the Requirements for the Room’s training situations. It caused his opponent to stop, disappear and be replaced with a couple of standard solid battle dummies with painted targets on them.

Harry waited to hear if there was another knock on the door and when it happened again he used the revealing window on the door in order to know who was out there. He was surprised to see who it was and suspecting no ill intent he opened the door.

“Malfoy,” he said getting the attention of the Slytherin who knew that the room was occupied, but had been hoping to convince whoever it was to leave.

“Potter,” Draco said shocked by the Gryffindor’s appearance, as much by what the room looked like behind the boy.

“Do you need the Room or something,” Harry asked. “You weren’t looking for me I hope.”

“No,” the blonde Slytherin said. “I was planning to convince the person in this Room now to leave, but I’m curious about why you are here, isn’t this the time for you and the lions to be in D.A.D.A.?”

“They are,” Harry said waving for the Slytherin to come into the Room so that he could close the door. “I have an independent study period for that course. Why does that matter?”

“No reason,” Draco said looking at the Room more closely.

One corner had a strange board with chips of black and white stones mapped out and it looked like the game was still in play. It looked like Othello, but it obviously wasn’t. One wall near the board was filled with books and the floor that he was standing on didn’t feel like it was a stone floor, but somehow it felt flexible.

He turned to look at the Gryffindor who’d let him into the room and then watched as the boy flexed and stretched his arms and legs in strange movements. When he was done, the lion walked over to a table that appeared with two chairs, a glass of cool water and a towel. He watched as the boy wiped the sweat off of his body and drink from the glass.

Harry put the towel around his neck and looked at the Slytherin wondering what he was thinking about the Room’s look. “Have a seat,” he said as he held onto the glass and then he asked, “Do you need the room all the time in this time-slot or is this just for today?”

Draco frowned, as he sat down and wondered, “Why do you need to know?”

“I’m booked for this time-slot every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, including several other times in the mornings and nearly all day during every other Saturday,” Harry stated taking the chair opposite the blonde.

“Of course they’re willing to accommodate their pet, the Golden Boy of Gryffindor Tower,” the Slytherin sneered in disgust at the indulgence. “Back on the Quidditch team yet, Potter?” He lashed out.
“Nope,” Harry answered calmly. “As far as I can figure, no one has asked for use of this Room and that’s why I got the slots, what’s it to you?”

Draco blinked and looked away. “I was hoping to use the room for training in D.A.D.A."

“So pick some other times,” Harry said.

“My Head of House suggested that I come here at this time;” Draco told him while looking him in the eye.

Harry’s eyes widened at that. It was not a lie. Then he hissed out, after looking at the snake on the crest of the blonde’s school robe. (...Sneaky, Slytherin, Sly, Professor...)

He had startled the Slytherin which surprised him, but then he realized that he was hissing out his words. ‘At least it covered up what I was saying,’ he thought. ‘Why would my Counsellor send Malfoy to here at this time? He knows I have the Room booked.’

“Are you taking D.A.D.A. classes in school too,” Harry asked.

“Yes, but...”

“Last year didn’t really prepare you and the O.W.L. you received in D.A.D.A. sucked,” the Gryffindor stated.

“Pretty much,” the blonde admitted with a frustrated sigh. “I’m not going to fail, but with my father in prison, no thanks to you, I have no choice and I can’t fail.”

“So your Head of House sent you here,” Harry re-stated. “He sent you at this time, when he knows about my independent D.A.D.A. schedule?”

Draco Malfoy heard the statement and then he looked up at the other boy and realized the same thing. “Manipulative, admirable snake,” he hissed in a mix of awe-anger. “He told me that it was the Headmaster...”

“Stop,” Harry said. “Did Snape go to the Headmaster to request time in this Room on your be-half?”

“He said that he would have to discuss it with the other Professors first,” the blonde confirmed with a nod. “He came back and told me about it today. I’ll admit he was a little miffed, but he told me that if I sincerely wanted to learn anything about D.A.D.A. that the Headmaster had approved me being here for two hours starting at two thirty Wednesday afternoons only.” He paused and said, “Come to think of it, he really didn’t look at all happy about it when he mentioned that this was the Headmaster’s time suggestions.”

“This is the Headmaster’s doing then,” Harry muttered. He drank the remainder of his water and threw the glass to shatter against a far wall. He targeted one of the dummies and began to attack it while saying, “Manipulative, son of a... a... ‘Blibbering Humdinger’ or would that be ‘Fwooper’?” (...ii...)

Draco pursed his lips to stop from bursting out in an immediate reaction of laughter. His eyes sparkled with the suppressed expression, but he couldn’t help it. He started chuckling at the rage that the other six-year student was displaying by striking the obvious practice dummy in a series of complicated moves with his fists and feet.

It was funny to the Slytherin because he had never seen the boy so frustrated before and for some reason it was clear that he was just as helpless against some of the forces at play in their lives.
However, that thought sobered him up right quick and lead to the thought, ‘I never realized that he was helpless too against the adults. He always looks so controlled? Impassive? Or maybe just stupid.’

Harry was done throwing a fit of anger, but as long as he was only attacking the dummy he could slow down gradually in order to relax the tension he was feeling. He stopped with a wide stance, his fists falling to his side and he was breathing heavily from his impromptu exercise.

One large sigh and he was back in his chair looking at the way the blonde was dressed. He then said, “You’ll need to wear proper training clothes.”

“What are you talking about,” Draco asked in confusion.

“You were sent here during one of my longer time-slots in this Room,” the Gryffindor explained. “Obviously ‘someone’ is thinking bloody stupid thoughts about promoting school ‘unity’. They set you up in order to actually try and make us get along or work together or some such rot.”

Harry then yelled loudly, startling the Slytherin again, by saying, “Meddling senile old prick.”

He turned to look at Draco and said, “I’m not giving up this time-slot, so it looks like we, either share the Room and use it together to learn at the same time or else plan to alternate in order to avoid one another. I’d leave that choice up to you, but to be honest if you choose the last one I’m still going to show up to do my exercises and train while you’re in here anyway.”

“I reckon that I could live with seeing you once a week to practice Defence spells,” the Slytherin told him. The chimes that Harry programmed in the room indicated a change of class. Draco frowned and looked at his watch. “I have one more hour here so what’s the plan going to be?”

“We’ll use the hour to test your level and to find out what you need to brush up on,” Harry said. “The reason you’re going to need more comfortable clothing is to join me in some of the training I do in here, unless you ‘only’ want to focus on practical spell work?”

“Let’s start with finding out how far behind I am,” Draco suggested. He removed his outer robes and Harry shook his head at the other set of robes underneath. They were pressed, squeaky clean and looked expensive. The shoes didn’t look too comfortable either.

“You’re going to get those dirty,” Harry said looking at the robes.

Draco just shrugged and said, “The house-elves will take care that stuff.”

“All right let’s start with year one,” Harry said.


“We’ll see if you’re missing any spells from the earlier years,” Harry said. “I made a list based on the texts in the books of all spells that as first year students we ‘should’ have learned with that idiot Quirrel. This is how I began my independent study, however you do have the choice to figure out how you’re going to choose what to study or not.”

Draco was surprised at that and then he nodded because it sounded like quite a logical and practical method to begin with. The Gryffindor handed him the list and pointed to the testing dummy. The dummy rotated in place waiting to begin its purpose which was to act appropriately when specific spells hit and to record the effectiveness of the spells.

“Primary dummy,” Harry said. “Activate year one.” He received a quizzical look from the Slytherin,
but he just motioned the other boy to give him back the list and to begin sending his spells. “I’ll call
the spells out, you do them and then we’ll see where you are at.”

“Right then,” Draco said taking up his position at a distance similar to what a formal duel would be
and waited for the name of the spell to be called out...

Forty-five minutes later the blonde Slytherin knew that Harry Potter was a harsh task master. He
didn’t let up for that whole length of time. He called out to the training dummy, “Activate year two,”
in the middle of Draco’s last first year spell and began calling out a list of second year Defence spells
with a mix of first year spells.

‘Bloody bastard called out most of the spells several times too,’ Draco thought, trying hard to
remember the wand movements for a tricky second year spell. ‘He better not do it for all the years.’

Harry stopped him when he was in the middle of the third year list of spells, mixed with first and
second. He watched dispassionately as the blonde collapsed on the floor. A cool glass of water with
a twist of lime and chips of ice appeared in front of the Slytherin who was momentarily startled by it,
but took a grateful sip of its soothing contents.

The Gryffindor walked over to the practice dummy, said a few words with a wave of his wand and
soon had two scroll-lists in his hand with an analysis of the Slytherin’s strengths and weaknesses for
specific spells. He kept one.

“Here,” he said handed the second list to the other six year student. “If you find this helpful, then
we’ll begin again from where we left off at our next meeting. We’ll start with the third year spells
and all of the other years until we get to sixth year spells. Then you’ll know what you need to study
in order to catch up and perhaps actually pass D.A.D.A.”

Draco took the piece of paper and pocketed it in a hidden pouch inside his robes. He looked at the
Gryffindor who was drinking water too and asked, “Did you do this too?”

“What,” Harry said sipping his water. “Analyze the spells and how I was casting them?”

“Yeah,” Draco confirmed. “Did you?”

“I did,” Harry told him. “I have to.”

“Why,” the Slytherin asked.

“Some other time,” Harry said. “Did you have any questions about the process or did you want to
train on another day? You’ll still be complying with the scheduled meeting in this Room, but if it’s
more convenient to come during a time when you know your year-mates are occupied elsewhere,
just let me know what you’d prefer.” He handed the blonde a copy of the schedule he had set-up in
the Room of Requirement for his independent study.

The Slytherin pocketed the schedule too, next to the analysis sheet of his spells. He stood up cast a
drying spell and a refreshing spell on his body. Only then did he put on his Slytherin robe for school
and looking back before leaving the Room, he said, “I will.”

HPHPHP

TBC...

(...i...) Made up name of book and author
(...ii...) Found on the web’s A-Z Lexicon of Harry Potter. (I used that web site often for canon stuff.)
Draco had studied with Potter about four times in the last two weeks, ever since that meeting during the second week of October. He read the analysis that same day and knew that if he wanted to be proficient, be more than just barely competent he’d need more that one two hour time-slot a week. He kept the Wednesday date for appearance’s sake and managed to get Harry to agree to allow him to come during his Saturday sessions in the morning time-slot.

‘I don’t understand why he needs to go twice in one day,’ the blonde thought. He shuddered at the thought of practicing magic for two hours in the morning and then disappearing again for another three hours in the afternoon.

Little did he know that the afternoon slot was really to enable Harry to review his other courses from school in much the same manner as the one essentially considered appropriate, for the Boy-Who-Lived, which was Defence Against the Dark Arts. The Gryffindor was using the Room of Requirement to improve his knowledge of the Charms, Potions, Herbology, etc… from his previous years in pretty much the same manner as his Defence training.

Harry zoomed through the first, second and third year studies quickly because they tended to be simple and easier, as is the standard case with most school subjects. His studies were doubled though because he added a few Muggle subjects to his learning process. He was curious about some of the sciences and about the mathematical differences from Arithmancy and the base Muggle Mathematics of Calculus, Geometry, Computing Logic, etc…

He was happy in his independent study world now that he had been basically kicked out of the Gryffindor Tower, but that didn’t mean that the Gryffindors had forgotten about him.

Ron made a nuisance of himself and was pissed when Harry refuse to return to the Quidditch team. The red-head had ambushed his supposed best friend during the last week of September in order to announce that Harry’s ban from playing Quidditch had been lifted and that he was nominated to be the Captain of the Gryffindor Team.

**Flashback**

“Harry, wait up,” Ron said chasing after the Boy-Who-Lived. They had just finished taking their shared Charms class and the red-head knew that in order to catch up to his best friend he’d have to run. “Harry, we need to talk, wait up.”

Harry paused and waited by an empty classroom. Empty was right there were no desks, chairs or even a teaching podium in that room. It was like they had been vanished as soon as the two Gryffindors had stopped outside the room.

“Aren’t you going to be late for D.A.D.A.,” Harry asked, as he glanced in the room, noting the last of the vanishing school equipment. He smirked knowing that if he needed the room to talk privately with his ex-friend that the house-elves were making it possible. One of them winked at him before
leaving the space empty of anything that could potentially harm the boys or be used as a weapon to
cause harm.

‘Perfect,’ he thought. ‘I think they believe that we’ll be fighting.’ He waited until Ron caught up and
then thought, ‘There’s a strong possibility of it with his temper. Who knows what will set him off this
time?’

“Harry,” Ron said huffing, as the pace that his friend had set when he left the room had forced the
red-head to run in order to catch up. He didn’t know that once Harry had left the room and once out
of sight of the other students, he sprinted down several different corridors in order to escape the
pending confrontation.

Harry figured that if Ron was truly determined to seek him out that he’d get directions from the
portraits. He looked at his, one time, best friend and sighed, “Yes Ron?”

He stepped into the room, quickly followed by Ron Weasley. He quietly put up silencing charms and
a couple of notice-me-not spells on the door to prevent peepers and curiosity seekers from looking in
and spreading rumours. “What is it?”

“I needed to tell you that the Headmaster has lifted your ban from Quidditch,” Ron said and then he
explained sourly that, “The whole team voted and you’ve been named Captain.”

Harry could well believe that. He didn’t think that the older students wanted that responsibility
because this was their N.E.W.T.s year after all. He was the only six year student that had been on the
team the longest. However he had never once cared about leading the team and it didn’t sit well with
him that when the ban had been lifted no one on the team ever approached him about it to tell him or
to even ask if he was even interested in being Captain.

“Well I didn’t know that the ban had been lifted,” Harry said in a surprised tone. “It’s a great honour
to be named Captain, but I’m afraid you’re going to have to tell the others that I decline. Tell the
guys thanks, but I’m just too busy with my studies to continue playing on the team with any form of
seriousness.”

“But Harry,” Ron said in shock. “It’s Quidditch. You can at least tell them yourself and why, the
bloody hell don’t you want to play anymore? You can’t tell me that you’re studying more than you
ever did, I won’t believe you. You love Quidditch.”

Harry snorted and then said calmly, “No Ron! ‘You’ love Quidditch. I just played it because I liked
to fly and when I was on the team I learned to fly in many different ways. Did you know that there is
not even a club at this school for just broom flying?”

“Who cares about that,” Ron said loudly, as though the volume of his voice would help his point.
“What about Quidditch? You’re the bloody Captain now. It’s your responsibility to lead the team.”

“I never asked to be Captain nor did I accept the position,” Harry said calmly, but getting slightly
angry. “Ever since I was banned, I’ve had the time to reflect on a few things and I’ve decided to
become a better student. During this summer when I could fly outdoors, I realized that I didn’t quite
like Quidditch enough to give it a go professionally. Therefore I knew that I would have to allow
someone else, whose ambition and future career plans involved Quidditch, the chance to play on the
team. It’s the best place for them to gain that kind of valuable experience.”

Ron stared at him in shock, shaking his head he persisted. “You love Quidditch and you’re going to
play because you’re the best Seeker that this school has ever seen.”
“No Ron,” Harry said with a frown that the Gryffindor’s attitude. “I refuse the nomination and I no longer care about the ban. Just because you believe me to be the best Seeker now, doesn’t mean that someone else should not be given their chance to show you that they could do just as well on the team.”

“You’re playing,” Ron said loudly and stubbornly.

“No I’m not,” Harry returned just as stubbornly and loud. ‘Who the hell does he think he is? He can’t force anyone to play.’

“You are,” Ron said stepping up to him with clenched fists. “You are going to play Quidditch for Gryffindor because you have House Pride and all that.”

“No way,” Harry said actively relaxing his muscles in order to prepare for an attack that he could sense was coming. “You’ve made me feel so unwelcome in Gryffindor that I can’t even visit the common room of Gryffindor Tower. Why should I have any House Pride, if I’m not ‘Welcome’ in my House?”

“You ‘are’ welcome,” Ron said. “Where would you get the idea that you aren’t welcome?”

“Probably from the last time I visited and had that cold bucket of water dumped over my head, drenching me,” Harry replied. “I squelched with every step I took to get back to my rooms in order to change and prevent a cold. The students laughed at me when I walked through the halls leaving bloody wet spots from my ‘Welcome’. I couldn’t even use magic to clean up and dry off because of the bloody ever-wet and chill potion in the water.”

“Yeah, well that was your fault,” Ron returned in anger. “You deserved it.”

“What!” Harry exclaimed. “How the bloody hell did I deserve something like ‘that’?”

“Yeah, you deserved it, all right,” Ron said nodding his head and pointing a finger in Harry’s direction. “You should have stayed in Gryffindor Tower and ‘we’ were supposed to be sharing a set of rooms together. It would have been fun. But, ‘no’ instead of staying in those separate rooms like I had been told I would be and all during summer too, I find my things back in the Tower with the other male Prefects, only to find that ‘you’ moved out of there completely and didn’t need your best friend to keep you company.”

“First of all, it would ‘not’ have been fun,” Harry said. “Next, I was never told that I would have to ‘share’ a bloody set of rooms that I had already fully paid for. I requested rooms from our Head of House like any sixth and seventh year student is allowed to do, if payment or compensation is given. Did you even request a separate set of rooms and offer to pay for them in order to get out of the dorm in Gryffindor? You know you’re allowed.”

He looked closely at the fuming face of the boy that had once befriended him on the train to school six years ago. He sneered and said, “I didn’t think so.”

“You know my family can’t afford it,” Ron yelled. “Why didn’t you just leave things as they were?”

“Because…,” Harry, paused a moment emphasis before continuing, green eyes blazing with controlled anger and frustration stemming from the last two years of school and from the last two years of the red-head’s wishy-washy, up and down, hot and cold, treatment of that friendship.

“Because Ron…I didn’t ‘want’ to pay for you or for anyone else to live with me when I had requested and paid for a private set of rooms. The main reason I requested a private room was to prevent my school things from being stolen by opportunistic little thieves like ‘Seamus, Hermione,
Ron saw red at that moment. He yelled loudly, “Aaargh...”, announcing his attack and swung a sluggish fist in Harry’s direction, who even though he hadn’t been on the team last year, his Seeker reflexes kicked in to prevent the loss of his glasses and a beautiful shiner from appearing. He was caught by the second wild swing on his right shoulder and which made him quickly remember that this boy had brothers who taught him how to fight in the cruel way of brothers, mainly dirty.

Harry ducked the third punch. He threw and landed one directly in Ron’s midsection causing the red-head to double over from the force. However that didn’t stop him from tackling his dark-haired ex-friend and using awful wrestling tactics to pinch, pin and punch the boy on the ground.

Harry twisted and was out of that tangle quickly, kicking the taller boy away from him and rolling back up into a standing position. He stepped back and waited to see what the other Gryffindor would do. Sure enough the boy attacked again only this time he remembered that he was a Wizard and had pulled out his wand.

“Titillandus,” Ron yelled, swinging his wand in a motion that would call forth the spell to cause Harry to fall into uncontrolled laughter because of a tickling sensation.

Harry side-stepped that. He waved his wand up to erect a shield silently, as the next spell flew forward and crashed against the shield in a spark of light.

Ron was getting more and more desperate to beat Harry Potter that he quite forgot that he was supposed to be begging for the green-eyed boy to return to the Quidditch team. “You’ll get yours Potter,” he snarled while sending an, “Impedimenta!”

The shield was still up when Harry sent a ‘Jelly-Fingers Curse’ (…i…) in order to stop Ron from using his wand. Unfortunately the spell was easy to side step if someone saw it coming.

Harry tried to talk to Ron. He cast another spell ‘Ter-glacies Telums’ (3 ice darts) (…ii…), as he said, “Ron this is ridiculous. Why are you fighting me this? It’s obvious that you don’t want me on the team or in the tower. So why are not you letting me step down for someone who has the greater ambition to be on the Quidditch team?”

Ron yelled, threw down his wand and charged the Boy-Who-Lived again. This time his swings connected with the shield making it flash a couple of times before collapsing under the physical assault of human fists. The shield was good against magic, but poor against this kind of onslaught.

‘Interesting,’ Harry thought, as tucked his wand away quickly. He wasn’t going to throw his down on the ground like the other Gryffindor had done. It might have gotten broken. In the meantime he was defending himself with the hand-to-hand methods that he had been learning and that was just frustrating the red-head even more.

“What’s the matter Ron,” Harry asked in a semi-angry, but thoughtful tone. It was as though an idea had just now occurred to him regarding something about Ron and the reason for his increased, unceasing attack. “Did I say something wrong?” He counter attacked and landed a few hits in order to keep the bruises slightly even between the two of them. “Did I say a bad word? Perhaps a dreaded A-word... could it be ‘Ambition’?”

Ron swung out and clocked Harry hard in the jaw. “Don’t say that we are Slytherins, we’re Gryffindors and I thought you knew what that meant.”
“Is that what you’re afraid of,” Harry double-tapped him, once in the left eye and once to the jaw too knocking the taller youth down. “That having any ambition automatically makes you a Slytherin.” He stopped defending when Ron stopped attacking him to stare at him in hurt, frustrated anger. “Ambition doesn’t mean you’re a Slytherin you bleeding idiot! It doesn’t make you Dark or mean that you’d follow a Dark Lord or anything like that.”

“What would you know about it,” Ron stated. “You don’t know what it means to be a Gryffindor.”

“And you do?” Harry retorted. “Maybe you should read Hogwarts: A History, because Godric Gryffindor was a Knight of the Realm. He defended the weak and those unable to do so for themselves. He was not a bully and to become a Knight you have to have ‘ambition’ to past the tests. You have to want it bad enough to do what is needed in order to become a Knight.”

Ron just looked away, red-faced and confused.

“You want to be known as a Knight,” Harry said in a questioning tone. “Knights don’t bully people and they certainly don’t order someone to give up their own ambition or force them into doing something that they don’t want to do. They certainly don’t judge a person by their race, colour of skin or what effin’ ‘House’ they were sorted at when they went to a Magical School. You do know that not all Magical Schools have this ridiculous House System.”

“What would you about it,” Ron shouted. “You had everything given to you. You don’t have to do anything and the world will give you whatever you ask without you even having to work for it.”

“Why the hell would I want something like that,” Harry asked, spitting out the question. “You’ve known me from year one. Was there ever a time I asked for anything that I got? I didn’t ask to be on the Gryffindor Quidditch team in first year, I was told I had too by Professor McGonagall and Oliver Wood. Besides it’s only in the Wizarding World that this kind of shite happens to me.”

“You got the fame,” Ron stated. “Money, everything!”

“I didn’t ask for it and I certainly didn’t want it, if I lived in the Muggle World I’d be classed just the same as you, poor and nobody important enough to notice,” Harry said. “The money I have was not given to me by strangers on the street. It was my school trust and it was set up by the Potter Estates on the day that I was born. Every Potter automatically gets a school trust, not that that is any of your business nor is it your business to tell me how I can spend that money or any money I earn.”

“You still got onto the Quidditch team as a first year, when you were only eligible to try-out in second year,” Ron said trying another approach.

“Again,” Harry said. “I ‘didn’t’ bloody ask to be on the bloody Quidditch team. I didn’t even know what Quidditch was until I saw my ‘first’ game here. Last chance Ron, what the hell is wrong with having ambition? You have to realize that in order for ‘all’ of the Founders to create this amazing magical school they had to have ambition and the skill to do it. Ambition back then was not limited to just Salazar Slytherin.”

“You’re wrong,” Ron shouted, as though being louder would make Harry agree with him.

“I’m not,” Harry shouted right back. “You’re just lazy because you don’t want to work for your goals, yet. In the Mirror of Erised, which is the Mirror of Desire just so you know, you saw yourself as older, good-looking, the Captain of the Quidditch Team and Head Boy, but you’ve never once worked toward those goals. Second year students are allowed to try out for the team, but you didn’t, did you?”
He continued to yell loudly as they were currently now having a shouting match. “You became a Prefect in fourth year, which is a step in the proper direction to becoming Head Boy, but you don’t care about the responsibility of being a Prefect. You just wanted the Prefect Badge and were proud because it was something that Harry bloody Potter didn’t get. It wasn’t handed to him. But let me tell a secret, I NEVER WANTED IT.”

“Shut up,” Ron yelled.

“You’re family is full of ambition,” Harry shouted and then he continued softly which had the red-head’s attention, who also had tears floating in his eyes caused by the frustration and his overwhelmed emotions at the ideas that his friend was bringing forward.

“Your father works at the Ministry of Magic because that was his goal, his choice and he needed ‘ambition’ just to get in there. It helped that he found a Department that he loved, but that’s not enough for you to respect him for that choice, is it? Bill followed the path of a Curse-Breaker, a dangerous yet very ‘ambitious’ profession that could get him recognition if he develops new spells to break curses in the process of working at it. Charlie works as a Dragon Tamer on a Reserve because he loves them and the work is full-filling to him. If he wasn’t ‘ambitious’ for the job he’d have been putting his life in danger because of it. The twins are absolutely ‘ambitious’ because they knew what they wanted to do from an early age. It takes a set of steel bullocks and lot of ambition to compete with against a market that has been dominated by only three companies in those particular areas. Even Percy is following his dream and ‘ambition’ to get into the Ministry of Magic because it’s obvious that his ‘ambition’ is to become the Minister of Magic someday and God help us if he does because he follows rules too much to be normal.”

“Don’t you talk about my family that way,” Ron shouted. “They’re not DARK.”

“Why does having ambition mean that you’re Dark,” Harry shouted. “Explain that to me because I don’t understand it. There are plenty of ‘ambitious’ Muggles in the world, with no magic which means they ‘can’t’ become Dark, so explain to me why you think that having a little, some or a lot of ambition makes you Dark or that it even means that you’ll become Dark?”

Ron’s head tilted back at everything that Harry was saying. It was like he was being struck by something that he had never once thought of in his life and it came to him like physical blows. They were just as painful.

Finally he shouted out, “Because the bloody Sorting Hat said so.”

Harry’s eyes widened. “Because a magical ‘hat’ told you,” he said incredulously. “A device created to separate students into like minded Houses, told you that being ambitious is a sign that you are Dark. Are you mad?”

Ron swung a fist one last time, knocking the Boy-Who-Lived to the ground who only twisted his legs up and took the tall red-head down with a sweep of them. The air was knocked out of him and then he heard, “You when you passed McGonagall’s giant chess set. You chose the position of the Knight on the board because you knew that you’d have to be sacrificed. You put me in the position of the Bishop, they’re usually known as advisors and Hermione in the position of the Rook, an unbending tower. As a knight you guided us on the board, but where do you think the Founders would fit on a chess board.”

“I don’t know,” Ron said winded from his fight and from the fall. He didn’t know where Harry was going with this, but for some reason he was glad that there was a change of topic.

“Godric Gryffindor was a real knight,” Harry continued. “He was a defender of the realm and he
guided those with magic to come to a school, like you guided us in on the board. Salazar Slytherin was an adviser to a king from what I’ve read before joining with the other Founders to create this school. He too felt the need to gather the young and ensure that the magical race of Wizard Humans survived by any means. I think he’d be a bishop too, on the chess board. Rowena Ravenclaw was a woman and women back then had one purpose and that was to have children in order to continue the species, but she favoured knowledge and was probably a Seer, I think.”

“So what, you think she’d be a Tower,” Ron said getting the gist of what Harry was saying.

“Yeah,” Harry said. “A right solid one too and secretive, she had to be secretive about it because she wouldn’t have been able to show what she knew to any Muggle men back in those days, if that was her only choices for marriage.”

“What about Hufflepuff,” Ron said wondering just where the original Puffer would fit on a large chess board.

“She’d be one of the most dangerous pieces,” Harry said. “She’s a pawn.”

“You’re nutters,” Ron chuckled.

“Nope,” Harry said with a wicked grin and looking at the Gryffindor, he explained. “She’s the kind of pawn that struggles completely across the board through patience, determination and then becomes a queen.”

He sat up looking at the red-head and then said, “I may have played the bishop in the game, but I’m not an advisor for anything. I have too many things to do regarding Voldemort and you know it. That bastard is still out there and even the adults of the Wizarding World are looking to me to know what to do and I can’t tell them anything because I haven’t learned how to guide, lead, strategize or even fight properly in all of the time that I’ve been coming to this school.”

He was standing tall and yet there was some child-like vulnerability that Ron had to acknowledge because he was seeing it, but he gave no voice to it. Harry just continued, “I haven’t even been allowed the chance to figure out what my own ambition will be or where I’d fit in when everything is over. I don’t want to even be an Auror anymore. I barely have a year and a half left of school before I’m thrown out into the ‘adult’ world and everyone, including you expects me to ‘be a kid, live like teenager, play Quidditch’, but I can’t, not anymore. If you want to remain my friend, then be a friend. Respect my choices and let me be.”

Harry sighed, walked to the door, leaving the other Gryffindor lying there and said, “We’re done here. Don’t ask me to play when I can’t and you know it. I still consider ‘you’ to be one of my close friends, but I can’t live with you guys in the Tower with all I have yet to learn.”

Ron watched him leave and knew right then that whatever they had linking them like Best Friends was over. He recalled the entire fight and wondered why he strongly believed that ‘Ambition’ was such a terrible thing and then he knew. In his heart he knew that it was because he didn’t have it yet. It never hit him that he would be out in the world soon because his parents, all of his brothers and his sister were there supporting him and his need to ‘be a child, for now.”

He stood and was at the door watching Harry Potter walk away. The Boy-Who-Lived greeted some fourth year Hufflepuffs kindly and answered the many D.A.D.A. questions that they peppered him with, with the calm patience of an adult. It was then that he saw the Gold Boy Gryffindor, as a possible the Knight of the House because he was doing something just like what he had told Ron a Knight was. He helped however he could with the tools he had and Harry really knew stuff about D.A.D.A. that even Ron had found odd sometimes last year during their rebel period with their
Knights back in the day of Godric Gryffindor were soldiers, fighters and they were called on by Kings to maintain peace, order and fight enemies. They defended larger kingdoms, as well as small towns and they did so with everything that they learned and they did it for everyone that asked for help.

Harry was fighting for the Wizarding World in much the same manner, but his abilities and knowledge were limited because he hadn’t trained for it during his younger years. The Dark Lord is currently over seventy years old, if Ron remembered correctly, because Hagrid’s about that age and according to Harry the Dark Lord was a Prefect when Hagrid was a younger student.

‘How much knowledge did the Dark Lord gain over time in order to still be the stuff of my nightmares,’ Ron thought. ‘Nightmares... I bet that’s one of the main reasons why he’s chosen to have private rooms.’

HPHPHP

Flash-forward

Ron looked out over the sea of faces looking at him in his Keeper position. It was an easy position to fill because he’d always been a Keeper when his brothers played. He’d learned a few tricks, but now was the time to prove he earned his place on the team.

In the sea of watching faces was a dark-haired youth with a very distinguishing mark on his forehead. Just because he didn’t play anymore didn’t mean that he wouldn’t be there to cheer on his old friend. He was sitting next to a bushy-haired girl who’d insisted that he come watch the game with her. He didn’t need convincing, he wanted to go despite keeping the company of one who continually passed on miss-information to her fellow students because she wanted to remain at the ‘Top of the Class’. That situation was neither here nor there that moment.

Harry Potter watched and cheered every time Ron successfully stopped a goal. He booed the Ravenclaw team and held his breath when the Snitch was being chased by the two Seekers.

All attempts at getting a goal against the Gryffindors were admirable and difficult because for some reason the Ravenclaws couldn’t get the Quaffle through even one hoop this game. The Seekers were chasing the Snitch and the Bludgers buzzed through the players being batted about by the Beaters from both teams. Still not one gong rang because Ron defended the goal with perverse determination.

A loud buzzer halted the game and one hand in the air held the fluttering snitch. “270 points to Zero, for Gryffindor,” Seamus Finnegan shouted excitedly from his position as announcer. “Gryffindor pulled off a miracle today folks as our own Mr. Ronald Weasley prevented the valiant Ravenclaws from even scoring ten points. Well done Ron!”

The crowds in the Gryffindor stands were jumping up and down, insane and high on that revelation, while the other Houses made their way down the stairs and back to the school. The Gryffindor team did their flyby three times before landing to go change.

During the flyby Ron heard Harry shouting loudly and with pride in his voice, “I knew you could do it. Well done!”

Ron was grinning all the way back to the showers and he knew that despite the lack of being ‘best friends’ with the Boy-Who-Lived or even hanging out with him at all hours of the day, he knew that
he still had someone that believed in him and could be known as a just and good friend.

‘Just a friend who could one day become a close friend or a best friend again,’ he thought with a strange regretful smile. ‘But right now being just a friend with just Harry…,’ he paused in his thoughts with another rueful grin. ‘… not Potter or the Boy-Who-Lived, but just Harry. Yeah, I think that I can do that.’

HPHPHP

Harry was about to walk into Charms class when someone called his name. He looked around and saw that it was Ron. He smiled and said, “Hey Ron. That was a bloody brilliant game Saturday, think you’ll be able to pull it off again?”

“Don’t know,” Ron said rubbing the back of his neck. “Share a desk,” he asked looking into the room.

“Okay,” Harry said acknowledging the fact that they were still students and still friends, good enough not to let a few bad thoughts change things. There was time enough to figure it out in the future, when they were older, just how much of their friendship would remain.

“Pygmy Puffs,” Ron whispered.

“What?”

“Password to the Tower,” Ron said, not repeating it. “Want to study together after I finish D.A.D.A? I have some questions about what we’re studying and I’m wondering if you’ve seen these spells during your independent study.”

“We’ll see,” Harry said with a smile. He sat down and soon they were busy reviewing the history of Charms, how some have been improved over time and how some have been lost.

HPHPHP

TBC...

(…i…) Found on web site known as, “A-Z Lexicon of Harry Potter”
(…ii…) Latin-English Dictionary - Love dual-language dictionaries. Making up spells for HP stories is fun!
Hermione had been acting strangely for a while now. Ever since her battle at the Ministry of Magic, something about her had changed.

It was only a week after Ron had given Harry the new password for Gryffindor Tower, that the redhead noticed that there was something off about her this year or else this was the first time that Ron had ever noticed it. She was constantly asking to review Harry’s essays until the Boy-Who-Lived finally blew up in her face.

“How’s all this you’re doing? My essay was finished and ready to hand in.”

“I’m correcting some glaringly obvious errors,” she said, continuing to make the corrections directly on the completed essay in red ink.

“Blood hell Hermione,” Harry said loudly walking into the Gryffindor Common room to see what she was up to. “What do you think you’re doing? My essay was finished and ready to hand in.”

The students watch in surprised awe, as the red ink flew from Harry’s essay back into Hermione’s face and clothes, causing her to step back with a shriek. “Harry,” she yelled while using the sleeve of her school robe to wipe away the drippy ink. “What was that?”

“IT’s a protection against corrections to my essay from someone who’s not recognized as a Professor in this school,” Harry said shaking the rest of the supplemental ink off of his essay.

The red-ink was still on his paper, as far as the other Gryffs could see, but he pulled off a clear film of transparency paper that contained Hermione’s supposed corrections. He was planning to use it as proof to his Wizarding Counsellor to show just how badly his essays had been influenced by the girl in the past. He used a special ink sealing powder on the transparency and then quickly put it and all of his school work away, including his now unblemished and completed potions essay.

“I didn’t ask you to make any corrections,” he told her. “I never even asked you to review it and you knew that I had finished it.” He was glad that he had planned to be there at this time because there was no other way to catch her at it. He had warned Ron to keep an eye out for it with the younger years; just in case she did the same thing to theirs, but it only looked she was doing to the essays belonging to them and those of their year who asked for her assistance.

Ron did confess that his work was usually bad anyway that whatever she did was sure that it was improved. All Harry had to do was point out a few things on Ron’s previous essay in Transfiguration that had been answered correctly before Hermione had even touched it.

“You could have gotten a higher O.W.L. mark, if you knew the right answer instead of believing that she was right and choosing to study from your marked essays,” Harry had pointed out. “It’s your choice to believe her from now on though because I refuse to let her continue doing this to my hard work.”

Ron had decided to set up his essays in pretty much the same manner only he didn’t have the transparency paper spells, but he did have the duplication spells and left duplicates around for her to
correct, if she ever asked for it. They were planning to hand in their proper essays even if she
’suggested’ a few ‘important corrections’.

‘I don’t believe that she did that,’ he thought. ‘I’m glad Harry’s method was to confront her, but
now we’ll see what’s going on with mine.’

“Hermione,” Ron said. “Did you by any chance see my Transfiguration essay around here?”

“Yes,” she said looking over the table that she had commandeered in the Gryffindor Common
room with the firm belief that she was the only one who studied and pointed to the scroll on top of a stack
of books. “It’s right there. I made some corrections on it too, but if you’re going to complain like
Harry then I’m going to have to refuse to help you study in the future. Do you understand?”

“I was just asking if you’d seen it,” Ron said, opening it up and sure enough it was full of red marks
and suggested corrections. He looked to Harry and nodded. “I don’t care if you made corrections
because I’m usually pants at Transfiguration anyway.”

The two boys left the room to go to the Room of Requirement for Harry’s last one-hour period of the
day. It was there that they had planned to review everything and to figure out how to bring this up to
the girl and possibly to the Professors’ attention.

“I can’t believe this,” Ron said staring at the red-marked essay. He pulled out his original and noticed
that the most important point of the essay had been removed. Even he knew about it, but it wasn’t
like he cared about the returned work from a professor before, but now that he looked back there
were times that he could have sworn that he had the correct information the first time around.

“You’d have gotten Acceptable on that one,” Harry said pointing to the red-marked essay. “Probably
with a note about how the most salient point had not been introduced or something like that.”

“You’re right,” Ron said. “From studying in here, I know that removing this information would
make me think that what I had originally written down was wrong and I would continue to think
that. Why? It’s not like I was ever competing with her for top of class.”

“I don’t know,” Harry said. “Maybe that’s the position she feels she has to have in our ‘Trio’. I mean
it’s not like she really has many other friends or study partners. I know that in the beginning we
asked her questions that she was happy in answering because it made her feel like she belonged, but
now that we’re nearing the end of our time here at Hogwarts, what if she’s afraid of not being good
enough?”

“No Harry,” Ron said. “She’s always been bossy, nosy and wanting someone to tell her that she’s
good in school or something like that. She’s seeking praise for knowing things, but this,” he looked
at his marked up duplicated essay. “This is wrong. As a Prefect, if we caught someone doing
something like this they’d be brought before their Head of House, punished with detentions,
including an extreme loss of House points and they’d lose their Prefect Badge.”

Harry sighed and nodded his head. “So, what now, do you want to hand your original work before
or after we confront her? Should we let a Professor know about this? Not McGonagall because I
seriously doubt that she’d believe that Hermione would be capable of something like this.”

“Before,” Ron said. “We need the actual proof to confront her with what she’s been doing. We can
re-take our O.W.L.s, but it’s too late to make corrections for this year for whatever courses we need
to get N.E.W.T.s for a particular subject next year. We can test into a class next year by re-taking our
O.W.L.s for a particular class and pass another exam for the sixth year, if we want, but we’d have to
book those tests with the Professors of those classes. They’d also have to agree to re-test us.”
“You’re going to need potions if you’re still planning to become an Auror,” Harry stated. “I can help you there, but we’ll have to study here in this room, unless you want Professor Snape to be involved.”

Ron paused for a moment and then said, “He will have to be involved eventually, but I want to brush up on my previous years first. What do you think?”

Harry looked at his course schedule and knew that it was time for his Saturday afternoons to be concentrated only on Potions. He’d done nearly every other subject. He was going to have to discuss something with Professor Snape first as the Potions Master of the school. Any insight to the type of books they should be reading or studying from would help.

“Let me check something out first and we should meet with Snape for you so that he can agree to letting you be re-tested for your Potions O.W.L. and let you take an exam to be exempt from sixth year classes,” Harry said. “How about you meet me here on the Saturday afternoon, around one, before Halloween?”

“Blimey,” Ron said. ‘I’d forgotten about Halloween. Do you think V…Vol…Voldemort is planning something against the school this year?’

“Ron,” Harry said. “How about you call Voldemort by his ‘real’ name?”

“What’s that,” Ron said.

“Tom Riddle,” Harry said with a grin.

Ron frowned. He thought about it and then said, ‘That doesn’t sound very pureblood.’

“Nope,” Harry’s grinned turned wicked. “He’s a half-blood. His father was a Muggle.”

Ron’s eyes widened and his mouth dropped into an O of surprise. “Think we should spread it around the school this year?”

“I have an idea,” Harry said. He leaned forward and told Ron of his plan.

Ron was surprised and then he laughed. “We have to get the twins involved,” he said chuckling. “They’d love it and I think that they have some of the basic spells or potions already in place, it’s just a matter of putting it altogether with a purpose.”

“You Owl them to let them know what we’re looking for and to meet us at the Shrieking Shack during one of our Hogsmeade week-ends,” Harry said. “I bought the Shack this summer from the town of Hogsmeade. The town council was only too happy to have it being used for something useful.”

“What are you going to do,” Ron asked.

“I’m planning to use it as a Gallery for students to display their projects and ideas,” Harry said. “The first floor is for all arts and physical projects. The second floor will be for the projects or ideas the need help. I’m not sure how to present that. I am thinking of something like putting together display boards behind protective glass with suggestion boxes in front so that the general public can give ideas for the students to test them.”

The Room of Requirement set up a few of the displays that Harry was talking about for the boys to
Harry looked at the design plans on his notes next to a copy of the design. “They have to be plain and solid for the students,” he marked. “I’m pretty sure that this design is available, but I wonder… Let me have my Goblin manager look into this item.” He turned to look at Ron and then asked a very personal question. “Ron do you have your own personal vault at Gringotts?”

Ron frowned at the question, but he answered truthfully. “No,” he said. “You need a minimum amount of 50 Galleons to open up a vault in Gringotts. You have to keep those 50g in there for one full year before they will allow you to empty the vault and keep the vault key. If you make money and take out that money they don’t care as long as the original fifty remains in there.”

“If I emptied one of the Black vaults, signed it over to you and gave you the key,” Harry said. “Would you then own the vault or would you need to have the original amount to take possession of it, like a new vault?”

“I suppose that you’d have to ask,” Ron said. “I’m not sure how that would work though. Why?”

“Just a thought,” Harry said. “Why don’t you let me look into it? If it can be done, then it would negate that 50g rule for opening a new vault wouldn’t it?”

Ron opened and then closed his mouth. “They’re your vaults Harry,” he said. “I’d like to try to get my own started, but it takes time to even earn 10g because I’m only a student.”

“Yeah, it’s true that earning money will take time,” Harry said. “Why not get a vault this way in the mean time? I’m sure that the twins had their own vault after they had started selling their stuff here at the school. You just need the time to make your own money.”

“What are you not telling me?”

“I can’t tell you that right now,” Harry said. “I don’t want to give you any hope about it, so will you let me look into that? Sirius would approve of this. It’s sneaky and kind of Marauderish, only it’s not a true prank, but it is kind of grand on the scale things, if it has never been done before. I mean if the Goblins had never thought of this, they’ll flip.”

“You’re right,” Ron said. “All right, but it will only be temporary until we finish school and only if it can be done.”

“Deal,” Harry said hold out his hand. Ron took it and that’s when they both noticed the time. “Damnit we have to leave or else get caught out after curfew.” He walked to the door and said, “See you tomorrow.”

Ron was out of the door and looked as the door fade into the wall. He turned in the opposite direction saying, “Later Harry.”
Griphook received the missive from one of his most active clients. He was surprised that it arrived with a completely black owl, known as a Sooty. However this owl seemed to have an even temperament, but again his surprise arose from the fact that the letter came from Harry Potter.

He read through the contents, raised an eyebrow and then felt the sudden need to actually look something up among the Bank’s policies, regulations and records. The information that his client was asking about didn’t seem to be known to him and that hasn’t happened to him in a long time.

He read through his standards books that contained the procedures regarding account management, specifically related to the opening and closing of an account. Then he looked up vault transference and cross-referenced that with Harry’s question about whether transferring an empty vault to a new client would be considered the same as opening a brand new vault and account for a client.

He looked up some past records for when clients had given away vaults to people in Wills. He reviewed them again to see if any vaults were ever transferred to the name of someone that had never opened a vault at Gringotts and what the process was for that.

“Well,” Griphook muttered to himself. “It doesn’t seem to have happened in the recent past. “ He paused when a knock occurred at his office door. “Enter.”

“Sir,” it was the one of the younger goblins that Harry Potter had hired this summer by the name of Crosspatch in charge of estate management with a human co-worker. “I received a letter from Lord Potter, but I do not know any good lawyers in the bank that I can recommend to him that would satisfy his needs. He did mention that the estate may have a couple listed on file, but he was hesitant to contact them due to what happened during the summer before his fifth year.”

“Let me see the letter,” Griphook said. His surprise at the letter’s contents was noted by the younger goblin, but fortunately Crosspatch knew better than to question his elders’ reactions to missives from clients. “You will stay here to learn how to look up Lawyers and Lawyer speciality. You may begin with those books over there. I recommend that you look into the ones that have been associated with the Potter or Black names first and see if any were involved in with the current contracts of the incoming business ventures.”

“Thank you sir,” Crosspatch said. He had wondered why his new boss Harry Potter would send him such a letter when he wasn’t trained to do these things and that’s when he realized that the Boy-Who-Lived was making sure that he’d go to someone wiser to get that training. Maybe that particular someone, just like Griphook Bonebreaker, would teach him and that looks just like what he was doing. He turned to the books with a grin and began the arduous task of finding a lawyer or a couple of lawyers for contract specific jobs.

HPHPHP

Harry waited for a reply from his Estate employees at Gringotts. He knew that Griphook would guide the young Crosspatch in his training and probably help the young one to become a good estate manager.

With the help of Winky and Dobby, the female Sooty owl’s offspring were bonded to him and to his Estate. They chose to live at Galaelio’s Spindle for the time being, but Hedwig had agreed that she was ready to seek a mate and therefore was willing to train the nestlings in their new magical tasks as Owl Post carriers.

There were three Sooty nestlings in total and all three were given names. The names didn’t matter as they didn’t affect the owl’s personality, but they were Amida (Japanese, god of death), Dev (Persian, god of war) and Lulong (Bornio, goddess of love). They were currently living with Harry in order to
get used to his magical aura and that was one of the important parts of training, what were basically wild magical owls. Should these Sooty children breed too, then their offspring were likely to have an easier time living with magical Humans, delivering their Post.

The original Sooty Owl, the Snowy Owl and the Barn Owl had been feral too long to consider becoming magical post owls, but did agree to bring their offspring for evaluation. Should they be strong enough magically, then Harry could effectively supply Eeylops Owl Emporium with some new stock. All this depended on what the newer owls would have to say.

The Snowy Owl from Galelios Spindle was currently courting Hedwig and therefore was tolerating Harry’s magical presence in order for something to occur in the spring. Harry consulted with Winky and Dobby about the nesting needs that any mated owls would have. He agreed to the purchase of a nesting pod that Hedwig could use should he still be at school when her eggs dropped in the spring.

He also told the house-elves to get a bigger cage for the owls and the pod, just in case. He didn’t want to have to move anything for when they returned to the Watermill and then Harry told Dobby to set up several other pods in the Owery of the Watermill and at Galileo’s Spindle. That way if the Sooty nestlings were doing a good enough job being Post Owls, by the time it came for Hedwig to do as nature intended she’d be able to go to the Watermill House or another secluded place directly without beginning to nest at the school, while waiting for her Master to finish his year.

Hedwig sounded her agreement to all of these arrangements and the other Snowy looked at the female Snowy Owl. He said something to her and she hopped to Harry’s shoulder. She got his attention and then hopped down to the book that he had been using in order to find names for the Sooty nestlings. She clicked her beak looking at the male Snowy Owl who bopped his head up and down in agreement.

Harry got the message loud and clear. He looked at the male Snowy Owl and said, “You want me to find you a name too.” The Owl bopped its fluffy head up and down. “All right then,” the Gryffindor said. “Give me a moment. Hmmm...here, how about Brono, he’s the Norse god of daylight.”

The male owl looked Harry and bopped his head up and down, hooting his agreement. It was a good name for him. It didn’t sound patronizing in any way shape or form.

Winky set up the owl corner with a magical plant called a Puzzle Tree. It had multiple branches that were perfect to use as perches for owls and since it was in a planter, the growth of the tree was magically limited. The base of the planter widened to encompass a large area that was used for the owl droppings. The droppings vanished with a clean scent that was complementary to the tree’s faint cinnimony smell and that way the occupants of the rooms were never bothered by the smell of guano or the necessary cleanup.

**HPHPHP**

Harry received a letter that was delivered by one of his new Sooty nestlings for the first time in the Great Hall. This was just the week before Halloween and just after Harry had told Ron about his Saturday afternoon training plans for improving their understanding and the Potions scores. The all black Post Owl was young, but it drew a lot of attention because it was such a rare thing to see.

He was about to take the letter when Hermione hissed, “Harry you don’t know who it’s from.”

Harry snorted and said, “Of course I know who it’s from. I can tell by the seal on the letter.” He reached over when she grabbed his wrist to stop him. “What are you doing let go of me?”

She had her wand out and was about to point it at the Owl, when he shoved her hand aside stopping
her from casting whatever spell she was planning to cast. He pushed her out of the way and scooped up the young terrified owl.

“Don’t you dare cast a spell on my owl,” Harry said, anger colouring his tone.

“Your owl,” Hermione questioned. “Your owl is a Snowy Owl.”

“You can have more than one owl Hermione,” he said with an exasperated sigh. He took the letter and pocketed it. Then he pulled out an owl treat and said, “Well done, I’m proud you Dev, but you’d better return to the rooms for now. Let your mum know that you did a good job, if she’s visiting today.” The young owl puffed up his feathers with pride, nibbled his Master’s fingers gently, hooted and flew out of his Master’s hand. He flew over the bushy-haired girl that had pointed her wand and threatened him. He chose to let loose a dropping in her hair before leaving the Hall.

She shrieked in outrage and cleaned it up quickly with a spell. Unfortunately every time she used that spell her hair frizzed up due to the magical static.

“Why did you go and do that for Hermione,” Ron asked her. He was surprised that she would pull out her wand in the Great Hall.

“It could’ve been from someone who wanted to harm Harry,” she huffed. “I don’t know what’s wrong with the two of you. Don’t you care about you own safety?” She said to Harry.

“Of course I do,” Harry said. Ron echoed an agreement. “But I told you that was one of my new owls.”

“But its Dark,” Hermione said.

“I’m sorry, what?”

“It’s a Dark Creature,” she said crossing her arms daring them to prove her wrong.

Harry and Ron exchanged a look and soon were laughing out loud. “Hermione, its colouring may be dark, but it is not a Dark Creature,” Ron said still laughing. “It’s just a regular Post Owl. Eeylops had some a couple years ago, but they are still only owls.”

“Some were experimented on during the last war,” Hermione said. “You can’t trust those owls. Are they even registered as Post Owls?”

Harry shook his head from side to side wondering what he was going to do with that girl. “Hermione,” he said gently and in a near patronizing tone. “That’s really none of your business. However if you ever cast a spell at any of my owls I will not be pleased. See you later Ron,” he said indicating that they’d meet up for their next session in the Room of Requirement to practice potions. “I have a meeting right now with one of my Professors.”

“Later,” Ron waved to his friend. He turned to Hermione and some of the other Gryffindors that had been listening. “Harry has three Sooty Owls that are learning to be Post Owls, two male and one female. They will be delivering his Post as often as Hedwig permits it. No action is to be taken against them, is that clear? Oh, and just to relieve your minds about it, yes they are Registered Post Owls with the Department of Owl Post Regulations. Does that satisfy you now Miss Nosy?”

“Ron,” Hermione said, but stopped not sure how to respond.

Ron quickly finished his breakfast and headed towards the one rare room that he never voluntarily stepped in until this day. He walked into the library looking for specific book titles that had been
suggested by Harry. He would need to check and review them before they began their potions study.

“No all happy in Gryffindor Trio paradice,” Malfoy drawled out after having seen the books that the red-head was stacking in order to check out. He’d followed him out of curiosity.

“That’s none of your business Malfoy,” Ron returned, too occupied with his search for the book that contained information ingredient properties related to plants. He found it on a low shelf and bent over to pick it up.

Draco was stunned that the other boy had basically turned his back to him and was now bending over, as though he didn’t care how it looked. He was fully prepared to make a comment about how the red-head was always bending over for Potter or some such, but he was stopped by the clear blue eyes that turned to look down into his.

“Don’t make any comments today please,” Ron said. He knew the direction that Malfoy’s thoughts had turned to and he wasn’t in the mood to hear any flack. “If you really feel like making some type of comment could you please defer it for another day, when I’m likely to take the time and reply in kind?” He smirked, walked up to Madam Pince’s desk. He then signed out the books and left the library in short order.

‘Merlin what was I thinking about,’ Ron thought looked down at the books in his hand. He glanced back to see the stumped look on the blonde’s face and then he quickly left to go meet up with Harry.

‘By Morgana’s frozen tits,’ Draco thought. ‘When did his voice sound like that and since when did he ever use a sentence with the word please. It sounded like he was getting culture training or something.’ The blonde Slytherin shook his head and then remembered the books that the Gryffindor had taken with him. He smirked and thought, ‘There’s a bit a fuel in there. That Gryffindor is suddenly interested potions, not bloody likely. I’ll just have to keep my eye on him for that.’

HPHPHP

Harry took a few moments to read his correspondence from Griphook before meeting with Ron in the Room of Requirement.

HPHPHP

Mr. Potter,

I have reviewed your requests and was astonished to learn that you are indeed correct in your supposition that should you empty a Family vault and then give it away, the new owner is not penalized like any new account owner. There is no need for the 50 Galleon limit to be observed, because while technically the account is new to the new owner, the physical vault will have been in existence for years.

My superiors could only have supposed that the reason behind such is that no one has ever thought of giving away empty vaults for the purpose of bypassing the new vault criteria.

I feel that I must inform you that having now brought this situation up we feel that it is necessary to implement new procedures and processes to protect against a new owner from receiving an empty Family vault for the purpose of bypassing our current new accounts and new vault regulations. However since the processes need to be debated, analyzed and written, perhaps you will have enough time to transfer an inconsequential Family vault to your friend.

You will both have to meet with a Gringotts representative in order for the proper paperwork to take
place and for your friend to get his vault key from us. I’m willing to meet you both during your next Hogsmeade weekend. Just let me know when it is and I will be there with all the appropriate paperwork. You will of course need to inform me whose name is to be the beneficiary of said ‘empty’ vault.

As to your other request, we found two lawyers that specialize in Creative Copyright Law and Contractual Law. They are currently enjoying several challenging issues that arise from Misters Fred and George Weasley’s business practices. I believe that they would suit your needs as well and I can ensure that they come along to our meeting.

I look forward to your next correspondence,

Griphook Bonebreaker
Chief of Vault Security
Primary Accounts Manager for Potter, Black & Grindelwald
Gringotts Bank, U.K.

HPHPHP

Harry quickly wrote a reply to let the Goblin know when the next Hogsmeade weekend was and that Griphook was to bring the two Lawyers with him.

Next he dashed off a brief letter to the store called ‘Apo The Carry, Distributing & Such’ (...i...) in Hogsmeade requesting two full sets of potions kits for first, second and third year students. The kits were to be owled to him immediately as he stated in his letter that he needed to replace kits that had been destroyed in an unfortunate incident. He was handsomely compensating them for the trouble and short notice. His accounts manager wasn’t going to be pleased about it, but there was nothing he could do about it.

Professor Snape had discussed with Harry the best method to begin his re-study process and then advised that a potions room would be made available to them once they were prepared to be re-examined on a per year basis only. He wasn’t looking forward to it, but he had been most displeased to know that the essays which some of the Gryffindors’ had turned in had similar errors to the supposed ‘corrections’ he was noting on the transparency that the Boy-Who-Lived had brought to him.

He handed the Gryffindor a list of books to use in order to review potions, including a full list of first, second and third year potions that they should have mastered by now. “I will schedule year tests when you advise me that you’ve completed these potions and the studies,” Severus told him. “I will not correct your studies, as it will remain up to you and your friend to decide when you’re ready for the year exam. I will be testing your potions and I will be scheduling one exam sometime in November for the two of you in first and second year potions together. Your third year exam will take place at least two or three weeks after. I will be giving you an exam incorporating all three years just before the Holidays and if either of you do not take that final exam then, you’ll forfeit my assistance for the remainder of the year. Is that clear?”

“Yes sir,” Harry said his lighting up in anticipation. “We are anxious to prove you wrong.”

“I doubt that you’ll succeed,” the Potions Master said with a sneer, but Harry saw the teasing light in the man’s eyes. This came from the time they spent together during the summer. The man was reluctant to acknowledge that the young man was quite intelligent in his methods of study. “We’ll see,” he conceded. “You still have to maintain an O average in this class though and I’ll not allow you to slack off, even if you are trying to improve yourself through self study.”
“Yes sir,” Harry said. “Did you want to know the name of my friend?”

“No,” Severus said. “I prefer to be surprised.”

“Professor,” Harry said in tone that told the man that he knew he was lying. However because the man was teasing him, he teased right back. “You’ll see him during that the first exam anyway. I have to dash, got homework to do and I don’t want to fall behind now do I?” He was quickly walking backwards to the door of the room and he was out of it faster than Severus could say Quidditch.

The infernal boy had the audacity of saying, “See you later Professor Snape,” while his next class of students, a mix of second year Ravenclaws and Hufflepuffs, were gaping at Harry and then turned their stunned expressions onto him.

“Get in here and set up your cauldrons,” he growled at them, which caused them to scurry. “Infernal brat,” he muttered as he closed the door sharply. He swished his wand to put the potion information on the board and said, “A simple healing salve. Get to it and if you’re quiet I’ll remain at my desk until they’re all brewed. One sound and I’ll be forced to hover over next the culprit disturbing my peace, am I clear?”

“Yes sir,” the children squeaked.

Silence reigned in the Potions class for the next hour, which caused Severus some amount of concern however it wasn’t like he couldn’t see where the errors were taking place. “Mr. West,” he barked before the student added the wrong ingredient to his potion. “Are you planning to cause hives to appear on your partner’s skin by adding mugwort before the slivers of dragon tongue?” The student in question quickly made the proper corrections and that’s when he said, “I thought not.”

The children wanted to speak, oh how they wanted to speak and chatter, but they were testing their Potions Master’s word and it seemed like he didn’t need to hover in order to correct their work with scathing remarks. Luckily they were almost done and the clock showed that they had a few minutes left to bottle their work, submit them to the man and clean their workstations properly.

**HOGSMEADE – OCTOBER, JUST BEFORE HALLOWEEN**

“I’m telling you Ron,” Harry said. “This will be brilliant. You just wait and see.”

“All right,” his friend said.

They stepped into Madam Rosmerta’s and were ushered into a back room. Waiting for them was a goblin and two wizards that looked like they were Lawyers.

“Pay up Giles,” one wizard said. “I told you that a Weasley was involved.”

“You pay up Hatter,” the other wizard said. “I told you that with this Goblin the Boy-Who-Lived would be involved.”

“Gentlemen,” the goblin said with his hand extended with grasping, snapping fingers. “I believe that I wagered that you’d both be right.”

The two men looked at the goblin and both said, “You knew!”

“Never said I didn’t, did I,” Griphook grinned. “Pay up!”
The one called Giles was wearing smart blue robes. He reached into a pocket of his robe and handed over one Galleon. The other who was called Hatter, reached into his grey robes and pulled out the same amount.

“Thank you gentlemen,” Griphook said pocketing the Galleons. It was a bet only for fun, but he had enjoyed making the wager. “Mr. Potter and Mr. Weasley, please join us.”

“Brilliant Griphook,” Harry said, sitting at the table.

“Bloody brilliant,” Ron agreed, sitting next to his friend.

“First here are the papers for you to sign Mr. Potter,” Griphook began. He watched as Harry read them, nodded in agreement that they contained exactly what he wanted, an empty vault transfer to Ron. He picked up the quill that he had been given and signed on all of the dotted lines and used his ring with a stick of magical banking wax to seal the deal. The goblin took the papers witnessed the request and then he had Ron sign at all the appropriate places.

“Done,” the goblin said. “Here’s your vault key Mr. Weasley.” He handed a small black key. “I would recommend that you reinforce the security on it as soon as you can.” Harry looked at his accounts manager sharply. Griphook nodded and said, “It’s true. These gentlemen will ensure that you are protected and that the contracts will be legal.”

“Thank you,” Harry said.

Ron looked confused, but also said, “Thank you.”

“If you’ll allow me to begin,” Giles asked his companion.

“Whatsoever,” is all that came out of Mr. Hatter’s mouth.

“I believe that introductions are in order,” Harry stated. “I’m Harry Potter; to my left is Griphook Bonebreaker Head of Security and Executive Manager to all of my Estates. To my right is my good friend Ronald Weasley.”

“I’m Gregory Giles,” the man in the blue robe said. “This is my partner, Archibald Hatter. We prefer to be addressed by our surnames.”


“Ron,” the red-headed boy said.

“Very well,” Giles began. “You manager has brought your concerns to us and we’ve decided to accept you both as our clients. Here is our standard contract and fees.”

“Oh don’t you worry about this first meeting young man,” Hatter said to Ron as he noticed the boy about to say something. “This first meeting is Gratis for you both. We rather enjoy doing things in this manner that way whenever shares of products become available we request that ten percent be considered a gift to us.”

“Three percent,” Harry said. “We don’t yet know how well our products will be received. We are after all using existing patterns.”

“Yes, but with different spells and purpose,” Hatter pointed out. “Your display cases, once patented will be in demand, eight percent”
“How can you be sure of that,” Ron asked and then countered, “Four percent.”

“Because we will be the first customers,” Giles said. “We were intrigued by the idea and we would like to set up a couple in the Lobby of our business... seven percent.”

“What is your business,” Ron asked, not countering, but waiting for Harry to make the choice.

“We are the Hatles Law Firm,” Giles said with a grimace at the name. They had been fighting over it for years and yet it was the fight that made it fun.

Harry’s eyes sparkled and Ron snorted, trying to hold in a laugh. “So what needs to be done,” Harry asked when he felt that he had some control of his emotions back. “These were only rough plans...five percent.”

“Plans that upon review need to be creator protected before the world begins to see even one actual table-display of this nature,” Hatter said. He ignored his partner’s ire about the company name. He pulled out Ministry Forms filled and only needing signatures to be filed correctly. “These have to be signed properly and then we file them at the Ministry...six percent.”

“Some ideas like these plans will be stored in the Ministry’s Grand Patent book,” Giles told the boys. “A copy of the book is available to anyone who builds things, like magical trunks or mirrors. If a company or business had any interest in your design they will contact your Lawyers, which would be us, and request the use of your patent. The payment for use is based on originality and the number of times that they wish to use the design.”

Hatter continued from there, “First we file the patent and then we find a business willing to build a few.”

“We’ve figured out that we need about fifty for our project,” Harry said. “After that the business can produce them, when they pay for the right to produce them.” He looked at Griphook regarding the last counter offer and received a nod that it was quite a good idea to accept. “Six percent, deal’s done!”

“Why so many,” Giles said.

“We’re converting the Shrieking Shack into a Hogwarts Student Display Museum & Emporium,” Harry said.

“That’s right,” Ron piped in. “The display cases will be placed on the second floor against the walls and in a maze pattern. The displays will contain student ideas for projects and these will allow the public or other students a chance to contribute to it.”

“Now that’s a smashing idea,” Giles said and then cautioned the boys. “You’ll need to give out copies of these patent forms to the students and make sure that they understand that there are magical consequences for creating something using someone’s idea without compensating them for it. Six percent, deal’s done!”

Griphook looked over the prepared contract and using Goblin magic he inserted the percentage that the Law Firm would be receiving out the total income that the two young men would be making. Ironically the first batch of money they’d be making is their own by commissioning the desk-displays for the Shrieking Shack. All parties initialled, signed, sealed in wax or blood their agreement for this contract.

Only Ron had to sign with a blood print because he had never even thought about creating his own personal seal. It could only be done with the permission from his Head of Family, but he knew that
Bill, Charlie and Percy had all gone to their father for it. He wondered if the Twins had created one for the two of them for their business, but it was acceptable to have a personal seal when dealing with personal business outside of the larger Family matters.

“It ethics isn’t it,” Harry said tucking away a copy of the contract into his portable desk and storing Ron’s copy with it, in the meantime for his friend. “There is some kind of magically ethical law that will prevent them from succeeding if they don’t acknowledge the contribution. What about the students putting their ideas on display could they not use a Copyright spell to claim original ownership? I mean that would be a way for them to credit someone with the final solution that made their project or idea actually work.”

“You are smart. Yes they can and it would help if they filed those ideas with the Ministry too in order to really protect them,” Hatter told him. “Now is there anything else that we can do for you today?”

“Yes, I have something else,” Harry said. “I created something and have used a Copyright spell to protect it, but I know that it could be improved upon.”

“What is it,” Giles asked, curiosity lacing his features.

“I’m currently taking fourth year Runes and came up with this during one of our study hall sessions,” Harry said. “I had help, but the base idea was mine.” He pulled out a copy of the huge Runes Cross-Reference Table. He opened it up in full and then everyone gasped when they noticed the crest flickering faintly in the background.

“Only powerful Witches or Wizards can claim something in the name of their Family,” Griphook said.

“Or they went and had their name protected,” Ron observed. “Anyone thinking of making money off of the name Harry Potter or his Family would have to think twice because of that…” He pointed to the crest and the initial HP with the date and the copyright symbol.

“You are quite correct young man,” Hatter observed. “Is there any chance that you are good at playing chess?”

“He’s one of the best,” Harry said.

“Harry,” Ron said flushing slightly with praise.

“Unfortunately he hasn’t been able to test himself against other students because there is no Wizard’s Chess Club at the school,” Harry said. “I can think of a couple of ways to test him, but…”

“Why are you asking,” Ron interrupted. He didn’t even want to dream of being tested for such.

“There isn’t a club,” Giles said. “That’s surprising.”

“There was always one when I was there,” Hatter said.

“The reason that we’re asking is,” Giles began.

Hatter continued, “We have an internship during the summers at our office…”

“But only to a student that can…”

“Beat the both of us at Wizard’s Chess,” Hatter finished.
“Why such a strange method of getting an intern,” Harry asked, seeing the shocked look that his friend had.

“Contractual Law and the Creative Copyright Law, requires someone with a strategic mind,” Giles said. “We usually intern the top three chess players from Hogwarts, but for the last two years no one has even applied.”

“We were wondering if internship placement was no longer in effect or offered to students,” Hatter said.

“I’d have to ask my brothers,” Ron said. “They’d be in a better position to let me know. I do know that Percy did an internship at the Department of Regulatory Affairs, but I don’t know how he was hired for it.”

“Didn’t the twins claim that they wanted to intern at Zonko’s last year or the year before,” Harry said. “I don’t know if they did or not, though.”

“They didn’t,” Ron stated. “They were home during their summers and hadn’t mentioned anything about interning to any shop or business.”

“Right,” Hatter said. He pulled out two chess boards and set them up. One had white pieces facing Ron and the other had black pieces facing him. “Let’s begin.”

“Why do you get to begin,” Giles asked.

“Because it is my turn to play while you fiddle with the Laws,” Hatter said. He turned to Ron and said, “You start with white. Giles will play white, while he’s working. Go on then.”

Ron looked at Harry confused and his friend said, “Oh just go for it. You’re a good player so why not see, if you can intern with them. Maybe you’ll find your own ambition.”

Ron just huffed, but there was something about the Laws that these two Wizards practiced that somehow felt comfortably right to him. He understood most of what he had read in the forms and he was curious about their work.

“May I ask questions while we play,” Ron asked, making his first move on the board and keeping an eye out on the second board. Sure enough they were both going to play him at the same time.

“Of course,” Hatter said.

In the meantime, Giles concentrated on his game as well as explaining to Harry what happened when he created the full Runes Cross-Reference table. He explained how it was automatically filed because of what Harry had done this summer in regards to his name and Family names. He also explained that any improvements to it in the future would be exactly like the process for the display table that they had been discussing early.

“It will only happen once you fully file this design properly,” Giles said. “Also it will depend on how many copies you created.”

“There are one hundred and one total,” Harry said. “There’s the original and then one hundred copies. I gave most of the copies to my classmates and allowed them to claim the Runes reference like ordinary books. The Family Crest and the copyright logo are still on theirs, though.”

“As it should be,” Giles said. He pulled out a couple of reference books, forms that needed to be filed before Harry gave away the remainder of his reference tables and sample contracts that the
young man needed to know about how to fill before allowing the ‘new’ table to be available for mass production or modified before production.

The chess games were well in hand and it was not without distraction for Giles because he was doing actual work while playing chess. Hatter was another matter. He kept an eye on both boards and it was clear that the young man he had challenged knew what he was doing.

“Checkmate Mr. Giles,” Ron said as he turned his focus to the last few moves on the other board.

“What,” Giles said looking over. He huffed and then turned back to Harry to finish filing the necessary paperwork for his reference table. “I hate it when we play like this.”

“You love it enough when it is your turn to only play,” Hatter said. He frowned because every move he could make would land him in check. He even had to pull out the move of switching the King with the Castle, but it didn’t help him. “Damn,” he said looking at Ron’s face. The young man was still calculating moves. He wasn’t even gloating or anything. “I believe that I will have to concede this game to you.”

Ron blinked and then really looked at the board. He smiled and said, “I was wondering when you’d see it.”

“I see it,” Hatter sighed, toppling his King. The little chess piece wasn’t happy about it, but it knew too that there was no other move to make. “Are you about done?”

“Yes we’re done,” Giles said putting away all of the papers. “You boys can now take your plans to a builder unless you have someone in mind.”

“I was thinking of hiring a business that is Goblin run,” Harry said to Griphook. “They’d have access to more materials.”

“Any World Wood,” Griphook said. “They do have more selections and have enough workers to produce the quantity you need in the limited time that you’re requesting. They have a branch of their store here, so we can go and see if they are currently occupied at this time of year or not.”

“That’s it then,” Harry said. “Can I hire your firm to handle my contracts? I mean on a more permanent basis. I’d like to see that business today, too. I’d also like to see if they can refurbish the Shrieking Shack before making the displays.”

“Of course,” Hatter said. “We have a standard retainer contract that can be renewed every six-months or yearly as per the choice of the client. However we must be clear that we do not handle Family Law cases nor do we handle Criminal Law cases either.”

“I understand,” Harry said. “You’re specialists in one type of Law. I’ll have to see who’s on retainer with the Family Estates for other types of cases. Griphook is my accounts manager so please send all bills to him.”

“So Mr. Weasley,” Hatter said. “This is a copy of the standard internship agreement for summer studies. We ask that you review it and drop by our office someday soon in order to get a feel for the environment. You find in the scroll some of what our expectations will be. You will be tested in various situations just likely to trip up young ones.”

Ron pocketed the scroll given to him with a pleased grin.

All five left the back room in order to go visit ‘Any World Wood’ to see if the company would accept a contract for Harry’s idea of a Hogwarts Accomplishment Display Museum. The name of the
Draco Malfoy and a couple of his Slytherin fellows were in the tavern when they noticed the quintet leave.

“Damn Draco,” Blaise Zabini said. “I’ve never seen a Goblin away from the Bank before.”

“Those two Wizards are famous for the type of Law they practice,” Theodore Nott said. “They’re very good at it too or else they wouldn’t be that well known.”

“I wonder why they were here to meet those two,” Draco said looking from Harry to Ron and lingering on Ron for a bit. The red-head seems to have changed again. There was some kind of inner confidence about him that made the blonde Slytherin want to provoke him into a fight in order to take him down a peg or two. Although for some reason he had a feeling that it wouldn’t work today.

“Should we bug them,” Nott asked.

“I don’t think so,” Draco said. “We don’t want to be messing with them when they’re in the company of a Goblin.”

“Why not,” Blaise asked.

“That one is the Head of Gringotts Vault Security, if I’m not mistaken,” Draco said. “It’d bad business to mess with the Gryffindors on a lark in front of one like him.”

The other two blanched slightly and Nott asked. “How can you tell one from the other?”

“My father taught me to recognise those in management,” Draco said with pursed lips and a sour look. “He believed that was necessary in order to not get shafted. It was good practice for any place of business to know who’s in charge of what, including which Goblin is the Head of which department.”

Theodore, Theo to his friends, nodded his head in agreement and said, “That makes too much sense.”

“I’m glad you did,” Blaise said. “I think we should just avoid those two for today.”

Draco finished his butterbeer and said, “I’m going to the Ole’ Bookshop.”

“I’ll join you,” Blaise said. “I want to look for something new.”

Theo laughed and said, “There’s nothing new in that shop.”

“True,” Blaise said. “However one of the younger years asked me about an Arithmancy book and I’m curious to see of the shop would have it. It wasn’t on the catalogue list at Flourish & Blotts or in McNicker’s Books either.”


“Arithmancy Structure & Tables by Level,” Blaise said. “Apparently it was written by someone with the name Maximillion Tremont. Have you ever heard of the book?”

“No, but that doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist,” Draco said. He snapped his fingers to call one of the Malfoy house-elves. “Twiddle, go to Malfoy Manor’s Library and see if there is a book on the
shelves called Arithmancy Structure & Tables by Level, written by a Maximillion Tremont. If it’s there, please bring it to me, if not you pop back and tell me immediately, please.”

“Yes sirs, young Master sirs,” Twiddle said popping away.

The other two Slytherins looked at him and he only shrugged, “He’s one of the few that know how to read and I’d rather keep on his good side because he can usually locate any book in the Malfoy Libraries.”

Half a minute later the house-elf popped back with a huge book floating behind him. “Shrink for travel,” Draco said. “Make it so that it will return to its original size in five hours.”

Twiddle snapped his fingers and handed the book to his young Master. He popped away when Draco made a shooing motion and said, “Return to your duties.”

“Well it looks like it exists,” Draco said handing it over for Blaise to look at it. “Now let’s go see if the Ole’ Bookshop has any copies.”

Blaise looked at the publishing information and the dates. “I doubt it,” he said. “This was published in the Wizarding United States of America.” He looked at the other’s stunned expressions. “Ten years ago.”

“Ten years…” Draco paused and was thinking. “Ten years…”

“Ten years ago the Ministry of Magic put a temporary ban on the importation of new products from any country,” Theo said. “That’s when there was a shipment of hexed toys that were badly labelled and several children got hurt.”

“I remember,” Draco said. “I had one of those. They were fun, but there was an addictive quality added to the toy that sucked the life-force from us. Severus had to keep me in potions until the addiction wore off. It was like having Dragon Pox and a stomach flu at the same time.”

“Nasty business that,” Blaise said. “However the ban was temporary because of that situation, so no new products, books or anything else came into the country at that time. If this book was only published once, then of course none of the British shops would carry it. Most businesses are still afraid to import new things, even though the ban was lifted two years later.”

“Which is why purely magical shopping areas like Diagon Alley wouldn’t have anything like net-books or music pods,” Draco commented on. “Bloody hell, the Ministry of Magic is keeping us in the dark. Do you know if the ban is still in effect?”

“It isn’t,” a Wizard in smart blue robes told him. He was the same Wizard that had accompanied Harry Potter out of the Tavern. “But the Ministry didn’t advertise it because that way…”

The three Slytherins nodded. They understood the reasons for keeping the majority of their World ignorant of a few things. “Things are starting to trickle in though,” Draco said. “I saw a net-book.”

“Pardon,” the Wizard said. “You saw a muggle device working in a magical area.”

“Yes,” Draco said.

“Brilliant,” the Wizard said. “I love those things. Oh, pardon my manners, Gregory Giles of Hatles Law Firm. I only saw them when I was in the Muggle World at an Internet Café about a year ago. Useful little things they are.”
“Draco Malfoy,” the blonde said. “That’s Theodore Nott and Blaise Zabini.” He pointed to his two fellow Slytherins.

“Who had the net-book and do you know where one could be purchased,” Giles asked.

“Malfoy,” Harry said coming up to the group wondering why Draco was subtly waving to him to come towards them.

“We’ll leave you now,” Draco said to the man, looking at Harry, but not saying another word. The other two knew that something had happened, but since they wanted to go see if the Ole’ Bookstore could put in an order from outside the country for a brand new Arithmancy text they ignored the subtle communication that had occurred.

“Mr. Giles,” Harry said looking at the blonde Slytherin confused about why he had been waved over.

“Net-books that work in a magical environment,” he said watching the other students walk away quickly to get out of hearing range. “Apparently you know about them.”

“There is a store in Muggle London,” Harry said understanding why he was called over. “I’ll give you a map to the location for it and tell you how to get to the right section of the store. Come on I think you’re due for another drink, now that all contracts are complete.”

He lead the stunned man back into the Tavern, only this time Hatter joined them for a real drink while Harry explained about how he found the store and how their unique layout hid them from the UK Ministry of Magic’s attention.

HPHPHP

TBC…

(...i...) ‘Apo The Carry, Distributers & Such’ - made up name, not meant to represent any person, place or thing, real or imagined and of course it’s punny.
Harry and Ron have just finished being tested on the third year potions curriculum. Both had passed with flying colours and were graded with an O for their written and practical test. They had passed all three primary Hogwarts years with Os.

Professor Snape was impressed by the changes in the two and wondered what differences occurred regarding their study habits or their interest. As he promised he prepared a final exam that incorporated the first three years of Potions and he sent them each an Owl with the time and day that they were to show up.

To their surprise they were not going to be examined at the same time. Worse there would be no written portion to the exam because they were to have an oral examination instead, followed by a multiple potions practical. This meant that they’d be making more than one potion at the same time and they would be graded on how they prioritized their work and the ingredient preparation.

“I think that we should have expected this from him,” Harry said. “Are you all right Ron?”

“Not quite,” the red-head told him truthfully. “I don’t know that I can do this.”

“Sure you can,” Harry said. “You’ve never had a problem standing up for whatever reason and think of this test as a preview of going before Magistrates in Court. You’ll have to do that too, if you’re going to go into Law.”

“I never…” Ron looked at his friend, who had a mischievous grin. “Since when have I ever considered going into Law.”

“Well, if you’re still interested in being an Auror, you’d still have to stand up in court anyway in order to present your cases,” Harry said. “You’d have to defend your reasons for arresting certain people, besides I’ve seen you looking over the internship contract from time to time. Come on we can practice in the Room of Requirement.”

“How,” Ron said gathering up his school belongings. “How can we possibly practice for something like this?”

Harry now had a positively evil grin on his face. “I might have been in touch with your brothers with an idea,” he said. “I’ve gotten permission from Professor Snape to test them on the condition that no one will ever know about them.”

Ron’s eyes were wide and surprised. They went to the Room and called up a Potions lab completely set for first level potions only. “Harry what do you have in mind,” his friend said. “What are you up to?”

“In the Muggle World there are tons of food items, not unlike your brothers’ products, that sometime
poke fun at people or creatures,” Harry stared. “I remember a product called Count Chocula Cereal. Dudley wanted it all the time, but eventually the people who made them sort of stopped producing it when they wanted something else to go out on the market.”

“So what did this cereal have that made it so special,” Ron said.

“It had chocolate marshmallows and cereal bits in the shape of bats because the Muggles believe that bats are associated with vampires,” Harry said. “It was play-on words that changed Count Dracula into Count Chocula.”

“What does this have to do with the twins,” Ron said.

“I presented them with an idea for a mini-chocolate bundle called ‘Voldie Voles’, ” Harry said. “It turns your eyes red and snakelike and it makes you hiss like a snake complete with a forked tongue. They look like tiny pure milk chocolate voles.”

“What does this have to do with having to taking an oral exam in potions,” Ron said looking around the room only to come face to face with grinning Professor Snape, who put something to his face that let out a couple of bright flashes of light.

“Waahhh,” he yelled. “Pp.. Prof…Professor Snape?”

Then Snape did something completely out of character, he laughed in the presence of a student. “Oh man,” Professor Snape said. “You should see your face. It’s priceless.”

One excruciating minute of staring in shock at the laughing Professor, who periodically flashed a light in his face and continued laughing, was beginning to unnerve the Gryffindor. Suddenly the man’s appearance wavered and soon there was Harry clutching his middle, just like the Professor had been doing.

“Completely priceless,” Harry said. He pulled out the same device only this time he turned it to show Ron the digital pictures that he took with the item. “See,” he said. “You’ve been captured on candid camera.”

“Bloody hell Harry,” Ron said turning red with embarrassment and slight frustrated anger. “What the bloody hell was that?”

“Snape Snacks,” Harry said. He held out a bag to Ron and explained. “The twins wanted to do something similar to the Voles, but it didn’t work. I told them the problems because they only wanted a person to get Snape’s nose and a scowl on their faces. I did tell twins that I felt compelled to mention this to Professor Snape and they agreed to never put out that product. Making fun of someone, especially our Professor, it’s just not cool you know.”

“All right,” Ron said. “But why do you still have those…”

“We can use these to practice,” Harry explained. “Once these are gone that’s it, there’s no more and your brothers assured me that they destroyed the formula too. If we still need the practice, we could always use our left over Polyjuice Potion, but then we’d have to get some hairs or fingernails from Professor Snape to be able to use it and it would last an hour not like these. We wouldn’t have Snape’s voice either, if we used the Polyjuice.”

“What leftover…” Ron looked at his friend and said, “You didn’t.”

“I did,” Harry said. “I looked up how long it lasts and that stuff will last forever if properly placed in cold storage stasis.” He shrugged and said, “Hermione was in no position to clean up the mess and
so I went back to pack up the potion and clean up the place.”

“How many snacks are left,” Ron said.

“Quite a bit,” Harry said. “It’s cumulative too. One snack lasts one minutes, but taking two snacks last two minutes, four snacks…”

“Four minutes,” Ron said. “So we can call out questions to each other looking and acting like Snape in order to help…”

“Yeah,” Harry said. “In order to help reduce our nervousness around him in order to succeed at the oral examination, that why this place is set-up this way so that we can test in different two ways; one with questions being asked and answered or two when working on more than one potion and when he’s likely to come up and ask questions while we’re working on them. What do you think?”

“Brilliant,” Ron said. “My turn,” he popped several snacks in his mouth. “Mr. Potter,” he said in Snape’s voice. “Set up your and station and brew me a simple Bruise Balm, Healing Draft and Pepper-Up.”

Harry giggled and then laughed harder when Ron frowned at him from behind the mask of Professor Snape. He slowly collected himself and went to work. They had a difficult time keeping to business, but the non-marketable prank helped both of them to relax and prepare for their upcoming hellish exam.

HPHPHP

Harry had chosen not to return to his new home at the Olde Watermill for the Holidays. He felt that it would be safer to just remain at the school. Besides he felt that the tradition should be upheld and there was more room to learn and do magic if he stayed in school.

He wasn’t alone either because Ron had written to his parents asking permission to stay. There was only going to be a few other students around too, with a minimal amount of Professor-type supervision. The Heads of House were all present including the Headmaster and Professor Sinistra who was in charge of Arithmancy.

Ron was miffed when he noticed that Draco Malfoy was staying behind too, but he didn’t blame him. He’d read in the papers that Malfoy’s father got let out on another technicality and was currently staying at home. He developed a pretty good idea of the bigger picture about some aspects of Malfoy’s life. He just didn’t like the way the blonde drew his attention. He couldn’t figure out why it was happening either and it was starting to piss him off for some unknown reason.

“It’s a good thing that Hermione is not staying behind this year,” Harry stated. “She might get jealous of your new fixation.”

“What are you talking about,” Ron said slowly eating his meal and staring at the blonde Slytherin.

“Ron you’ve only been staring at him since he arrived in the Great Hall,” Harry said with a chuckle, but without cruelty.

Ron turned to look at Harry and when Harry pointed at the Slytherin, Ron was right back to staring at him. “Oh,” Ron said, quickly turning to look at his plate with a slight blush and slowly eat his meal, muttering, “It’s not what you think.”

“I don’t think anything of it,” Harry said. “Just letting you know that there’s something different is all.” He paused to look at the blonde and noticed that Draco was looking at Ron just as much as Ron
had been looking back.

‘This is positively grade school stuff,’ Harry thought smiling to himself. ‘It’s too cute. Rivals who aren’t rivals, but blood enemies and yet... I never asked what that blood feud was about. I wonder if Ron would tell me.’

Harry looked at Ron and then asked, “Do you think I should give gifts to the Professors this year?”

“What?”

“I was thinking of getting small gifts for the Professors this year,” Harry said. “I figured that would at least be the polite thing to do, what do you think?”

“Why would you do that,” Ron asked pushing away his plate of half finished dinner.

“A sign of maturity,” Harry said with a grin.

“A sign of mentality,” Ron replied with his own grin. “What were you planning?”

“I got a few weird books for each Professor,” Harry said. “I found some strange things and a couple are rare. They were not something commonly available in the U.K. and they weren’t expensive. I was just thinking of something supplemental.”

“If you getting them books, why bother with anything else,” Ron said.

“They’re going to arrive within the next two days,” Harry said. “I was just thinking of something additional and personal, like a singing stone for McGonagall that has old Scottish lullabies or love songs.”

“I get it,” Ron said. “What about Sprout?”

“She’d get muggle seeds,” Harry said. “It’s a seed of the month type thing from a muggle company. The Headmaster’s getting the same from a candy company, candy of the month. Flitwick, well I figured a bottle of Brandywine, because that’s what Madam Rosemerta told me is his favourite. Professor Sinistra, I’m getting her an Arithmancy weekly magazine that I know she does not subscribe to. What do you think?”

“They’re all right, but what about Professor Snape,” Ron said. “What about his extra gift?”

Harry looked at Ron in such a way that Ron just knew he was about to get dirty. “What,” he said. “What is going on in that head of yours?”

“Snape’s book arrived earlier than the others,” Harry said. “In it are a few potions that require rare ingredients.” He just looked at Ron and said, “Third floor, girl’s loo.”

“WHAT???” Ron said loudly. He swallowed when everyone looked at him. “Oh, no, you don’t mean… you can’t mean…” He leaned in and whispered, “You don’t want to go back down there, do you?”

“Maybe,” Harry said. “Look Ron you don’t have to go with me, but I’d like you to be there. I’d have Dobby and Winky with me, but it is a ruddy great snake and I’m definitely going to need your help. You know that when harvesting potions ingredients we can’t use magic.”

“Yeah, yeah,” Ron said with a shudder. “I know you can’t use magic.” He looked at his friend and then thought, ‘What the hell? It’s just another adventure with Harry.’
“All right, I’ll go,” Ron said. “You did after all come up with something that helped us to pass those potions exams.”

“You do realize that with only fourth and fifth year potions left he might make us sit in with the O.W.L. students this year to take that exam again,” Harry said.

Ron gaped in shock and said, “No bloody way will I take re-take any O.W.L.s.”

Harry laughed and then stood up to leave. “Gotta go work on some of my essays,” he said. “I don’t want to be stuck doing all of my school-work last minute. You should re-take that O.W.L. to show that you’ve improved.”

“Give me a bloody complex you do,” Ron said. “See ya later. I guess I should do the same.”

“Meet you in the Library,” Harry said. “I’ve got to get my notes and books. Get us a side room where we can talk.”

“Right then,” Ron said, getting up to leave as well. “See you there.”

The boys made their plans for the next day and since Charlie had given them a basic animal harvesting kit the year before they took that with them along with several containers of various types in order to collect the samples. The two Gryffindors reached the girl’s toilette on the third floor and that’s when the red-head noticed that his friend had picked up a straggler.

“Harry,” Ron called out. “You pick up a stray snake?”

“Nah,” Harry said as they arrived at the door. “I did promise him that if he behaved and didn’t egg you on into a fight that he’d get to see something, not even his Head of House has seen yet.”

He led them into the girl’s toilette without even a care if some girl was in there doing her business. “Potter,” Malfoy hissed. “You should have knocked at least and you never said we’d be going into the girl’s loo.”

“Don’t worry,” Harry said confidently. “This one’s never used by the girl’s going to school.”

“Merlin’s balls, why n...” Draco wanted to continue, but his answer floated up from one of the stalls. “Hallo Harry,” Moaning Myrtle said with a twittering giggle. “I see that you’re still alive.”

“Yes, still alive,” Harry said with a friendly smile.

“You’re going down there again, aren’t you?” She asked.

“Yes,” Harry said. “We shouldn’t be too long.”

“You know if you die down there, you’ll be welcome to share my toilette,” Myrtle said with a giggle. She giggled again and then flew up over their heads and dove down to rest in her regular spot in the U-bend.

“Merlin Potter,” Malfoy observed. “You’ll make friends with all sorts, won’t you?”

“I hang out with you,” Harry replied slyly. “So I guess I do.” He focussed his attention on one particular sink and when he found the engraving he hissed, (...Open...).

Ron shuddered and turned to see the blonde’s reaction to the Parseltongue language. The Slytherin’s eyes were dilated and his mouth was open. It was strange, but Harry had once told him that the
password was only the word ‘Open’. That didn’t explain the extra sounds that came out of his mouth when he said the word, but it was clearly having some kind of effect on the blonde that gave Ron something to think on.

‘Later,’ he thought. ‘I’ll think about that much later.’

Draco watched in awe as the sink moved out of the way and a tunnel heading down appeared. His reactions to the hissing of the snake-language were only natural to him and soothing to him, but there was something visceral about it too. Even if it came from a half-blood Wizard with too much power and not enough focus.

He leaned over to look and took a sniff of the air. “Doesn’t look clean,” he observed which cause his companions to laugh. “What?”

“No one’s been down there since second year,” Harry said and Ron nodded. “It’s also underground, so when could it be cleaned? Time to go,” he said jumping in and yelling laughter all the way down with war whoops at varying turns.

Ron shrugged, shaking his head at the Boy-Who-Lived’s antic. “He once said that Muggles have theme parks where the parents take kids to go on rides that twist and turn, just like this tunnel. I think they’re insane.” He jumped in and yelled back up, “Welcome to insanity!”

“Bloody barmy gits,” Draco muttered. He sent down a rolling magical ball that filled the tunnel and contained a cleaning spell. He then quickly followed them down to land on his feet with a crunch of small bones under them. “Urgh, this place is disgusting.

“There’s more,” Harry said. “Come on you two, we need to shore up the wall before we can get by.”

He quickly used a spell that was mainly used by Cartographers and Explorers. It was a mapping spell that helped mark sections of where they were to where they’ve been. It was a pretty map, but it had nothing on his father’s map of the school, however it would be useful for them if they were going to explore the tunnels that the Basilisk lived in after they obtained a few potions ingredients from the great snake.

Several spells later the rock slide was transfigured into a solid wall and was sturdier then the time that it fell in when Lockhart used Ron’s old ‘spell-o taped’ wand in their second year. They soon arrived that the round door complete with a snake motif. Harry hissed the password again and they all watched, riveted to the hissing snakes and clicking sounds as each tumbler was released.

Through that entrance and into the main tunnels they walked. The corridor and side openings were warded by the boys in order to prevent any surprises from happening. Torches lit up with magic by their presence and soon they were in the cool cavern with the non-decaying Basilisk snake lay in rigor.

“Whoah,” Ron said and then he looked at his friend remembering how small they all were during their second year. “Harry did you really?”

“Yep,” Harry said casually. “Fawkes helped by taking out the eyes.” He looked closer at the gruesome creature. “Too bad about that though.”


“I’d have loved to sell off the ocular fluid. Still I’ll extract the remains and give them to Professor Snape. I’m sure that he can do something useful with them,” Harry stated normally as though he was talking about the weather. “Dobby, Winky,” he called to his house-elves.
“Hello you two,” he said in reply to the bubbly greetings. “We need the tables set up here and here in order to catalogue the harvesting of the Basilisk and to hold our containers. We’re only going to pick a few choice things today and then we’ll see about the rest of this ruddy great beast.”

“How do you rate two house-elves Potter,” Draco asked. “They’re obviously personal ones and not normal house-hold ones.”

“I asked and they said yes,” Harry stated. “I knew that they were free, Dobby used to be your father’s and Winky was released under bad circumstances.”

Draco stood there for a while in shock about what he had learned from Potter. This was nothing compared to the D.A.D.A. lessons he’d been enduring with the Boy-Who-Lived. All right if he was honest with himself he liked the lessons, but they usually worked on lessons and didn’t exchange all that much personal information.

He walked around the snake and noticed the huge stone face in behind it. He wondered if there was something in there as it was clear that the mouth was capable of opening.

Ron watched the blonde wondering he wasn’t fighting with him or even bothering to reach for his wand. ‘Bah,’ he thought. ‘He’s been civil, as Hermione would say. I wonder how come Harry’s so calm, although it’s clear that something’s up with those two.’

“Potter you ever go in there,” Draco asked removing his outer robes to reveal a set of patched jeans and a comfortable sweater that had obviously been worn a few times. These were clothes he had been using for his D.A.D.A. lessons with Harry.

“Where,” Harry said looking up from the notes to harvest one of the beast’s venom sacks. The Slytherin pointed to the statue. “Nope, but that’s where the snake came out of when Riddle called it.”

“Riddle, the git,” Ron said with a grin. “Hey are you going to do that thing you told me about?”

“Yep,” Harry said. “It’s all set for the day the students come back to Hogwarts. The information will be released over Diagon Alley, Hogsmeade and every magical town or community, plus at every Wizarding travel station. It will be the biggest media revelation in the history of Wizards and Witches and it will contain the absolute truth.”

Ron chuckled. He couldn’t wait to see the shocked faces of the students. “I wonder what the Prophet will have to say about it.”

“Don’t know, don’t care,” Harry said. “Let’s get this started. The sooner I have what I need the sooner that we can explore the mouth of the statue, come on Draco.” He said calling back the Slytherin who was trying to figure out how to get the stone face to open up.

Harry’s house-elves helped to gather and store the ingredients that the Gryffindor wanted to keep. He allowed Ron to take a few items to ship to his brothers for their pranks and kept a few that he wanted to use as extra credit research material for Potions.

Draco also was permitted to keep a few of the items that they had harvested. He was quite pleased to receive one of the beast’s fangs and he planned to carve it into some kind of knife handle. Both Gryffindors thought about that and they too took a couple of fangs for that purpose.

“Winky please take everything here to my rooms,” Harry said. “We’ll see you at dinner time.”

“Winky be making dinner for Master Harry and friends,” she asked hopping from one foot to the next in hopes that that was what he was going to do.
Harry smiled and nodded, “All right. You can make us a meal. Please serve us wheel pasta with spiced steak and tomatoes, plus Caesar salad on the side. Surprise us with the dessert.”

“Winkys be pleased,” she said popping out with their things and leaving behind a Basilisk that looked like it had been bitten in the face. They hadn’t taken much from the snake and it was clear that more could be harvested, but the boys were not sure how to do it or what to store things in.

“Well let’s see what we can for the next couple of hours,” Harry said walking up to the stone face that filled the far side of the wall. He stood at the same spot that Riddle had back in his second year. “Get your brooms ready and Dobby,” he called out to the waiting house-elf. “Get ready to pop to my side. We might need some elf help in there depending on what we find.”

“I bes waitin for Master Harry’s call,” Dobby said. “I harvest some more while waitins.”

“Okay,” Harry said. “Please don’t overdo it though.” The house-elf only nodded happily being of service.

The two Gryffindors and one Slytherin thought they were ready for whatever would happen when the mouth of the stone stature opened. They held their breath and two of the three waited to hear the magical phrase that would active the door.

“I can’t believe I’m going to say this,” Harry muttered before hissing loudly in Parseltongue. (...Speak to me Salazar Slytherin, oh greatest of the Hogwarts four...) (...i...)

“What’s he saying,” Draco whispered to Ron.

Ron just looked at the blonde and asked, “Can’t you guess?”

“No,” Draco replied. “It’s just a string of hisses to me.”

“He’s saying, ‘Speak to me Salazar Slytherin, oh greatest of the Hogwarts four’,” Ron told him with a sour look on his expressive face.

“You mean to tell me that this,” Draco point at the face. “This monkey-faced looking thing is supposed to represent Salazar Slytherin and that he would set up such a self-aggrandizing password?”

“Yes,” Harry said as they watched the mouth open and they waited to see if something would come out of it before going in. “Although I’m quite sure that the password had been changed by Tom about sixty years ago. Slytherin kept things simple and his password for the Chamber and for the door back there was simply the word ‘open’.”

“Well that makes sense,” Draco sniffed. “By the way who’s Tom?”

Harry grinned mischievously and said, “You’ll find out in the New Year. Are you two ready?”

“We’ll need mirrors just in case,” Ron said, conjuring up a hand held one. “We’ll also need only one person to look around the corners at a time.”

“Yeah and hope that Snape has some ‘Anti-Petrification Potion’ on hand,” Harry said, conjuring up his own mirror.

Draco copied the boys and was about to ask why they needed them, but then his eyes fell onto the carcass of Basilisk. He nodded that he was ready.
The boys mounted their brooms and lifted off. They slowly made their way through the darkened tunnel, because that’s exactly what it was. Slowly and cautiously they flew through the entrance section and noticed that there were more tunnels branching off. They flew down several branching tunnels to come up at dead ends filled with regurgitated bones and sloughed off snake skin.

Several of the tunnels ended in doors that Harry made notes about the doors on the map that they had been making since their descent. They were going down a last tunnel when the noticed that there was light drifting in. Curious, but cautious they made their way to the end only to find that the tunnel lead them out of doors and into the Forbidden Forest.

“Makes sense,” Harry observed, immediately erecting a ward that prevented forest creatures from coming into the tunnel. It would have been foolish to allow the forest creatures to continue having access to the underground tunnels. He did make the ward one-way to allow those that may have found their way in, a way out.

A chittering sound nearby became louder and Ron was in the beginning stages of his fear. “Harry,” he whispered hoarsely. “Ha...haa...Harry!”

“I know Ron,” Harry said. The noise was behind them. The Slytherin was frozen in place by the fear he sensed in the red-head. “Don’t either of you move,” the Boy-Who-Lived told them. He held up his mirror to look behind him. He gulped loudly, but knew that the other two didn’t want to see the creatures, especially Ron.

Harry rotated his mirror to look overhead. He gulped again and hissed in Parseltongue, hoping that he’d be understood. (...We mean no harm, please let us go. We’ve made arrangements so that none of you will ever get lost in these caves again...)

There was a deep chittering hiss that replied, (...You are a friend of Hagrid are you not? ...)

(...Yes...) Harry replied honestly, refusing to move.

(...Despite your underlying delicious scent, you’ve done something to render yourselves unappetizing...) The creature hissed and clicked its reply. (...Tell your companions to move aside we will leave the three of you alone on this day...)

“Guys,” Harry said getting a sidelong glance from the other two sixth-year Hogwarts students. “Move to one side and let them pass. We don’t smell like food to them today.”

Ron didn’t care who he grabbed and pulled into his arms to lean against the wall and get as far from what he knew was coming. The chittering-chatter told him everything he knew. He had his wand out, but he buried his face into the hair of the person he was holding.

Draco was shocked to be man-handled by the tall red-head, but he knew and understood uncontrollable fear. He just didn’t know what the creatures were. He kept his wand out and his back against the Gryffindor that was bending and hiding behind him. The Slytherin’s eyes widened as six small, knee-high, spiders walked by. He looked up to see that the Boy-Who-Lived was pressed against the opposite wall with his wand out as well.

The blonde was further surprised by the eight mid-size spiders, thigh high, passing him only to nearly faint at the one coming from the rear. It was huge. “Close your eyes right now,” Draco whispered to the shaking person holding him closer like he’d protect him from the nightmare. “Keep them closed.”

“Thanks,” Ron whispered back with a shuddering breath that heated the blonde’s neck.

The last Acromantula to leave had brushed up, slightly against the boys, but continued on its way. It
let out a parting chittering comment. (...My children got lost in their play. I trust that will never happen again...)

(...I will personally make sure of it...) Harry hissed back. (...These tunnels are now blocked by magic against all entry...)

As soon as the last spider was out of the tunnels, he cast a Parsel Tongue ward that would shield the entrance from any and all creatures of the forest. In fact he found and called forth stones and rocks from the forest to come and block the entrance so that it didn’t look like an inviting cave.

The boys walked back down the tunnels and since they were near the forest, they did a few magical tests on the structure of the tunnel. “We could bring down this wall,” Ron said in a shaky voice. “It would help to protect the tunnel from the forest creatures even more.”

“First we’d have to make sure that we are not taking down any towers in the process,” Harry said. “I was thinking that we’d explore the three rooms that we found down here first. Then we’d let the Professors and Headmaster know about that back entrance.”

“Do we have to explore those rooms today,” Ron asked in that tone of his that indicated that he was still feeling scared and shaken by the fact that Acromantulas were actually in the tunnels the same time that they had been exploring.

“Not at all,” Harry said. “In fact I think we found some interesting information to work on an extra credit project for Professor Snape instead.”

“What project,” Draco said. “He never assigns projects for extra credit.”

“I was thinking about doing research on an Acromantula Repellent,” Harry said.

“What?” Ron shouted, “ARE YOU INSANE?”

“No,” Harry said. “Thankfully we never washed up after we gathered the Basilisk ingredients because that’s what made us unappetizing to the spiders.”

Ron’s mouth opened and closed and then opened again with a question that he knew he didn’t want the answer too. “They’d...they were gonna... they...”

“They would have,” Harry nodded in agreement. “Only we didn’t smell good, which I can only believe is because we’d been carving up the Basilisk a couple of hours ago.”

“Bloody hell Potter,” Draco said looking at Harry with something new in his eyes.

“I guess that we can fly out of here,” Harry said. The others didn’t object, as they were eager to get away from the far wall that they had built.

They met up with an excited Dobby that had continued to harvest ingredients from the Basilisk. The little elf was only concentrating on what he could reach, but he was also making similar notes on how he harvested what he did.

“You’re brilliant Dobby,” Harry said. “I want you to stop now, go wash up and rest for the remainder of the day. You’ve done enough.”

“No,” Dobby said. “This never be ‘nough for great Master Harry Potter, sir.”

“It is for today,” Harry said. “Pack up everything you can. We’ll need to get more containers of
different sizes for the snake’s skins that are in some of the other tunnels. I want you to find the proper containers for them and the other types of ingredients we’ll get from it. I’ll check with Gripook to see of the Goblins will be interested in the skins or some other parts of the snake.”

“Yes Master Harry,” Dobby popped away as soon as everything he had been working on was properly stored for his return.

“Let’s go,” Harry said hopping onto his broom and zooming back up the tunnels. He stopped to shut the doors and the entrance from the girls’ loo. The other two were waiting for him, including Moaning Myrtle.

“Pity,” she sighed. “I see that you’re still alive.”

Harry only nodded and they left the toilettes. “I’ll see you guys in an hour,” he said. “I figure that’ll be long enough to get the smell of snake and spider webs out of our hair.”

HPHPHP

Christmas morning was an interesting day for everyone that remained at the castle. The children all got up and opened the gifts they received. They met for breakfast and some bragged about the gifts they got, while others never mentioned what they did or didn’t get.

There were not many like Harry who had never received a gift before his eleventh birthday and his first Christmas at the school. There were a few that received smaller things, but they were all pleased with the things that they did receive.

The Professors had been pleasantly surprised by the gifts that Harry had sent. It showed that he paid attention to some of their quirks and quite frankly it was kind of nice to be remembered in such a fashion once in a while.

Well, almost all of the Professors expressed thanks to the Boy-Who-Lived except one. “Mr. Potter,” Professor Snape called out. “You will meet me in my office this morning at ten am sharp, understood.”

“Yes sir,” Harry said. He wasn’t really surprised by it.

“What did you do Harry,” Professor McGonagall asked.

“Nothing,” Harry said. “He might want to discuss something else. I presented him with an idea for a project, so I’m hoping that’s what he looking to talk about. I don’t want to think that it could be anything else. Please excuse me I don't want to be late.”

"You have plenty of time," Professor Flitwick observed.

"Not quite," Harry said. "I got a late start this morning and I need to freshen up before I go down there. Besides I'd never go down there without adding an extra layer of warmth." That earned him some good natured laughter in his direction and it allowed him the opportunity to leave without saying anything more.

He detoured to his rooms to show his Christmas gifts to his house-elves, since he had slept in Gryffindor Tower in order to keep Ron company. He presented them with gifts for them and received a couple in return. They were very thoughtful gifts and would be of use to him at their home at the Olde Watermill.

"These are great," Harry said about the magical plant starter pots and the magical garden seeds from
Winky. The seeds contained the basic muggle herbs as well as some Wizarding varieties which made
Harry curious about how to cook with them.

Dobby had given him a basic garden tool set to go with the seed kit, plus a book on raising owls for
multiple purposes. "I can start them here and then when Spring comes I'll be able to send you to plant
them and care for them until end of the school year. Thank you Winky."

"Master Harry’s gifts are good too," Winky said eyeing the pots and pans that were necessary for the
kitchen. Some of the pots were very different from what she was used to, but apparently you could
cook a lot of stuff in one pot, meat and vegetables, and put it all in the oven at the same time. It was a
Muggle World set known as, 'Le Creuset' which are basically coated cast iron cook pots in many
bright colours. She received some pans in the shape of Woks and many sizes of regular shiny copper
bottom pots that she was used to.

They had very minimal stuff at the Olde Watermill because they hadn't been living there for the
whole summer and they had still been in the middle of renovations. The renovations were due to be
finished during that coming Spring and Harry was looking forward to his summer before his seventh
year of school began.

Dobby received any and all tools that he needed for his work around the watermill. He was working
as a general maintenance man. He’d also work on projects like fencing that Harry had planned to
build, but it was not only that, he was going to be responsible for the Owler and in making sure that
the young owls were trained before his Master chose to sell them. He was hoping that he could build
a magical aviary on the property and Harry had said that they would have to see what they could get
away with in their property plans.

After that, Harry quickly made his way down to the dungeons in order to meet up with his Potions
Professor. He was curious about why the man would call him out that way in the Great Hall, but he
figured it was just a better way to keep up appearances.

He was about to knock on the door to the office when one of the remaining Slytherins came up to
him and said, "Lost Potter?"

"Not at all," Harry said. "Are you?"

"I live in the dungeons," Crabbe said. "That doesn't explain why you're here now?"

"Since when do I have to explain myself to you," Harry said to the other boy, eyeing him and
making sure that there wasn’t going to be a confrontation. "I was told to be here by ten. Since
Professor Snape ordered that I come, well here I am." He looked at the other boy considering and
then said in observation. "You know that I've never heard you speak in complete sentences before
today."

Crabbe's face changed to one of slight fear and that's when Harry understood something was
fundamentally different with this Slytherin, too. He held up his hand and said, "I don't think I'm quite
awake yet, you know opening up presents and all, so I think that I will chalk all this up to a strange
dream."

"Mr. Potter," Professor Snape said opening the door. "I believe that I told you not to be delayed. Be
on your way, Mr. Crabbe."

"Yes sir," Crabbe said. He looked back at the Boy-Who-Lived who mouthed 'See Draco' and who
then turned quickly to scuttle into the Potions Master's office. He was surprised about that, but then
again he figured that it may time to speak to the Year Leader in his House to find out what is going
on. He was smart enough to know not to do this with any other Slytherin present, though.

Harry just walked into the room and noticed that the containers with the gift of Basilisk ingredients were all lined up and he sighed. He had naïvely thought that they would just be accepted without question, but it was obvious that the man wanted to know where he got them or perhaps whether he was serious about the gift. He sat down in the chair that had been placed in front of the desk and waited for the man to ward his office, protecting it against snoops and spy-spells.

Severus looked, for all the world, ready to give the young man heck, but he only sat down and stared at the gifts in wonder. Finally he only said, "Thank you."

Harry smiled happily and said, "Happy Christmas, sir."

"Is it too much to ask just where you obtained such rare potions ingredients or even this novel little book of recipes?"

"Not at all," Harry said. "I obtained the ingredients from the Chamber of Secrets and the book from the Muggle Internet, respectively."

"The Chamber…," Snape looked stunned. "I beg your pardon, but I don't believe that you said the Chamber of Secrets."

"Yes, I did," Harry stated still smiling at the man. "I went down there four days ago with Ron and another student. We harvested some ingredients and I chose those ones to specifically give you, as they were in that little volume of '201 Obscure Ideas in Potions from the Years 842-1325'. I found the book on the Wizard-Net, but it was on a potions web site that sold rare or odd books."

Severus opened his mouth and then shut it again. He paused to think about something and then said, "Mr. Malfoy came to me three days into the school year to ask questions about the Greater Red Wood trees and their potential in potions," he observed the Gryffindor's small twitch of the mouth to hide a grin and concluded that they were getting along during Draco's remedial D.A.D.A. classes on Wednesday afternoons. "I suppose that his questions stemmed from the same source."

"Well," Harry hedged a bit and told him. "I did tell him that it had been in print in the International Potions Plus – Monthly Magazine. I gave him the year and month that it had been printed. He said that he was going to look it up in the periodicals of the Library before discussing it with you. Did he?"

"Yes," Severus said looking into the frank eyes that reminded him of his long ago best friend, Lily Evans. "He wondered why we never used such ingredients at the school. I informed him that many potions created and used in this part of the world are based on the availability of ingredients nearby and that many factors must be considered prior to attempting a potion that may need ingredients from an outside source."

Harry only nodded because that was the conclusion that he had come up with too. ‘Plus there are some potions that will never be popular despite popular usage in a specific locale,’ he thought. ‘Who wants a Pepper-Up potion that causes you extreme flatulence in the process, because that’s just gross, pee-eew.’

"Mr. Potter," Professor Snape said getting the boy’s attention.

The Gryffindor grinned sheepishly and rubbed the back of his neck. "Sorry, sir," he said. "You were saying?"

"I asked if you planned to return to the Chamber anytime this holiday," the Potions Master repeated.
“I cannot believe that two foolish Gryffindors’, but then again I can, would be so idiotic to go down there without adult supervision in case there was something else living in there. You didn’t even come to me asking for advice on the matter.”

He was a little put out about it, but since it was obvious to a blind man that the reason for going to the Chamber of Secrets was to get potions ingredients for a gift, he couldn’t stay that angry, but still...

“We wanted to surprise you and we felt that since we’d been down there before we could handle whatever came up,” Harry stated. He knew that the man wasn’t that hurt not to have been consulted, but he did recognize that he could have invited one of the other Professors at the school to come and supervise the harvesting of the great snake.

“I am sorry, sir. It ‘was’ thoughtless to go down there without some adult to watch over us.” He looked up through the fringe of his hair with the classic pleading eyes of a pup and asked in a small hesitant voice. “Would you like to accompany us when we go down again on December twenty-seven?”

Professor Snape had been fully aware of how much this young man’s look had gotten others to ‘help’ him in his studies. It didn’t prepare him for the power of the boy’s pitiful looks nor did the looks hold him back from saying, “You get away with a lot from your Head of House when you do that, don’t you?”

Harry gave up the look quickly and said, “Sometimes. Most times I don’t, but it’s useful for getting help from the girls in the school, especially smart ones, not that I need it these days.”

Snape just snorted and then said, “I do hope you have a better plan when we go down to the Chamber in a couple of days.”

“I mapped out most of the tunnels,” Harry said pulling out the magical Cartographer Map that he was still working on. “These pipes in the main tunnel and the first door are linked to the expanded plumbing that was added several hundred years ago. I cross-checked the school’s blueprints in the library with this map, yesterday. We only blocked those to prevent creatures from using them to get to us, but the water will still flow like it’s supposed to. In the main Chamber contains only the torches on the wall and the Statue at the far end, plus the carcass of the Basilisk.”

“What are these, then?” Snape pointed to the branching tunnels that originated at back of the Chamber and at the lines that dead-ended in a couple of places. There was one that was clearly marked ‘Exit Forbidden Forest’.

“These tunnels can only be accessed by entering the mouth of the Statue, here,” Harry explained and pointed the location of the door. “These are all dead-ends filled with animal bones and shed snake skin. Only these three,” he pointed to the three tunnels that ended with a straight line across the tunnel and the small word ‘door’ next to the line. “Those three are doors that we encountered and warded, but did not enter. We were hoping that you’d know a spell to sort of see through the doors to know what the rooms contain before I opened them.”

“Why you,” Snape asked.

“They are guarded by snake figures and so I believe that they will open only to someone that can speak to snakes,” Harry said. “We didn’t try conventional opening spells on them though because of the unknown factor, but we can give them a go once we’re down there before I talk to the guardians.”

‘It’s too good to pass up,’ Snape thought.
“Very well,” he said. “I will accompany you and your friends on the twenty-seventh. I cannot in good conscience allow you boys to explore unknown rooms without some kind of adult protection.”

“I understand, sir,” Harry said smile and knowing full well that his Professor was looking to get first pick from the rooms should they contain some kind of useful treasure.

“None of that now Potter,” his Professor said. “Now explain this request?” He pointed to the scrolled proposal that Harry had submitted to him at the end of the last potions class.

“As you can see from the map where the tunnel leads out to the Forbidden Forest,” Harry began to explain by giving a bit of background to his ‘Potions Project Proposal’ that he had gotten inspiration from their mini-adventure. “We had explored to the end. Well Ron and I had been to this part of the forest before. It’s where the Acromatulas have settled since the time that Hagrid was expelled from school. We immediately set up barrier wards to prevent the creatures from entering the tunnels, but there were some that happened to already be in the tunnels, which we didn’t know about until they were returning to the forest while we were standing at the exit to the forest.”

Professor Snape’s eyes widened at the thought that the boys, foolish as they were, were not harmed. He thought, ‘Perhaps there were only a few little ones, easily manageable with the right spells.’

Harry rubbed the back of his head, clearly his throat and said, “We were very lucky that we had chosen to harvest the Basilisk beforehand because we still smelled of the great snake, from our contact with it. The last one to leave the tunnels barely fit in there, but it was one of the ones that I could speak to. It actually understood Parseltongue. She stated that because we still smelled of the Basilisk that we were not appetizing and therefore she and her children chose to leave us alone. We called rocks and boulders from the forest area and blocked the entrance with them as best we could. We included wards to prevent the spiders from coming back into the tunnels.”

Severus shuddered and closed his eyes, fully imagining the parade of spiders going by the students in the tunnel, each one bigger than the last. He shook his head at the foolishness of the Gryffindors, but then he realized that he didn’t know who the other student or students were that had gone down there. “Who was with you,” he asked. “How many students were with you?”

“Only two,” Harry said. “Ron, of course, and one person from another House came with us.”

“Who,” Snape said.

“Draco Malfoy,” Harry stated plainly. “We offered him an adventure and a visit to a place of legend that you hadn’t even seen yet. I bribed him with a few bits from the Basilisk carcass to keep him and Ron from fighting.”

The Potions Master sighed and said, “Continue explaining your proposal.”

“During my conversation with the Acromantula matriarch,” Harry said. “I got the idea for a spider repellent specifically geared against the giant spiders, so that we could actually go and harvest the spiders from their nest. Well, that is if Acromatulas and their parts are not common potions ingredients.”

“They are not common due to the difficulty in breeding them and in controlling their numbers,” Snape told him. “However since they are completely overrunning that area of the Forbidden Forest there have been various occasions where the Board of Governors and the Heads of House permitted the hunting of those spiders, but that has not taken place in the last twenty years.”

“No wonder there’s so many of them,” Harry said. “I’m guessing it’s because of the war with the
“True and only adults were permitted to hunt because they have a larger arsenal of spells to cast. The regular spider repellents were not quite strong enough to knock out the larger of the species,” the Potions Master commented thoughtfully. “Your proposal is sound…” He looked over the scroll containing Harry’s idea for a new or improved spider repellent. It wasn’t like the Basilisk ingredients didn’t exist on the market. It was just that they were expensive.

“Several tests would have to be made, but the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures would be the ones in charge of actually doing those, once a viable product is available,” Snape told the young man whose eyebrows rose up in question. “The product could initially be tested by Hagrid or by some of the Professors first before you published anything.”

“I wouldn’t be publishing anything,” Harry stated with a shake of his head. “I would keep the patent though, but I don’t have enough knowledge in potions at this point in time to actually write anything like that. I was hoping that I could do a bit of theoretical research and then try out the variations from the research in order to come up with a stronger primary base that could be used for different types of repellents. I wasn’t even thinking of ‘inventing’ something brand new.”

“Your proposal is good,” Severus told him. “It’s different and unexpected, especially coming from you. You and Mr. Weasley have improved your Potions scores from the first three years, which has been permanently recorded to your files. This is your sixth year of studying at this school and I feel that now is the perfect time to introduce the two of you to independent research of a higher level. I fully expect that you both will, of course, continue in your private Remedial Studies to improve your other years in this subject.”

Harry was looking at him in shock and with the expected horrified look of a student getting more work than they wanted. He watched his Professor nod his head in a decision and then heard the dreaded words, “You, Mr. Potter, along with you compatriot Mr. Weasley ‘and’ Mr. Malfoy will be assigned this project as a supplement to your existing Remedial Potions Self-Improvement exercise. I will be giving you a syllabus to follow for this kind of research process that you will do on your own time and the four of us will meet every week to review your discoveries beginning the second week of into the New Year. Before our first meeting, the three of you will provide me with a comparative essay on the two existing spider repellents that are successful in the market. You will make a thorough analysis of the ingredients with a complete break-down of their interactivity and alternate brewing methods available for those ingredients and you three will present it together to me and whoever I have with me at the time. This is your punishment for going down into the Chamber of Secrets without a qualified adult.”

“Yes sir,” Harry said with a gulp. ‘They’re going to kill me,’ he thought about Ron and Draco’s reactions. ‘They are really going to kill me’.

“I will send out notices this evening and if any of you choose not to follow a syllabus of study for the improvement of such, then whoever refuses will have to choose another subject to supplement your proposal and it must contain the use of Basilisk parts as that is the whole purpose of this conversation,” Severus told the Gryffindor. “This includes Mr. Malfoy, as he was present during your ‘adventure’. You are now dismissed, Mr. Potter.”

Harry almost ran out of the office, but he turned around when Professor Snape called out his name. “Happy Christmas Potter,” Snape said with a grin. “I’ll await your owl to let me know where to meet you on the twenty-seventh.”

“Happy Christmas once again, Professor Snape,” Harry said. He was not exactly cheerful anymore because of the additional work had just been given, but he was sincere in his wishes to earn better
grades. This was just another way of doing that.

He walked out the office door with a sigh and thinking. ‘I’m not going to get out of this without being pranked, I’m sure of it.’

HPHPHP

TBC...
The New Year arrived without much fanfare, but many of the students were pleased with the outcome of their class exams. The only thing of note was the mass marketing of Weasley’s Wizarding Wheezes brand new product called ‘Pensieve Paper’.

It was a five inch by seven inch piece of parchment that acted like a pensieve, but only preserved one memory. A specific memory couldn’t be mass copied unless a business required it for marketing purposes.

They had primarily invented it to be specifically used by Witches when they created ‘Scrapbook Albums’. It was a trend that was taking off in the Muggle World under a creative art category called ‘Scrap-Booking’ and it had been slowly coming into the Wizarding World.

They had been able to successfully market their specialty paper with the slogan ‘Parchment of Truth’ because it worked exactly like a true pensieve. It can contain a memory perfectly preserved. They were marketing it as an object for the quick distribution of news and they had the cooperation of several balloon dispersal companies that would insert the paper and distribute it to all magical places like villages, the transportation platforms, the magical alleys, etc…

The Ministry of Magic had already approved them as being a ‘Magical Authority of True Events’ and they could be used in legal proceedings just like Pensieves and Veritaserum. So with the UK Ministry of Magic’s backing and law supporting them, it was a perfect device for when Harry wanted to distribute one very specific memory to everyone. They agreed that balloons would be the best way to launch their product en masse.

The memory selected was very memorable and no one siding with the Dark Lord Voldemort will ever forget it. It was acknowledged as a true memory because that the only thing that can go on such a Pensieve Paper. Once it was released, it had launched a series of investigations into the Family line of Riddle.

Harry’s specially selected memory was of Riddle’s confession that he didn’t want to keep his ‘filthy muggle father’s name’ and so he fashioned himself a new one. The memory showed a young Tom Riddle spell writing his real name and switching the letters to show the anagram from his original name of ‘Tom Marvolo Riddle’ to that of ‘I am Lord Voldemort’.

Adults saw this. The Slytherins and anyone contemplating on joining the Dark Lord saw this. Marked Death Eaters saw this and tried to protest its validity in the face of their children’s accusing eyes filled with bitter disappointment and betrayal. Nearly everyone in the United Kingdom Wizarding World saw it.

The Daily Prophet had it thoroughly investigated as an historical column article, one that was not written by Rita Skeeter, but by an anonymous writer with the penname of ‘Ghost Writer RCMM’. (…i…)

The Pensieve Papers were released in self-popping balloons that would automatically and magically banish the papers should the balloon wander into the Muggle World by the breezes and winds.
wasn’t uncommon in the Muggle World to see deflated balloons. If they thought there were an abnormally large number of them then they figured it was because there had been a fair or party nearby and shrugged away that anomaly.

HPHPHP

All the students returning to school had a copy of that paper and many were planning to keep it as an historical fact for future generations, just in case. However that simply amazing parchment did not detract from the shock that they received upon entering the Great Hall and finding that one of the sixth year Gryffindors had been pranked.

The one unhappy person was the subject of giggles, whispers and stares, but at least the prank was slowly wearing off. It wasn’t like he wasn’t used to being stared at, but this time he wasn’t buffered by the presence of his known friends.

Harry Potter was sitting at the Gryffindor table a little ways away from the other students and definitely far away from Ronald Weasley. He had fluorescent dark green streaks in his dark messy hair, green-tipped black cat ears were twitching on the top of his head at every little noise and he had his green-tipped black cat’s long tail wrapped around his waist to prevent others from stepping on it. On top of everything else he bore the indignity of having to wear a cat collar with a couple of small gold and silver bells which really sucked because he couldn’t proper spells unless they were silent and they couldn’t be silenced with a spell unless he never moved when casting.

“HARRY!” Hermione screeched at seeing him and he gave her a foul look.

“Keep it down would you,” he said with a yowling hiss of upset cat, covering his poor sensitive ears. His sharp cat teeth were very evident when his mouth was opened. “The ears are sensitive, as you darn well know.”

“Harry,” Hermione said with a disapproving look. “Watch your language.”

“You know what Hermione,” Harry said getting up to leave as he wasn’t really in the mood to listen to all of the students whispering about his looks. He figured that he’d take his meal in his private rooms. “You’re not my mother and I don’t care if you approve of my damn language or not. The ears are painful to the level noise in here and it’s beginning to give me a migraine, your screeching didn’t help any, so leave me alone.”

“Mr. Potter,” Professor Snape said stepping into the Great Hall as the young man was stepping out of it. “Three points from Gryffindor for using an offensive tone and language.”

Harry only nodded and took off, slightly bounding up the moving stairs with his tail swinging back and forth in irritation. He was currently working on something that would hopefully reverse the prank because it felt like a mix of Wheezes, plus a charm or transfiguration spell.

The Potions Master had laughed when he saw the young man a few hours after he had sent the syllabus to the other Chamber of Secrets adventurers. It looked like school unity might become fact, if the volatile red-headed Gryffindor and the cool collected Slytherin were the cause of Harry’s unfortunate situation.

‘A common enemy will often result in a reluctant truce,’ he thought derisively. ‘That’s certainly the case with that mangy were-wolf and myself in the Order of the Phoenix.’

It took five more days into the school year, before Ron and Draco released Harry from their prank spells because the Boy-Who-Lived was getting too much attention from all the girls who thought he
looked ‘soooo cute’ and ‘aaawwwww, just adorable’. Of course the hidden Slytherin side of Harry was soaking up the attention and rubbing it in the other guys’ faces, but he’d had been stuck like that since the twenty-eighth of December. It felt like there was no end in sight so he allowed the girls to gush when he was around, but he did ‘not’ permit anyone to pet him because really he wasn’t a cat.

The three boys had received the Owls on the twenty-eighth at dinner time, after the previous day of being subjected to a lecture on the dangers of going down to the Chamber of Secrets without adult supervision. They all just knew that the scrolls were not going to contain cheerful holiday greetings.

They also figured it was because they hadn’t been able to explore the three rooms marked on the map because Harry refused to take them after a long day of learning to properly harvest the great snake without actually doing much harvesting.

The Potions Master was not pleased to have that adventure put off for another day. He did caution the boys that should he find out that they had gone through those rooms without him he’d be using them to test experimental potions that would be the result of his brewing from the book that Harry had given him for Christmas.

Needless to say, neither of Harry’s study partners were pleased with the ‘extra’ schoolwork, so their displeasure was very much known by the Boy-Who-Lived’s altered appearance. However now with the fawning he was getting and the fact that he had cancelled their study sessions without good reason they agreed to lift their spells, if Harry would continue their ‘independent’ studies with them.

HPHPHP

“Please Harry,” Ron begged his friend on their way to their sixth year transfiguration class. “I can’t continue the potions study without you there. Malfoy promises to show up and to help remove the charms.”

Harry sighed and then said, “All right.” He looked at how pleased the red-head was about the outcome. “Don’t look too happy,” he said. “I’d have removed the spells myself, but you both cast them at the same time, so both of you are needed to remove them.”

“We will,” Ron said. “We’ll meet you at the usual place after supper tonight.”

“Okay,” Harry agreed.

“What usual place,” Hermione asked. “You two are not going to get into trouble again are you? You know we’ll lose points if you do.”

“Why do you automatically assume that we’ll be getting into trouble and losing points,” Ron asked.

“Because you usually do,” she replied.

“I don’t think so,” Harry said. “Everyone loses points now and again, but we are not the ones that are consistently losing House Points for Gryffindor this year.”

“Of course you are,” Seamus said, butting into their conversation.

“Have you even looked at the House Point Logs,” Harry said. “You’re name and Dean’s are in there three times as much as ours. The total number points that you two lose over time is not even equal to the large losses that we had in previous years.”

“Don’t lie,” Seamus said.
“He’s not,” Neville said sitting down at a desk once they had entered the classroom. “The logs are available for review. He’s right you two have lost Gryffindor the most House Points and that is usually because of your poor schoolwork too.” He turned to the front of the class in order to not see their outraged expressions.

Harry just shrugged and sat down at a desk that he preferred, which was usually in front of Neville. Ron sat next to him and Hermione sat next to Neville behind Harry.

“All right,” Professor McGonagall said. “Be seated and be quiet. Today we’ll be studying an area of Transfiguration that is unique and rare. It’s a type of personal Transfiguration that will lead you to your potential Animagus form. Now normally this topic is only discussed during your sixth year and I usually assign essays on the matter during your seventh year only. However all the professors feel that with the upcoming conflict that any of you that have the potential of discovering your form early may gain an advantage of having an emergency form to use in order to escape. The Ministry of Magic is prepared to delay the mandatory registration of your forms until after the defeat of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named. If any of you have strong objections or would prefer to study for your form independently, see me and I will assign you a different set of course work for the first part of this term.”

She looked over at all of the excited expressions on many of her students. Only a few were thoughtful and then she said, “However those of you who chose to do this independently will have to schedule a few times with me after school hours in order to be monitored during your physical changes. We cannot allow you to do a first or second change unsupervised.”

“Could we go to our own Head of House for that,” a Ravenclaw student asked. “To keep the advantage private,” she stumbled and continued on with her reasoning. “Some of us might feel more comfortable going to someone they trust, not that we don’t have trust in you, Professor. It’s just that some of us might already be more comfortable doing this in the presence of another Professor, m’am.”

“As long as you do go to another Professor for your first full transformation,” she said quickly, as though the Professors had already agreed on the matter. “It must be supervised in case you get ‘stuck’, so to speak. I will take names after class of those who wish to study independently, however you will still have to attend classes in order to get the full grasp of the Animagus process. Are we clear?”

Every student in the class agreed and at the end of sixth year Transfiguration she wasn’t surprised when Harry, Ron and Hermione chose the independent study option.

**HPHPHP**

Harry was waiting for the other ‘amiable zanies’, as he called Ron and Draco in his mind, to show up to remove their joint charms and spells. He was currently starting out his research both for his independent studies, one for Transfiguration and one for Potions.

He grinned and thought, ‘Still a competition between Gryffindor and Slytherin by having to write these two papers.’

The Room was set up pretty much like it was for his D.A.D.A. studies, but this time he had a desk near the library section and was pulling books into two piles on the table he had charmed to follow him and hold the books. He was only going to begin his papers once he chose his appropriate references and a fun place to begin.

The chime he programmed on the Room to let him know whenever someone wanted access to the
Room rang out. He guided the table back to settle near the desk before he cancelled the charm that made it move on its four legs like a slow moving horse or donkey. He reinforced the charms to keep the books in the towers that they had been sorted into and then he called out, “Enter.”

Ron and Draco came in, but were quickly followed by Hermione and Ginny.

Harry’s eyebrows rose and he asked the two girls, “What are you two doing here?”

“We followed Ron to find out where he was going,” Ginny said. “Then we continued because he met up with the Ferret and we wondered just what was going on. So, what’s going on?”

“Ginny this is none of your business,” Ron said. “We’re here to help Harry get out of the prank charms he’s under.”

“What would you know about that,” Hermione asked with her eyes narrowed looking between the two boys unaffected by a prank. “You two had something to do with it, didn’t you? Couldn’t you two have fought some other way, like with words? Where was your mind when you did this? I bet that neither of you thought about the effect it would have had on the other House students watching you.”

“Hermione,” Harry said interrupting her.

“And you,” she said in his direction, her rant growing with her anger. “Why didn’t you stop them, instead of getting into the middle of it? Children could have been...”

SPLASH

“IIIEeeeeek,” Hermione shrieked due to the downpour of cold water. She looked around and noticed that Harry had his wand out. “What do you think you’re doing?”

“You will calm down,” Harry said with a glaring hiss. “You do not have all the facts and I for one am so tired of you ranting on subjects that are truly none of your business. This was a harmless prank. That is all. It’s not the result of a fight, duel or what have you. Now if you can calm down and dry yourself off, they may choose to tell you about it or not, but I refuse to have you come in here during ‘my’ scheduled time in this Room and have you mouth off at those that I asked to come and help me train. Am I clear?”

Ginny’s mouth was open during the entire time. She didn’t know that it was a prank and had told Hermione that it was the result of a duel gone wrong. That was what the rumours were and she couldn’t get her brother to tell her otherwise.

Hermione had dried herself off and at the same time the two pranksters sent their counter charms in a synchronized motion that looked completely natural. She turned to point her wand at Harry in order to undo the charms that he had been stuck under and found that he was back to normal, although his hair still had dark green streaks in ends of it.

“Sorry about the colour, Potter,” Draco said. “I think that was a different charm. I don’t remember if I used an Anglo, French, Italian or German incantation for it. I’m afraid you’ll have to wait for the charm to wear off.”

Harry just shrugged and said, “I don’t mind that, as long as my ears are no longer twitching to every sound. Didn’t mind the being able to see in the dark though as that was pretty cool, but the tail was murder on my trousers.”

Draco nodded with a chuckle and then made his way over to the strategy corner. He was setting up a
battle campaign of Dark versus Light creatures. He didn’t include the Witches or Wizards because they didn’t have a clear cut view of Dark versus Light, but this set was like using miniatures to re-enact battles and test out different strategies. The games corner was one of his favourite places, although he really hated getting trounced by Potter during some of the obvious campaign re-enactments because the Gryffindor never bothered to learn the actual historical set-up first.

Ron snickered and recalled the two pairs of pants that Harry had to have modified to allow his tail to go through. He was in Harry’s rooms for supper when Winky was making the alterations. He had threatened the Boy-Who-Lived with a permanent tail if he didn’t help him with the Potions task. He joined Malfoy in his corner and waited to see how Harry would handle the girls.

Hermione and Ginny had taken a look around the Room and noticed that it was almost set up similarly to match last’s clandestine training group called Dumbledore’s Army. “I see you did away with the mirrored wall,” she stated. “Why?”

“I don’t need one to know if I’m doing the proper wand movements,” Harry said. “If I’m doing them properly, then the spell will be cast.”

“What about the spell words you usually have trouble with that, so I’ll help you,” she said, as she started to go over to the library wall, when Harry stood in front of her. “What?”

“This isn’t the D.A.,” he said. “This is my scheduled time and I’m going to have to ask you and Ginny to leave now.”

Hermione was shocked and couldn’t figure out a way to get him to let her stay. She looked at Ginny who shrugged and asked, “What are you doing in here then?”

“Studying D.A.D.A.,” Harry said. “I gained permission to use the Room at different times and this is one of those times.”

“But it’s not during the regular school hours,” she said. “Why would you be permitted to use the Room after school hours?”

“Hermione,” Ron said from the other side of the room, where he was having a gentle argument with Draco about including the Wizards and Witches because they provided the ‘unknown chaos’ factor, as Harry called their point of view. “This Room is like the Quidditch Pitch. You have to book it in order to use it and you have to have a legitimate reason for using it. In case you didn’t notice Harry’s in fourth year Runes and fifth year Arithmancy classes now. He has other things to do and his class schedule is full.”

“That’s not possible,” Hermione said. “I would have noticed.”

“Apparently you didn’t,” Harry said. He gently took both girls by their arms and guided them to the door of the Room, as it swung open. “Now I’ve asked you nicely, please leave. I have too much to do.”

“But we can help you,” Hermione said as she found herself in the stone corridors.

Ginny was just glad that Harry was even touching her, but he only moved her to the corridors and didn’t offer her his arm like a gentleman was supposed to. That disappointed her. “What about me,” she said. “Can’t I help you?”

“Sorry, but no,” Harry said. “You have O.W.L.s this year and Hermione, I know that you’re too caught up in your studies, so I’m not going ask for help from either of you. See you around.” He quickly shut the door and warded it so that they wouldn’t be interrupted by them again. He did set
the alarm to ring to notify him when his time was up.

He huffed and then made his way to the corner where the other two boys were still arguing about using the Witches and Wizards battle figures. He took them from the other boys’ hands and said, “I’m playing them. We’ll play a three-way battle, we’ll take turns using negotiation tactics first and then battle, if that is our choice.”

Harry called the room to change his figures to resemble some of the Famous Witches and Wizards from the past with varying alignments towards good and evil. He asked the Room to make them truly random so that the ones they were familiar with would either play as they normally were, meaning ‘good’ being ‘good’ or playing out the battle with a random chance of someone known as ‘good’ actually being ‘evil’ or vice versa.

He chose not to include the current players of the War taking place right now because there was no way that he could view those Witches and Wizards objectively or without gaining the additional consequence of questioning his current choices and decisions. It felt wrong, somehow to use images of people still alive, so there was no Voldemort, Dumbledore, etc... on the board.


Time passed. An hour and half later Ron threw up his hands in the air and said, “I surrender.”

The remains of his army of light action figures drew up little white flags to wave them. “That’s your own fault Weasley,” Draco said. “You didn’t negotiate enough to allow for partial ‘good’ characters to join your army.”

Harry’s army was the largest because his strategy had been to recruit from the other two armies, but some of his Wizards and Witches walked between the two armies mixing in and doing strange things like trading information or choosing to inform both sides that they were neutral and not the mess with them. It was the strangest game that they had ever had to date and his mind was tugged in the direction of simulation games that he came across on the Internet.

He asked the room to change the figures back and then store them away. He looked to his table of books and nearly swore. “Damn,” he said. “I have to get to work on that.”

‘That’ was the two independent projects waiting for him to begin his research. He used his wand to make to notes on parchment about the book titles, the authors, the table of contents and the rear index in each of the books pertaining to a specific subject. He used his lists to pick out four books to begin with, in each subject and sent the rest back to the library wall.

The other two watch as he put the books into his backpack and then proceed to walk out of the door. “Wait a minute,” Ron said. “You can take books out of this room?”

Draco looked on to see what the response would be.

“I can,” Harry confirmed. “I’ve made a magical promise to the Room to bring back the books every time I enter the Room. So I only take what I need and make notes or copy what I need with magic before bringing the books back to exchange for others or retake the same one. I promised not to harm the books or allow harm to come to the books while they’re in my care. I was only able to take out three in the beginning of the year, but now I’m allowed ten at a time.”

“Why,” Ron asked.

“I don’t need all of the information in the books and the Library is always full of other students or the books are limited in number,” Harry said. “This is the Room of Requirement and therefore the magic
of this Room creates a copy of the Library book for temporary use by me. I’m not Hermione.”

“Obviously Potter,” Draco said. “Why would you say such an inane thing?”

“I only meant that I don’t need all the information contained in a book and I certainly don’t read them all the way through, if I’m only looking for specific information,” he explained. “Ron looked like I was about to become book absorbed like her and I was just pointing out that I’m not.”

“Could we take out a book or two as well,” Ron asked and in a flash a parchment floated in front of him. “Whoah... how...”

“What is it,” Draco came to stand beside him to read what was on the parchment. “Fascinating...”

“It’s the magical promise, oath, or whatever you want to call it,” Harry stated. “It’s what I had to do in order to be able to take the books. Looks like the Room will let you do the same, but your limit will be two books to start.”

“How do you figure that,” Ron said.

“Key word, ‘Duo’,” Harry replied pointing it out on the parchment. “It also looks like your limited to the Library Wall that I call forth though because neither of you are formally scheduled during my times.”

Draco was interested in some of the books that he had been reading while learning in this Room, so he had no problem taking out his wand to chant the binding spell written on the parchment.

“Will I be able to take a couple out tonight or will I have to wait til our next training session,” he asked the Room. He felt a warm positive glow in his core and looked at Harry to figure out what the hell that was.

“That means yes,” Harry said. “I’m going to have to alter the Room for Ron’s books because he comes here for Potions studies,” he explained for the Slytherin. “Unless the Room chooses to allow the two of access to both subjects today.” He felt the room respond with an expanded wall that contained all of the books from the two different subjects. “There’s your answer and it’s your choice Ron.”

“Thanks,” Ron said to Harry and the Room.

“Yeah thanks,” Draco said. “But does that mean I could choose from either subject...” He felt the positive response from the Room again. “Does it also mean that I have to bring books back on all subjects the day I’m scheduled to come...” He received his reply just as quickly. “All right then,” he said. He looked to the red-head and said, “It seems like we can take out the books from whatever subject, but we have to bring all of them back during our scheduled times here.”

“But does that mean I can only come here during my scheduled time....,” Ron felt a shiver of cold to denote a negative response. “So I can come when Draco is in here with Harry...” He felt the same warmth that the Slytherin felt earlier to indicate a positive reply. “Does that mean I have to bring back all books when I come during Draco’s time in the Room?” A cold chill slid down his back and caused him to shudder from the sensation. It was like an icicle was dragged down his spine. “Thank you,” he said to the Room and shook his head to let the Slytherin know about the response.

Ron began his chant at the same time as Draco and when they both spoke at the same time, cast at same time the Room glowed from the power of the magical Oath. It was stronger and the parchment’s total number of books changed from ‘duo’ to ‘quattuor’ in the middle of the verse, but both students continued without hesitation. Once the magical promise was rendered and a loop of the
school’s House colours appeared on their right wrists and was absorbed into their skin. The two
looked at the spell light and then looked to Harry for an explanation.

“Yeah,” he replied their unvoiced question. “That’s your reminder. Sometime in the morning you’ll
feel the invisible bands heat up and cool down quickly to remind you to bring the books back. If
you’re sick or in the infirmary I suggest you call a house-elf that you know to do it for you or else
you’ll lose the privilege.” There was a pop on the table near the shelves with two scrolls. “Those are
your contracts with the Room of Requirement.”

“This room is wicked,” Ron said shaking his head at the magic that had just happened.

The two young men took the small scrolls and read the terms of their agreement. It was only when
they read the part regarding the total number of books that one of them voiced the question. It wasn’t
the Slytherin who asked, “I thought it was only going to be two books, why four?”

“Idiot,” Draco said. “Now the magic in the Room will change it. Why did you say anything?”

“I doubt it,” Harry said taking out two slim books from his backpack. “Go ahead and take out four
books. Here I got these for the two of you.” He was holding out two slim hardcover books in fancy
binding with a gold script title of ‘Basic Guide to the Synchronus Magic of Animapar’. He had
already charmed them against damage, destruction and to conceal them from the prying eyes of
others. It would only show a book that they would most likely be reading, but nothing of its contents
and nothing that would get the book taken from them by a teacher.

Harry’s magic was significantly stronger and slightly altered because of his legacy from Natalia
Grindelwald, so it wouldn’t interfere with any magic that the other two would do to protect them. He
had a front plate added so that once they touched the books the plate would automatically fill with
ownership data. He was holding out the books, the other Gryffindor and the Slytherin were looking
at the title as though it was something poisonous.

“What’s the matter,” he asked.

“We’re not soul-mates, Potter,” Malfoy said with a sneer.

Ron looked pale and nervous, which was quite normal for him, but his emotions slowly burned
towards anger and he too said, “That’s only for soul-mates. What are you playing at?”

“No it’s not,” Harry said. “Animapar is only Latin for Soul Match; it does not mean mates or
marriage or whatever the two of you are thinking. I’ve checked every possible variation and if it was
talking about marriage it would be called something quite different. Take them or not, I don’t care. I
just thought that you two would like to know the reason why I didn’t undo your prank from the
Holidays, when I have the ability and power to do so.” He put the books on the table and left the
room, knowing that this was something that they would have to sort out for themselves.

The library wall was still there, so the other two boys quickly picked out four books that had caught
their eyes during their training sessions with Harry. They both picked up the book that the Boy-Who-
Lived had given them without looking at the other and they too left the room.

All talk of joining up for joint lessons ended when they took the book that Harry had gotten for them.

Draco stuck with his Wednesday lessons and Ron with his Saturday ones, but for some reason, a
perverse feudal type reason they did not want to open the book on about Synchronus Magic or even
discuss the matter with each other. However, that was about to change soon and in the most
astonishing unexpected manner.
(...i...) Ghost Writer RCMM = Ghost Writer Ravenclaw Moaning Myrtle (Q: How could she write a newspaper column... A: Using a dicta-quill provided by Harry! (duh))
Harry worked diligently in his studies and with his independent projects.

He was secretly amused by Draco and Ron’s refusal to even acknowledge that they had compatible magic. It wasn’t that they were soul-mates, but that when they cast their magic at the same time, the magical forces, auras, fields, or whatever you want to call it, multiplied their core power. This multiplication can occur by two, four and sometimes by ten times the normal output for a normal Witch or Wizard.

Of course he knew that pairs of that nature usually wound up getting married or became lovers and that’s probably why they were hesitating on taking any action to test out Harry’s theory. The Boy-Who-Lived was secretly amused by the whole deal because of the way they kept looking at each other when they believed that no one would notice.

Harry knew that knowledge of this by either side in the war, would have to change some of their views or future battle options, but it would have to be their choice completely to reveal their ability. He did tell them that he bound both their Heads of House to secrecy on the matter, so that they could be on the lookout for potential issues in the school.

“They needed to know that if you two cast spells in close proximity to each other and at near the same time, that the results could be far different than if you were to cast a simple spell singularly,” he said to them. “What if a younger student gets caught in the cross-fire? You’d both be responsible for casting the counter spells, at the same time, to undo the result. That’s why I told them and that’s why they’re keeping it a secret for now. Until you two mess it up, no one will know about this because no one needs to know. That was the best I could do for the safety of the other students in the school. My only other advice is not to partner up in any classes. Don’t let the teachers push you into it either, that is if you want to keep this a secret and for Merlin’s sake never cast a spell at the same time.”

Draco was relieved that this information would not be let out that easily because of his family’s associations. If his father found out about this, there’d be more problems with the Weasley family and he didn’t want that. He was getting tired of the constant negativity being spewed by his father towards, Muggle-borns, Muggle-raised, etc., especially after that damning revelation on the Pensieve Paper.

He knew that the time for his choice was now and he’d have to make a decision of some sort before the end of this school year. Still some of his father’s plans had to be carried through even though he didn’t want to do them. He hoped that there was going to be a way out for him before he had to take any action.

Ron wasn’t so relieved because as an in-born strategist he could see the ‘good’ in being strong enough to be able to assist in the War. Then again being a strategist he could understand things from the blonde Slytherin’s point of view too.

‘He’d have to go against his father and his friends,’ he thought. ‘He’d even have the right to ask me to do the same...it’s not fair that we’d have to choose.’
Both recalled the mock battle when the three boys played with the battle action figures. They both remembered how Harry had played the Witches and Wizards. They remembered the way that the action figures acted and how some tried to remain completely neutral in the field or how they would get together to battle one side and then the other side, choosing to side with the strongest ones, while some did the opposite and fought for the ‘underdogs’.

The two sixth years both went up to the seventh floor a few days later without notifying anyone and without noting that there was someone else in the corridor with them at the same time. They both passed the door thinking, ‘I wish I had a comfortable place to talk with him.’

The only difference in their wishes was that Draco added, ‘But I don’t know where that would be.’

Ron finished his with, ‘Like our living room at home.’

They were both surprised that the door suddenly appeared. They had been aware that someone else was in the hall by the time their wishes were in their minds, but they never thought that the door would appear if two people had different thoughts in their minds.

“Malfoy,” Ron said noting the Slytherin standing next to him. “Looks like we had the same idea, but…”

“Yeah,” Draco said looking at the door. “I know our thoughts can’t have matched that much.”

Curious about what the room would look like, the Slytherin opened the door and stepped into a place that he could never have imagined. To his right was a room with an oversized couch on an angle facing a rocking chair with a set of knitting needles working away and, ‘Hovering?’ He thought. ‘How...odd.’

There was a large window seat with several overstuffed cushions that looked like deflated over-sized Quidditch balls and a loveseat in the opposite corner.

To the right he noted a kitchen area in the distance with a table used for dining, since he was quite certain that whatever this place was didn’t have a formal dining room. In the kitchen he could see that there were clean dishes drying on a rack to one side and a heap of dirty ones dancing in the sink getting washed and scrubbed by a floating brush.

It was like he had just walked into someone’s home and he wasn’t very comfortable with it because it was obviously not the home of someone with a lot of money. There was no formal entrance, no marble floors or grand staircases. The staircase that he did see looked dark, poky and narrow.

Draco felt a hand on his lower back guiding him to the living room area and towards the loveseat. He allowed the Gryffindor to do this because he was not sure how to react to this environment.

The door to the Room of Requirement closed and Ron set up the standard wards locking the Room and a charm to let him know when someone needed the Room. He cleared his throat and then asked, “Would you like some tea or something?”

“Ah,” Draco sounded, but couldn’t say anything so he just nodded.

He watched as the tall red-head walk towards the back of the kitchen. It was a matter of using his magic to set up a tea service and bring it back. A low table grew up out of the floor and the Slytherin watched as the Gryffindor dragged a deflated ball to the table and sit down on it with a foofing sound.

“What would you like in it?” Ron said flushed looking, but making eye contact with the Slytherin.
that was just staring at him.

“This is your house,” Draco stated. He looked around and sure enough his eyes landed on the family clock with the multiple hands with the faces of who they considered family members.

“Yes it is,” Ron said. “What do you want in your tea?”

“Cream and honey,” Draco said. He was about to add, ‘if you have it’, but he decided that the red-head would tell him if he didn’t. He watched. The tea was prepared and poured into a fair sized solid mug. This wasn’t a house that would have delicate china and fancy tea sets for different occasions.

‘With the number of boys in that family, these mugs were probably a better idea to use instead of delicate china,’ he thought, sipping the surprisingly tasteful concoction.

“This is good,” he told the other boy who sighed with relief that he had gotten everything right. Another sip was followed by, “This is really good. What kind of tea is this?”

“Just the regular stuff,” Ron said take a sip from his own mug. “You know a bit o’ this and that from the garden.”

“From...the...garden,” Draco said slowly. “What?”

“Not everyone can go out and buy different brands of tea,” Ron said flushing from his embarrassment about the lack of variety that his family had. He then lifted his head in defiance and in a way daring the Slytherin to make something of that statement.

“Oh,” Draco said. He noted the look, but explained himself. “I was curious about the blend because it is quite good.”

“Mainly it’s the honey,” Ron confessed. “We get fresh honey from our neighbours. We exchange some of our tea and herbs for their honey. They have different flavours based on the flowers that the bees used. This one’s from Rosewood. The bees on their land usually rove over the rose flowers with a bit of honeysuckle. The cream is from our goat.”

“Goat,” Draco gulped hiding his expression. It wasn’t the height of fashion to eat or use anything made from goats, but he couldn’t dispute the pleasant taste.

“Yeah,” Ron said looking at the Slytherin. “If you don’t like it, we do have regular cow milk.”

“No,” Draco looked up quickly and said. “This is fine. It’s different and I find that I actually like it.” Ron looked sceptical, but the blonde said. “It’s truth. I like it and was only curious about why it didn’t taste like anything that I’d ever had before.”

Ron shrugged and took a cookie from the plate that he had haphazardly loaded with some of his family’s favourites. He wondered how he could have thought of his home as being a place he could talk to the blonde about the stuff in the book that Harry had given them. He did read and study most of it, but he was just wondering what the Slytherin wanted to do with this information. However, for now he was happy to be sitting in familiar surroundings and munching on his favourite snack.

The blonde took a cookie and it too had an unfamiliar flavour to it. He supposed that many of the foods that the Weasleys would have to be different from what he was used to. He was used to things that cost a lot to buy and a lot to make. Whereas he supposed that a family like the Weasleys had to grow some of their own stuff like vegetables and from the sound of it, their own tea leaves too. There was something about this room and this house in general that was cozy and more intimate than anything he was used to, but he wasn’t that uncomfortable about it.
“Do you feel safe here,” Draco said out loud wondering about how the redhead felt about his family.

Ron looked at him in confusion, but answered honestly, “Yes.”

“You’re very lucky,” the blonde sighed and leaned back into the comfortable loveseat.

This was second time in his entire life that Ron had been told that. The first was when Harry first came to his home during the summer of their second year. This time is was a shock to hear that coming from a Slytherin whose family had been feuding with his own for nearly a century. He looked around and then thought about the pressures that Harry had and attributed similar types of pressures to the blonde. That’s when he realized something for perhaps the first time in his life.

‘I am lucky,’ he thought. ‘This is the same thing for Hermione and I don’t even think that she’s realized this, despite reading too many books. We’re luckier than Harry or Draco because of our families and our homes.’

“I love my father,” Draco said as though he was confessing something that he knew would get him ridiculed. “I love my Family, our name, our history and our pride. I love my father.”

“I love my Dad too,” Ron said. “You love them and you’d do near anything to feel that they love you back, right?”

“You probably don’t have to do much,” Draco pointed out.

“No,” Ron agreed. “You’re right. My Dad would love me no matter what I did.”

“Even if you joined the Dark Lord,” Draco asked in a whisper.

“Even if,” Ron stated. “He’d be very disappointed, of course, but he’d still say he loved me. Whatever consequence that comes out of making such a decision, like a sentence to Azkaban. I know he’d still visit me there just to say that he loved me.”

Draco thought about what he father would do. “Nope,” he said with a sad tone. “My father would never do that. He’d say that it was my own fault for getting caught and then he’d go about producing another heir to inherit the Malfoy estates and legacy.”

Ron moved from his bean-bag chair to sit next to the blond. He did what he normally would do when sitting with Harry, Hermione or any of his brothers and sister when they were saddened by something that overwhelmed them. He put his arm around them and just held them, slowly rubbing a large hand from shoulder to elbow.

His father had taught him that when he was younger and still did this to each of his children whenever they were feeling troubled about something. From the initial flinch in Draco, he was fully aware that the Slytherin was thinking of ulterior motives rather than comfort, but Ron didn’t stop giving comfort until the feeling of sadness was passed. He also knew when to let go, so he removed his arm, turned with one knee on the seat and faced the other boy.

Draco mirrored the red-head’s move and found that it was kind of comfortable to sit that way too. “Golden Boy is perceptive,” he began the serious part of their conversation. “Damn prat figured something out before I did, man I hate that.”

“He usually does,” Ron said. “It’s annoying sometimes between him and Hermione. Even when we were younger, he did that too. At least they’re as different as night and day when it comes to explaining things.”
“What do you mean,” Draco asked with curiosity. He’d always been curious about the dynamic that the three of them had.

“Hermione is book learned,” Ron said. “Anything she’s read she can nearly repeat it back word for word. I don’t know if it’s a ‘talent’ that she was born with or if it’s something that she’s developed over time, but that’s what she has and does. She can put together essays and projects in a detached professional way that is highly annoying, but there’s no life to it.”

“I can readily believe that,” the blond said. “It’s why she has top marks, I suppose.”

“That and the fact that the Professors allow her to overextend her essays without teaching her to reduce them or re-interpret the data like rest of us do,” Ron told him. “I think they know that as a Muggle-born she’d not have many options of work in the Wizarding World unless she gets tapped by the Ministry of Magic and even then she’d only be able to primarily do research. I won’t be surprised if she moves back to the Muggle World to live out the rest of her life there or finds a town with a healthy mix of both.”

“Harry’s teaching is very different, I’m sure that you’ve noticed it,” Ron said. “He’s intuitive about some things. It’s annoying because his magic is powerful enough to not need his wand to work. The thing is I’m not sure if he knows that or not. Sometimes I see his brilliance when he does some spell work and other times it’s like he’s a first year again too fascinated by it and taking simple joy in the results, even if it’s just a stupid spell to change the colour of his socks.”

“Hmph,” Draco snorted. “He sounds simple.”

“Yeah,” Ron said. “Everyone thinks that and you know what?”

“What?”

“I think the little bastard does it on purpose,” Ron said.

“Yeah, right,” Draco said. “If he does then that’d made him a Slytherin because that’s sneaky business.”

“He can sneak,” Ron said proud of his friend. “Very well too!”

“Do tell,” Draco said leaning forward.

“Can’t,” Ron said. “Took a Wizard’s Oath about it,” watching the blonde’s face fall in disappointment, but also in understanding. “Look about the ‘Synchronus’ thing. We don’t have to do anything about it, if we don’t want to. We can also begin by trying out a few things just to be sure. Harry was obviously right about the proximity thing.”

“What do you mean?”

“I’m guessing that you wanted a ‘Safe’ place to discuss this with me, but couldn’t think of single place for it,” Ron said. “We were both walking in front of the Room of Requirements and for some reason your magic and mine or maybe our requirements ‘synchronized’ and let the Room change to someplace that I ‘knew’ was safe. Because, I’m quite sure that you had never been here before to even imagine this as being a safe place.”

Draco had a rueful look on his face. “You’re right,” he replied. “I wanted someplace safe, but I couldn’t picture a place. Merlin’s balls I couldn’t even think of a room or setting that I could consider safe. So what do you want to do now?”
“Well there are several options,” Ron said. “We can do nothing, I mean nothing as in not tell anyone, but also we’d have to watch our spell casting when we’re in the same area or else something dangerous could happen. We could practice in private and learn how to control our dual casting. We could tell someone to get help in practicing, the options depend will depend on you.”

“Why me,” Draco said.

“You have much more to lose,” Ron stated matter-of-factly.

“You’re right,” Draco said. “I do have more to lose, but it would be just as or perhaps even more dangerous not to practice then get the control we need to learn. I’m just afraid of what my father will say when he finds out.”

“So we keep it secret from our Families’,” Ron said. “We tell our Heads of House and book the Room of Requirements for practice purposes.”

“Harry,” Draco said.

“What about Harry,” Ron asked.

“He could help us,” the blonde said.

“He did by giving us the books,” Ron said and then he grinned. “You see what I mean by sneaky. He gave us the books, but I bet that this was after he studied that problem about why he couldn’t change his appearance back by himself. I can also bet you that he has a few ideas on how to begin or train our ‘Synchronus’ magic.”

“I’ll have to think about this,” Draco said standing up and heading towards the door. He cast a wistful look around the room and Ron was hit by the fact that the blonde might just miss this comfort.

“You have a home you should be proud of,” the Slytherin said quickly. “I’ll Owl you with my decision.”

Ron could only stand there looking at the door to the Room as it shut behind the departing Slytherin. He shook his head and said softly, “Yeah, I’m beginning to see that.”

HPHPHP

A couple of weeks later and an interesting event occurred at Hogwarts during one of the Hogsmeade mornings. It wasn’t something that any of the students or Professors had ever seen in their lifetime. This is including the venerable Headmaster Albus Dumbledore, who has been around for nearly a century.

The doors to the Great Hall opened to a small group of Goblins, lead by one Griphook Bonebreaker and an elderly Gringotts Magistrate. She was one very familiar to Harry by the name of Ignatia Bonebreaker. They were followed by an Icelandic goblin dressed in thick furs with braids at each ear and a balding head, who was followed by two others. They were similarly dressed and they were all armed with large blades attached to their backs.

The school and the house-elves had allowed them entry because it wasn’t uncommon for visitors to come through the main doors to the school. But it was a very rare occasion that the Headmaster was not aware of it. The only reason he wasn’t aware of it today, was because he’d been called to the Ministry of Magic that morning to render counsel and vote on a few cases that the Wizengamot had
“pending his appearance.

“Lord Harry Potter,” Griphook called out, looking for him among the many students.

Harry stood up immediately. He'd had a feeling that they were there for him, but there was still a chance that the contingent of goblins could be there for someone else. However that was not the case, so he quickly made his way past the tables. “Griphook,” he said with a closed mouth smile. “It is good to see you. How may I be of service?”

“We are here to be of service to you,” the Head of Vault Security and the Managing Head of the Black-Grindelwald-Potter Accounts replied. “A place to talk,” he said, as he looked around the school and frowned not liking the attention coming from the portraits, the stonework, the armour or humans staring at them.

“Hogsmeade,” Harry said looking at the rest of the school with eyes that knew that he was being watched, for anything that would give away where a secret meeting would be occurring. “My place,” he said, stepping back and allowing the Goblins to leave before walking up to the Professor’s table in order to see if his Wizarding Counsellor would be available for a private meeting.

Griphook nodded to the others in his party and quickly led the entire group out of doors. He then guided them to the Shrieking Shack and was pleased to note the changes in the place. Wards and such were yet to be erected to protect the empty display cases and a quick spell cast by the Magistrate revealed that there was no spy charms or spells on the property.

All of the Goblins quickly raised their favourite wards and everything possible to protect their conversation while Harry was stirring the curiosity seekers and gossips even further by his next action.

“Professor Snape,” he said approaching the head table, to the murmurs of the students watching him. “I’m wondering if your schedule is overly burdensome this morning?”

Severus quirked an eyebrow up at the formal language, but he knew that the young man didn’t want to ask for his Counsel in front of the other Professors. He also didn’t want it known that he was actually, gasp, helping the Boy-Who-Lived in Wizarding matters and it wasn’t anyone’s business anyway. The other Professors looked on in wonder at the formal polite request and looked on to see what was happening.

“Not overly, Mr. Potter,” he said. “Do you need something?”

“I was wondering if I could trouble you for a portion of that time,” he said not giving away anything about what he needed the man for.

Professor McGonagall was a bit put out about that, but if the Goblins needed Harry for some reason or another, the Boy-Who-Lived would need supervision. It irked her that he had not asked her, as she was his Head of House by rights that’s what he should have done, but then Harry said something that put her mind immediately at ease on the matter.

“I would normally ask my Head of House, but since the Headmaster is not here I’m fully cognisant of the fact that she must remain at the school until his return. The reasoning is based on her duties as his Deputy.” Harry explained to the man. “Your presence would be appreciated in her stead, if quite convenient, sir?”

“Convenient or not, it wouldn’t do for our resident celebrity to come to a foul end because he wasn’t properly supervised,” Professor Snape scowled sourly for show. “Get your things and meet me at the
front doors. We leave in ten minutes, no excuses.”

“Yes sir,” Harry said turning and nearly running out of the Great Hall. It was the perfect image of a rushed and petrified student that everyone saw. The scowling Professor stood and stalked out of the teacher’s entrance in order to accompany the Boy-Who-Lived somewhere that not many knew about as being safe.

Harry stepped into a small, rarely used meeting room near the front doors. He called for one of his house-elves to bring him his backpack with the lectern desk inside with all appropriate papers and seals, just in case. He instructed them to prepare the appropriate things for their meeting and told them just who he was meeting.

Then they brought him a change of clothes in order to look the part of a Young Lord, which included warm things to brace himself against the cold outdoor weather. His Potions Professor appeared, dressed pretty much in the same manner, but his wardrobe was still in dark tones and blacks.

Harry looked at the man and said, “Counsel me Professor Snape.”

“My counsel and advice is yours, Lord Potter,” Severus said with a pleased smile. He liked being called upon for advice, even if the young man were to never use it, it still feel good to be valued in this manner. The pay was good, but that’s not why he was going to be willing to renew his contract when the time came. He was quite intrigued by the young man as a person too.

“Thank you,” Harry said. “I do not know what this is about.” He walked out of the door and headed toward the Whopping Willow Tree. After a quick ‘Immobilus’ charm, the tree stilled and the two walked through the existing underground tunnel that led to the Shrieking Shack.

Snape wasn’t very happy regarding the direction they were heading neither was he thrilled about their seeming destination. However he was willing to put up with it, as long as the boy didn’t mention the dead mutt or the wolf that had yet to put in an appearance this year. He was slightly surprised to feel Goblin magic and wards around their location.

“I’m glad I bought the Shack,” Harry said. “It’s going to be interesting to see what the students choose to display in the cases when they find out about it before the week-long break in March.”

He looked at his Professor who was stunned by the changes in the place. He was staring at the empty pedestals, frames and glass cases. The walls were freshly painted and the place was clean and clear of all the old furnishings. They had bypassed a door that lead to a basement area that was currently being re-enforced for security reasons. The Goblins were found on the second floor looking at the strange set up of back-to-back flat displays and desks.

“What is going here,” Snape asked looking at the cases and wondering if he had just stepped into an alternate dimension, like the Muggle-borns were fond of saying.

“Please follow me,” Harry said to everyone. “There is a meeting room upstairs and my house-elves are prepared to serve us refreshments depending on how long we will be there.” He led them to a wall that had a calculator type thing hidden by a portrait frame that contained no portrait yet. He pulled the section of the frame away to access it and then he keyed in a number, which allowed the wall to slide behind the large frame and reveal a set of hidden stairs leading up.

“Sirs and Lady,” Harry said to everyone. “If you please, I’ll close up the wall so that no one will suspect that there’s another floor.” They preceded him up the stairs and found a slightly narrow rectangular table with enough chairs around it to seat everyone. He locked up the wall and added his
own wards to the room and building and then quickly joined them up there.

(…Griphook, may your gold increase daily and your enemies die gloriously at your feet from the thrust of your ever, sharpened blades…) Harry said in formal Gobbledygook. All the Goblins and the Potions Master stared at the Boy-Who-Lived, who just continued. (…I do not wish to offend your ears by butchering your language, but felt that I must greet you appropriately before doing further business with you and your colleagues, in a language that I know may be offensive to your ears…) He bowed with respect, keeping his eyes on his Manager, remaining that way and waiting for the acknowledgement from his greeting.

Griphook grinned showing many teeth and replied, (…By the grace of Gruggenhiem Alloskang First King of the Under Mountain, you do honour our language just fine. Blooded enemies in everlasting torment and mounds gold beneath the mountains, so mote it be!…) The other Goblins grinned in much the same way, they thumped their fists on the table and echoed, (…So mote it be!…)

Severus Snape was at a loss of what to do, but after having seen these powerful beings grin like that, he pretty much knew that he would be keeping his mouth shut until his counsel was truly required by the Boy-Who-Lived. He watched the young man straighten and show too many teeth in reply to the response he had. He gestured that all others take a seat before he did so. His professor sat when he was gestured to do so.

“Mr. Potter, when did you have a chance to learn our language,” Ignatia asked in English in order to include the boy’s Counsellor for the rest of their meeting.

“I’m doing several projects of study independent of the school curriculum and have taken full advantage of my scheduled time of the ‘Come and Go’ room, as my house-elves call it, to learn many things,” Harry replied candidly. “I’ve only been studying your language and customs for about two months and I must confess that the history that I have access to is quite different from what is being taught. I’ve long since decided to learn whatever I choose to learn while at Hogwarts, whenever the opportunity rises. Your culture is one of those that I have long since been curious about, but have not been able to trust the human resources for accurate information.”

“Where did you get the information then,” Griphook asked. “We are not offended by your wish to learn, but we are curious about where you are obtaining your information.”

“The Room is attached to all the libraries in the school,” Harry said sheepishly looking at his Professor who frowned in confusion. “That includes all of the past and present Professors’ personal libraries. Sorry sir.”

“What for,” his Counsellor asked.

“I accessed your personal library quite a number times whenever I was looking for an obscure reference related to Potions or Defence Against the Dark Arts,” the boy confessed. Snape’s shocked expression gave way to fury at the thought of anyone accessing his personal things without his knowledge.

“No sir,” Harry said loudly enough to bring the man out of his rage. “No one else knows about it and I’ve blocked the Room from doing that after I found out about it and realized what had been done. I just didn’t do that with the other ‘Hidden’ libraries in the school.”

“Hidden,” Professor Snape said. "I don't know of any ‘hidden’ libraries."
“One contained a lot of old texts, manuals and a fully translated book about called ‘Wizard’s History & Relations to Other Sentient Magical Species’,” Harry wrinkled his nose at the title, which the others noticed.

“The title is dumb,” he explained. "The book contains a relatively true history of the relations that Witches and Wizards had with several species, like House-Elves, Goblins, Vampires, Were-Creatures (not just wolves) and a few others that don’t seem to be around anymore like the High Elves, Mountain Dwarves and Tinker Gnomes. It’s a huge book that thankfully had compacting and preservation spells on it or else that information would have been lost. Anyway that book contains a section on each species including several old spells that granted Witches and Wizards the ability to learn different spoken languages of non-human origin.”

His tone clearly indicated what he thought of the term, but they couldn’t dispute the result. He looked at the Goblins and said, “I wasn’t sure if the language I was using would be the correct one because of the age of the book, but I’m glad that I got it right. If there’s something wrong in my pronunciation, then it is my hope that I can correct it soon, so as to not offend any of you in future.”

“You did just fine,” Griphook said. “That language is utterly formal and crosses the barriers of our regional differences, as in the case of our guests. Perhaps we can discuss the language issue at a later date and proceed with the real reason that we and they are here.”

“Of course,” Harry sat up straight and snapped his fingers for Winky to pop in quickly and provide a service of good Goblin social drink, plus tea for the humans, and food for all.

“You may now begin,” he stated like a Lordling of the Human world. He was using a near abandoned Goblin tradition for important meetings, as they haven’t done so with Humans for several centuries. This was mainly due to the Humans not trusting Goblin honour despite the fact that they trust these creatures implicitly to deal with their money.

The Goblins grinned again and said, “So mote it be.”

Professor Snape was confused about the types of drink and foods on the table. He looked to the Boy-Who-Lived for guidance this time because he was not familiar with some of the foods.

“Tea Professor,” Harry said holding up a pot and pouring himself a cup. “There’s coffee too,” he pointed to another pot. ”But beware it’s the Turkish kind in deference to their palette and need of stronger tasting foods. All foods in the blue plates were made for us and those in the other colours are mainly for them. I don’t think that there’s anything wrong with their foods, but you might find them harsher on your digestive system, especially if you’re not used to it. There are some that you shouldn’t bother with unless you don’t care about keeping your teeth. The ones on the green plates can be shared by all and the red plates contain very spiced offerings, both of which you may need to soak in your tea or find another way to break them down in order to appreciate the flavour. I personally find that some flavoured cooking oils and salad oils add a different kind of zest to some of these dishes and help to break them down in order to be properly digested by our pitiful Human systems. I wouldn’t eat anything from the yellow plates or bowls, as those are very special and should only be eaten by Goblins.”

The man next to him just acknowledged his recommendation by taking a little bit from everything that Harry stated was relatively safe for a human to eat. He looked into one of the yellow bowls with a small spout formed on the rim out of curiosity and nearly dropped it when he saw that it contained tadpoles. There were hundreds of thousands of tadpoles that were wriggling and swimming in a thick pale blue fluid. He looked sharply at Harry and put the bowl back on the table, “Tadpoles?”

“Where,” the leader of the Icelandic Goblins said excitedly.
Rank among them was noted when he was the first to choose food from all the plates, followed by Ignatia, Griphook and the last two visibly much younger Goblins. Even though they had not been introduced the food offerings were always served and sampled first before negotiations, as that denoted trust in the host not to serve up tainted foods.

Introductions were for after the meal.

Goblins began many feuds and wars because of the tendency of deceit in some of the other magical creatures that wanted to kill the leaders of the Goblin clans in order to push the Goblins into a sub-class of species. That’s when they decided not to hold any more meetings of this type with Humans or many of the other magical species around. However for the Boy-Who-Lived and as one who clearly thought he was doing the right thing, they were going to judge him on this service first. They’d never likely trust any other Human in this fashion and that is an important factor to note.

Harry passed him the yellow bowl and the Goblin just poured its interesting contents into a small pewter goblet next to his plate. The sample came out of the in a large water drop filled with the little swimmers. The other Goblins were eagerly waiting their turn to taste the treat. The dish was passed so that each could fill their mug and then they did a ‘Salute!’ gesture of raising the mug and swallowing the contents whole.

The Boy-Who-Lived looked at his Professor and noted that the man looked a little peaked. “Sir,” Harry said drawing the man’s attention to him. He pointed to a closet door that contained the word ‘Private’ on it. “You have time.”

Severus excused himself politely and walked through the door to note that it was a pleasant looking loo without a talking mirror, which he was grateful for. In all his time with the Dark Lord he had never seen anything like that. Sure he used tadpoles of varying ages and sizes, as potions ingredients, but they were most assuredly dead. He drank some cool water from the tap, used the facilities quickly, took a small dose of anti-nausea potion in a mild ginger flavour and came back out looking slightly better for the small break.

The Goblins had taken that time to finish eating everything that Harry had to offer, well everything that would make the Professor uncomfortable. The Gryffindor had given them a ‘go-ahead while he’s away' gesture to glut themselves on the majority of the exotic treats offered. It was the only way that they ate and they took note that the young man wasn’t offended by the crunches, grunts and burps that inevitably resulted from eating at the fast pace that they normally used. They did leave most of the benign stuff to munch on for when they discussed their reasons for being here, but they were pleased to be able to indulge in something that Wizards had long since stopped doing, custom wise.

Even Goblins didn’t indulge those kinds of meetings unless it was the upper levels of Gringotts management or those of the Royal Clans. Most of the types of foods found on Harry’s table were mainly for gatherings now, but knowing that it came from an older book of old traditions they felt justified in gluttoning their appetites for such treats.

“Mr. Potter,” Professor said, noting that most of the plates were empty upon his return. “I’m curious to know whose library contained the book of old traditions regarding the different magical species.”

“Braxton Hufflepuff’s,” Harry said snacking slowly on a lightly honeyed and buttered scone. “I believe he was one of Helga Hufflepuff’s great, something great grandsons. He was a Professor here teaching History of Magic approximately between the years of 1309-1421. He died three years after retiring to the country. At least that’s what the book plate told me.”

“The bookplate talked,” Severus asked.
“From what I could understand some of the older bookplates contained ‘Cameo’ like images of the owners and included the Family Coat of Arms,” Harry said. “There were a few books like that when I asked the Room to provide a library that would help me with my studies and some of the questions I had. Many books only had a plain Coat of Arms, but even with those you could tell which family had a Professor working at Hogwarts and approximately during which years.”

“How are these books now available to you if they are with their Families,” Ignatia asked.

“They aren’t with their originating Families,” Harry said. “They were part of the assigned Professors’ quarters that they used to live in before the rooms became hidden from lack of use and moving walls changed the directions of the hallways in order to protect the more dangerous, disused corridors. The books are still in the school. Many were left behind because they were either; too old, too used, too outdated and many were deemed to have been donated to the school when the Professors’ terms were up and were left behind. If their rooms were never re-assigned then the librarians at the times could have used a summoning charm to call ‘All’ books in the School to the library, but there were a few times when that didn’t happen so the rooms were eventually sealed by Hogwarts. Now the books are only available through the Room of Requirement or the Come and Go Room, well whatever you want to call that fascinating Room.”

“Interesting,” Griphook said. The food was finished and since no more was coming he called the meeting to order and introduced the Icelandic Goblins. “To Ignatia's right is High Chief Borak Grendel, you know Magistrate Ignatia Bonebreaker, and myself. To my left are Henrik Grendel and Sinius Grendel who are the son and grandson of the High Chief.”

Harry stood up and bowed a less formal bow of greeting and then sat down. Snape remained seated and waited to see how the young man would introduce himself and him to the Goblins. He looked at each of the Goblins in the eye and said, “I am Lord Harold James Potter, Head of the Wizarding House of Potter. I’m also the Head of House Black and Head of the Clan Grindelwald.”

“That is not possible,” the High Chief said. “Oh, we have received the updates from your interactions with the United Kingdom's Branch of Gringotts this past summer, but we did not believe the information. The human Wizard Grindelwald died in Nuremberg without issue. That is why we have come to investigate the matter.”

“He had a daughter,” Harry told them.

“The daughter died years ago,” Borak said peering at the young man. “She died at a very young age and without issue.”

“How long ago did she die in your records,” Harry asked. This caused the Goblins to blink and then turn to consult one another in fast speaking Gobbledegook that the Gryffindor had a hard time following. He figured that was the purpose and at the moment didn’t quite care that they were leaving him out of their conversation.

“She died when she was about thirteen or fourteen Human years,” Borak stated. “All of her magical accounts were sealed. The question now is why they suddenly became unsealed this past summer and why you've been made the Head of that Clan.”

Harry brought the Grindelwald Coat of Arms forward on his family ring. It was a magical ring that indicated family blood connections. He showed it to the Goblin, who was obviously here to conduct an investigation into the re-issuance of new keys for the three Icelandic vaults, which belonged to the Grindelwald Family. They were listed among the ones that Harry's staff had yet to visit.

“I received my inheritance,” Harry stated. “The Right of Ownership Ritual was done this past
summer by Magistrate Bonebreaker here and my Family Crest integrated all the Wizard Families, for which I am responsible for, into a new familial seal.” He changed his ring to show the full family crest that he used most times for his formal correspondences, including the new family motto.

“But she died,” Henrik said. “How could the vaults be sealed if she did not die?”

“Would your vaults be sealed and deny access if the person in question no longer had any measurable form of magic,” Severus asked. This question brought alarms looks to every Goblin at the table. They couldn’t think why or what would make a thirteen year old girl lose her magic.

“What are you saying,” Griphook asked on their behalf, as he was the most familiar with the young man.

“Would any Gringotts vaults be sealed if a member of a magical Human family and one known as the last in their bloodline lose all their magic,” Harry asked. “This is important.”

“Yes it would,” Borak said. “It is not possible for you to be related to young Miss Natalia, we researched the family records.”

“It is possible, if she no longer had any active magic and no previous memory of her life in the Wizarding World,” Harry said. "The family records would not have been able to track her without magic being available in some form.”

“Offensive,” Ignatia stated. “There’s no way that would happen unless something truly offensive had taken place against the poor child.”

She looked at the young Lord and at his Counsellor sitting stoically beside the boy, lending him strength by being present and allowing the affected young man to lean on him. She heartily approved of the contract that allowed the young Potions Master to view life from another angle and give advice in matters unrelated to the current political strife. However their unease and expressions made her say, “There was an offence, wasn’t there?”

“Yes madam,” Harry said. “It was a Magical Siphoning Ritual of the darkest sort.”

Severus shuddered recalling their summer at Galileo’s Spindle. He was sincerely hoping that after the cleansing that they had done that the Shades had not returned.

Harry had promised that they could visit the place during their March Break and the Potions Master was looking forward to doing some research in there. He thought that there might be a few books on rituals that would allow him to remove that blasted Dark Mark from his arm, in order to become free from the Dark Lord's influence. If not, the he was hoping that he’d be able to find something to transfer the Fealty that he had once strongly believed in and swore on.

“Who,” Borak demanded. “Who would such a heinous thing?”

“That doesn’t matter,” Harry said waving away the question. “The Wizard in question is too powerful at the moment. You cannot demand retribution for her because that is my right as her grandson.”

“The Goblin Clan of Grendel has always sided with the Wizard Clan of Grindelwald,” Borak said. “Our family is yours to call upon, should you need us. We came here to vow…”

“No,” Harry said interrupting the creature that was about to state an Oath of some magical importance. "Please tell me that you did not come all the way here to make a vow of service to my family or something of that nature. I cannot accept such from you. It is demeaning to your people to
enter into such Oaths without first choosing to do so, especially if it's based on something other than your own personal choice. You do not know who I am or what kind of person I will become in the future."

"It is a tradition that has dated back centuries," Borak explained. "One of your ancestors aided us during a time of crisis. We made the vow in order to pay back your Family for that aid."

"Aid should be offered freely and without expectation of payment," Harry said strongly. "I cannot in good conscience accept it when I do not even know the circumstances of that occurrence. Surely, if repayment has been done over all these years that it should have been enough by now? You cannot think to tie your clan to me because frankly I do not have the knowledge to lead anyone."

"Our clan would not exist without the aid of the first Grindel," Borak said. "Our clan would have perished without that Wizard's assistance."

"But you named your clan Grendel after him didn't you," Harry asked.

"We did," Borak said.

"Then that is enough honour for me," Harry said. "It is grand that the name will live on. I’m glad that it will be honoured by such as you and yours. I certainly cannot carry that name and I will have no offspring or issue to give that name to. In point of fact I wouldn't want to, not until several centuries have passed and even then I'd leave them the recommendation that the name be altered or shortened back to its original form of Grindel. Gellert Grindelwald did much to cause strife in the Wizarding World and I have no wish for anyone to resurrect hostile feelings against those belonging to the Family of Grindelwald."

"Surely you’d be able to lead us," Henrik said cutting into the conversation, even though it the elders should have their say first. The talk was not truly going anywhere at the moment anyway and his father certainly looked he needed some time come up with a convincing argument to allow the Oath to take place.

"Why," Harry asked.

"You're the Boy-Who-Lived," Sinius stated. "Surely you'd know how to lead us."

"I don't," Harry said. He was completely serious in his tone and demeanour and he hoped to get it across to the Goblins that he was incapable of leading them. "Why would you believe such a thing?"

"Your place among the human Wizards is known to us," Borak said taking charge of the conversation. "Surely you've been trained from a young age regarding the expectations placed upon you."

"No I have not," Harry said truthfully.

"What," the three Icelandic Goblins said at the same time. Those of the Bonebreaker clan looked at him in slight wonder at his candidness. They were pretty much aware of how little the boy knew. His Professor looked at him blankly, not giving away his feelings or thoughts in the matter, but he was shocked too.

"I have not been trained from a young age," Harry stated. "I didn't even know that I was a Wizard until I received my letter on the day of my eleventh birthday. I knew nothing of this magical world and nothing about magic either."

"That is not possible," Borak said. "The papers..."
"Lie," Harry finished for the Goblin. "Most of the stories in there are lies. There is no regulatory agency, department or federation to reign in or create a standard set of media protocols that the Wizarding newspapers should follow, let alone force them to follow. They print whatever they feel like based on a portion of the truth and that is only on the bias of the writer. If the writer changes their minds or if they were in error they would either write a new story as truth and the old one would be forgotten or ignored. Most of their so-called facts about me, were truly lies. No one in this world has ever stopped to think and say, 'Why couldn't they just write or report the truth?' So, if the papers say that I was trained secretly or had a pampered spoiled upbringing or that I have unbeatable magic because I lived when my parents died, then they were writing lies."

"Mr. Potter," his Counsellor called his attention. "How could you possibly believe that you do not have the power?"

"Oh, I have power. I know that I have power," Harry said. "However I also know for a fact that it is not 'my' power."

"But…but you survived a Human 'Unforgiveable',' Sinius said. "You defended yourself from a very powerful spell."

"How would I do that," Harry asked. "I was only a year and a few Human months old. When would I have had the chance to learn such defence in that time frame? It is not possible, when I hadn't even learned to talk in coherent sentences back then."

The Goblins all looked around at each other and Professor Snape who was suddenly thoughtful about the matter. He looked at the Boy-Who-Lived and understood just how far things had gotten in the Wizarding World. Here was a boy without training or understanding of his place in the minds and hearts of the magical world and he did not know that he was special to them. This boy, it was assumed, had been taught and trained, learning the things that he needed to know.

His father, James Potter, and the ass wipe, Sirius Black had certainly known how to do the basic things in the Wizarding World. Severus had assumed like the rest of the Wizarding World that the boy had been trained, cared for and even pampered like those two. He didn't mind the were-wolf because Lupin hadn't really become a problem until he started hanging out with those other two. But the Boy-Who-Lived... there was something inherently wrong for the boy to not know anything about being a Wizard and having so much unchecked power. 'Though he did say that it was not his power;' Severus thought. He looked at the little Lordling and saw a shadow of the man that he might become one day. 'How would he know? I wonder if he knows whose power it is.'

"You said that it wasn't your power," Henrik began. "How do you know it wasn't something instinctual that your magic did?"

"Dementors," Harry said. "Those foul creatures can dredge even the most buried of memories. My mother gave me the power I needed when I was a child."

"How can you be sure?" The question came from the very thoughtful expression of his Potions Master. Harry looked at the man in the eye without fear and without any form of expression.

"She cast a very powerful sacrificial spell, charm, ritual or a combination of all three the night she died," Harry explained. "She begged the Dark Lord, not once, but three times to let me live, let me go free."

"How do you know that," Borak asked.
"Could you tell us," Ignatia asked.

Harry stood up and walked over to the window to look out and then he told them. "I hear my father," he began. "I mean it’s the voice of who I believe is my father, saying 'Lily get to Harry, save Harry,' and then nothing else. There's a green flash of spell light coming from the door. I sense my mother running into my room and slamming the door shut. I stand up in my crib, using the bars to pull me up and see the door being blasted inwards. There’s a shield of red in front of me, I believe it’s her hair. 'Stand aside woman,' he says. 'No,' she yells. 'Not my son, not my Harry.' He walks towards her with his wand pointed at her. 'Take my life, but spare my son. Let my Harry live,' she says with tears in her voice. 'Stand aside you stupid witch,' he says coming closer to her. 'You can't have him,' she says. 'Not my Harry.' She's still standing in front of me, shielding me and in a flash of vile green spell light she collapses. I feel a burning pain here," he told them while pointing to his scar. "I think at that point I remember hearing her singing a song, but after that the pain was unbearable. I see dust fly out of the window and then I don't remember anything else. That is what happened that night. That is what the Dementors call forth when they approach me and that is why I learned to cast the ‘Patronus’ spell when I was just a third year student at Hogwarts."

The Goblins all looked at one another. They were shocked by what they had just heard, but based on every action that Harry Potter had done today it proved to them that he was sincere in the fact that he didn't want any clan to bind themselves to him for something that he didn't do. That particular Ritual was known to some of the oldest Goblin Magistrates and Ignatia knew it well because her own sister had cast it, ending her life for that of her adopted son’s, Griphook.

"It is called the Mother's Blessing," she said looking fondly at the short Goblin sitting next to her. "Not many are prepared to sacrifice their lives for their child. I wish that many would, but that… I'm afraid not many have the stamina, the strength or the will to perform such a spell and that is the sad fact about life."

"I know," Harry said. "If I was a woman, I would not consider such an action unless I could trust those that remained alive. Trust that those that remained behind would be there to take care of my child. She truly believed that Sirius Black, as my Godfather would be the one taking care of me. That was his promise when he accepted that honour, but I'm sorry to say that he failed."

"Yet you were willing to meet up with him in your third year," Severus said. "You…"

"I'm sorry Professor," Harry said. "Ron's pet rat was the animagus form of the Wizard known as Peter Pettigrew. Remus did a spell that revealed the traitor and Sirius explained about a last minute switch of the ‘Secret Keeper’ in the ‘Fidelius Charm’. It was the perfect cover, when you think about it. No one would expect him to be given the honour of keeping that secret."

"So you have had no training," Borak said. "You claim to be a child of Natalia Grindelwald’s direct bloodline and yet she disappeared from the magical world without a trace."

"That's what happens when you deliberately get rid of your own memories in order to protect your own life," Harry said. "That Siphoning Ritual took her magic, but a powerful spell was cast at the same time. It was one that should she ever mention being a Witch, knowing any form of magic or acknowledged the fact that she knew about the Wizarding World, she'd die a most painful death. She stored her own memories in a magically created pensieve, which I was able to access this summer."

He looked at the High Chief and asked in perfect Gobbledygook. (…Tell me Borak, do you still have that musical crystal stomping out the battles sounds in a chorus of drums and trumpets?…) Borak looked into the young human's eyes and realized one thing. "You have her eyes," he said. "You have Natalia's eyes."
"Thank you," Harry said with a smile. "Maybe when I go to Iceland this summer you'd show it to me?"

The High Chief looked at the Boy-Who-Lived and said, "You need to come sooner than that. The Magistrate and your Manager tell me that you have a full week in March where you are free from mandatory attendance at this school. Do you have plans for that time?"

Harry looked at his Professor and the man said, "Plans are fluid and can always be changed, my Lord."

"Thank you, sir," Harry said. "Would my Counsellor be permitted to accompany me?"

The High Chief looked at the man and then cast a simple spell. It lit up the Potions Master in a variation of lights and colours. The one dark spot negated the man's chance of being with them. "I'm very sorry sir," Borak said. "Due to that spot of darkness, we cannot allow you to accompany the boy. That Mark alone would compromise our security."

"What would the plans be for that week," Harry asked.

"As a member of the Grendel Goblin Clan, I believe it is my duty to have you instructed in different forms of defence and find the one perfect physical weapon that suits you best for non-magical combat," the Icelandic goblin said. "I would consider it an honour to train you and it would bring me some measure of comfort that you are being trained properly." He didn’t mention that it would also give the goblins time to get to know the boy and give him a chance to find out about a Wizard's alter-gifts in magic.

Harry bit his bottom lip in thought. He didn’t want to go alone and then he asked, "May I bring a couple of companions to train along side me?"

The Potions Master looked at Harry and remembered the conversation that they had about the two with Synchronized magics. He nodded his had and said, "Get your house-elves to bring them here."

"Thank you sir," Harry said calling for his house-elves and giving them instructions to fetch Ron Weasley and Draco Malfoy. "I'm sincerely hoping that they've come to a decision regarding their abilities."

"I hope so too," Snape said.

Winky chose to go after Ron and Dobby popped away to fetch his old master’s son.

HPHPHP

Draco was in a used book shop. He was trying to find some books on Synchronized magic without letting his Slytherin companions know what he was looking for. A pop by his left elbow indicated that a house-elf had just appeared by his side.

"Young Lord Malfoy be coming with Dobby," the little house-elf told him firmly.

"I'll come with you if you help me find what I need in here," Draco told the little creature. He knew that the house-elf would be able to help him find what he needed with a snap of its fingers.

The little elf was smarter than Malfoy had ever thought him capable. "I be meeting you at counter," Dobby said. "You be paying for what's there."

"Of course," Draco said agreeing to it and then turned to let his companions know that he might not
be meeting them at the Three Broomsticks. “I’ll see you guys back at school,” he told them coming to a quick decision of not bothering to explain himself. “I doubt that I’ll be able to get away in time to meet for drinks, so I’ll see you later.”

Pansy refused to be put off. She put her arm through his and said, “But Drackie-poo you promised to take me to Madam Puddifoot’s for tea.”

“I made no such promise,” the Slytherin Prince sneered. “I’d never go there and even if I did, I wouldn’t be going there with you. Now let go of me before I hex you.”

She pouted, batted her eyes and then quickly released his arm when he took out his wand. “Fine,” she said. “Be that way, just you wait until your Mother finds out.”

“She has nothing to do with this situation,” Draco said. “Contact her all you want, but you’ll find that she’s not available anymore to hear you whine about inconsequential things.”

“Inconsequential,” she said loudly with a near whine in her voice which included a raised tone of anger.

“Yes Pansy,” Draco said walking away. “Inconsequential is exactly what you are.” He turned to walk away and said, “We can discuss this later, you know a Malfoy is never late to an appointment and I will not ignore the summons from another Lord.”

He quickly walked up to the counter and noted that there were several other items on it in front of the house-elf waiting for him. However he was quite prepared to pay for it all. Obviously there was some reason three extra books on strategic games complete with a how to manual for making the game boards and charming them. He shrugged and paid for everything figuring that Harry would explain once he met up with him.

Meanwhile Winky elf-popped to Ron’s location at Honeydukes and tugged on his sleeve to get his attention, “Wheasy,” she said. “Master be needing you.”

“Sure Winky,” Ron said. “I just need to pay for my stuff first.”

She nodded and had a quick look around. Noticing a few things that were not selling very well because they were quite frankly not for humans, she snapped her fingers and said to him, “You be buying these too.”

“Winky...,” he looked at the items and blanched. They may have had a ‘Sale Fifty Percent OFF’, but they were still well above his price range. It was then that he felt his pocket get heavier with the fact that a money pouch had just been popped in there.

“You be buying everything in stock,” Winky said.

The owner of Honeydukes, Ambrosius Flume, had heard this and was nearly crying on the inside. “I’ll make you an excellent bargain if you’ll take every bit of that product,” he said. “We can’t sell it.”

“Then why do you have it, Mr. Flume,” Ron said.

“It was an error in shipment,” Mr. Flume said. “It cost too much to send back and even with the preservation charms they’d expire before they reached the supplier.”

“That’s not right,” Ron observed.
“No, but that’s how that particular supplier operates,” the man explained. “They don’t want to admit to shipping the wrong product because it looks bad in their books.”

Ron pulled out the money pouch and said, “Give me all of the... *Live Iced Grubs* and *Rainbow Flame Tongue Gum.*” He shook his head at the names because he was quite sure that no human would ever eat this stuff. “This isn’t for humans is it?”

“Nope,” the man said, happily ringing up Ron’s purchases. “Only Goblins like this stuff, but Hogsmeade is too far for them to come and get these.”

“What about adding the items to your Owl Order forms,” Ron said.

“It has to do with the preservation spell again,” the man said. “They have to be sold in store because that is the contract that we have with our supplier. If they were available by Owl Order, no one could buy them from me anyway because the spells preserving these sweets would vanish. But luckily this is the last of that botched order and we have another supplier lined up that’s going to allow us to add a few items to our Owl Order forms.”

The Gryffindor nodded and met Winky outside of the store. “What are these for,” he asked as most of his purchase was taken from him. “Weasleys do not accept charity even if it means saving face.”

She looked at him and then said, “Hospitality gifts for goblins three. They be from Iceland. Master...”

“Winky!” A voice called out. “Is that you?”

It was Hermione, who had finally noticed that no one had followed her to Scrivenshaft’s. She had huffed and returned to the Honeydukes’ area of town because that’s obviously where Ron was. She arrived in time to notice that Ron was outside with the house-elf and that the house-elf was dressed in warm boots and a long warm cloak specifically made for her frame.

“You are looking much better Winky,” Hermione observed. “Being free must agree with you now.”

“Master takes good care of Winky,” the little house-elf said proudly. She turned back to Ron who had asked if she had a pen and paper, which she produced from a pocket in her outfit.

“What Master,” Hermione said slight outraged that the elf was in bond to another Wizard. “How could you tie yourself to another Wizard? I thought you’d enjoy being free once you learned how good it was.”

“Why would Winky be wanting freedom,” the house-elf huffed. “Magic was dying inside Winky without Wizard Family to bond with. Youse is not know nothing ‘bout house-elves, youse is bad to force ‘Freedom’,” the little house-elf spat to side at that word, much like the curses or warding off evil, that some cultures have which are followed by spitting on the ground in threes really fast (*Freedom* patooie-patooie-patooie). “On honourable house-elves when deys not askin’ nor wantin’ it.” She turned around to ignore the girl and kept right on ignoring every comment or protestation of how it was immoral it was to enslave other beings.

“Could you pop over to the Burrow and hand this to my mother,” he asked, handing her a small rolled up note. “She’ll give you something appropriate from the Family Weasley.”

“Winky be doing that happily,” the little house-elf said. She fully understood that he might object to the small deceit, but she hoped that whatever she was going to fetch would be appropriate.

“I see Dobby,” she said pointing him out down the street and he was being followed by Malfoy. “Youse be followin’ Dobby to Master.”
“All right,” he said and she elf-popped away. When Dobby came up to him and Hermione, who was still slowly ranting about the slavery of house-elves, he turned to the girl and said, “Hermione give it a rest. She’s gone now and can’t hear you. Hey, Malfoy.”

It was then that Hermione noticed that they had company and it was also then that she noticed Dobby’s outfit too. “Dobby,” she said. When he looked at her, she asked, “Are you still free?”

“That be Dobby business,” Dobby stated proudly. “Dobby be busy and cannot answer Grangey questions. Come,” he said to the two six year boys. “Master is waiting.”

“Weasley,” Draco said. He looked at the house-elf and stated, “I’ve never known you to be a bossy elf.”

“You twos goin’ to be late,” Dobby said walking off in the direction of the school. “Dobby be busy and cannot answer Young Lord Malfoy questions.”

“Sorry Hermione,” Ron said following the house-elf and the Slytherin. “I’ll meet you back at the school.”

“What,” she said confused and following them. “Why, where are you going?”

“Don’t know,” he shouted back jogging to catch up to the other two.

“House-elf slavery is so wrong,” she muttered, but since she didn’t have to put up with company that didn’t see the logic of going to Scrivenshaft’s to pick up more quills and ink before sweets, she strode back to do her shopping in peace, for once. “But then I guess you don’t need more ink or quills if you never do your work on time or as well as it should be,” to the retreating backs of the other boys.

The two boys were far enough away from the others and that’s when Dobby explained that Harry needed them to attend a meeting. When asked the house-elf would not tell them why they needed to be there.

Elsewhere, Mrs. Molly Weasley received the strangest request from her youngest son by way of a house-elf. “Do you have an idea why my son would request these?”

“My Master be havin’ very important meeting,” Winky said. “Gifts of hospitality needed to follow old tradition of primary greeting and...” She wavered, trying to find the proper term. “...gift needed to... makes wheels greasy, no. Not right... to... to... approve idea... no. Not right either... best guess to make brooms go in right direction.”

Molly smiled and understood. “Hospitality gifts, I think I understand,” she said. “I don’t know why he wants these because no one our little Family has developed a taste for them. Give me about five minutes and they will be ready for you.”

“Winky pop back,” the house-elf said, popping out.

Five minutes later, Molly had three goat cheese wheels of about two feet in diameter. They were from an old family recipe where the cheese had to be aged for years and years and years. On her marriage, her mother had given her twenty-six wheels of this weird cheese that had been handed down through the female line.

The cheese was so hard that it couldn’t even melt when cooking and the only way to eat it was to use very sharp grating spells. However it was also so strong in scent that they had to be wrapped in a type of cheesecloth that prevented the smell from escaping and even that had to be re-enforced with
magical bubble charms that encapsulated them to prevent vapours from escaping the cloth.

The secret to making them was still handed down from family to family, but there had been a rumour in the Prewitt line that one of their ancestors had actually acquired the recipe from Goblins. The first few batches of this kind of cheese could be eaten by Humans and it was only through natural aging, not magical aging, that made this product the way it was. The longer they were preserved and worked on, the more hardened the cheese became and the smellier they became.

This was the reason that during the harder times in their married lives Mrs. Weasley would sell off a small wedge or two of the oldest of them. She just didn’t know who would appreciate them, so she took them to a couple of gourmet restaurants in the Wizarding World that she knew could use the product in their foods.

What she didn’t know and no one in her Family knew was that one wheel was valued at, at least four times its weight in Galleons to the entire race of Goblins and none of the contacts who buy it from her, had seen fit to notify her about it. They only thought she had one or two wheels that she kept chipping away at, not twenty something or else they’d have definitely taken advantage of her lack of knowledge about their true monetary value.

Since the gift was a Family gift, she added another secret tied to each of the wheels. Knowing that the gift was for Goblins she added a large flask, one foot in diameter wide and half an inch thick of something called ‘Dragonfire Bourbon’ that Charlie had invented for them. This was another source of the Family income, but the bourbon was much rarer because her son had just created it. His first few were either too strong or too weak, but they kept the strong ones for Bill to give as gifts to his Goblin bosses. So she knew that they’d be appreciated by whomever Ron was meeting.

Winky popped back and immediately noticed the smell in area. “Winky, help?”

“Do you know a strong encapsulating charm,” Molly asked. “It might be better if you did it.”

“Yes,” and with a snap the smell from the cheese wheels were hidden behind a soft blue bubble. “Wheasy be happy.”

“Well I hope he’s happy with this,” she said. “They are getting harder to cut every year. Tell him to send me an Owl on how well it went over.”

Winky only nodded and popped away with the gifts levitating behind her.

HPHPHP

The gifts were ready. Winky had prepared them in such a way that the items purchased were packaged nicely as gifts from Draco. The boy was in Slytherin for a reason and didn’t care who paid for what as long as he was saved from the embarrassment of making a ‘faux pas’ in custom, tradition or courtesy.

Ron was different and he was glad that he could help his mother out by getting rid of some of those awful cheese wheels. She didn’t have the magical power to cut those anymore because they were that tough.

Harry was waiting for them down the stairs to explain a bit about what was going on. “Hey guys,” he said. “I’m glad you could make it.”

“Whatever Potter,” Draco said.

Harry just looked at him and ignored the blonde knowing full well that the Slytherin was curious, but
was refusing to admit it. He looked at Ron and then asked both. “I need to know if you two have decided to improve your spell-casting skills by studying your new ability together.”

Ron looked at the blonde, who indicated that he could let his friend know of their decision. “Yeah,” the red-head told him. “We plan on studying it, even if it’s only so that we are aware of who casts what and when.”

“Good,” Harry said as he turned around and led them up to the second floor and through the hidden door panel that even Ron didn’t know about. “Pick up your gifts and a follow me. I am the host for this meeting. I trust the two of you with this new adventure. I’d have had my Counsellor accompany me when they offered, but he had other duties that override his availability and since you two have been training with me since nearly the beginning of the year, even if in different subjects, well you’ve earned the right to be offered this once in a lifetime chance too.”

“Potter would please make sense,” Draco said, cutting off the obviously nervous ramble.

“You’ll understand shortly,” Harry told them.

The all entered the meeting room just as he finished his stilted explanation. “Everyone,” he called for attention. “I present you, Young Lord Draconis Lucianis Malfoy, heir apparent to the Malfoy Family Legacy.” He then turned to introduce the Icelandic goblins, which each received one of the gifts that Winky had prepared for the blond.

“From the Family of Malfoy,” the blonde said as he handed them out.

Harry then introduced his oldest friend and said, “I present you Ronald Bilius Weasley, sixth son of the Family Weasley.”

As the goblins were presented, Ron had seen the look of shock on the creatures’ faces. He tried his hardest to reign in the shame of giving them goat cheese and strong liquor, but by the time the last one was handed to the goblins he was bright red with embarrassment. Their stares were about to undo him, however one goblin was whispering to Harry explaining the reactions and why they were so strong. Even the Slytherin didn’t know what that was all about.

“Ah, no,” Harry said softly, but his voice carried in the silence. “The Family does ‘not’ know that or else things would have been very different for them. How should we correct this miss-step in protocol?”

Ignatia whispered in his ear and he nodded.

“Ron,” he said to his friend. “Please remove the flasks and present those as gifts to all three, but only give one cheese wheel to their leader, please. The value of three full wheels is too much for them to accept.”

Ron may have had terminal foot-in-mouth for many things, but he was also a strategist. His fellow Gryffindor would never lie about something’s value. If Harry said it was too much, then there had to be a reason why those stinking cheese wheels were considered a dowry for the daughters, generation after generation. Although the reason for why was lost in time, but he had a feeling that he was about to find out soon.

“Of course,” he said. “Please forgive me, I did not mean to over step your hospitality, Lord Potter. Sirs, please allow me to correct my mistake, I had sent a note to my mother for three of the smaller wheels, which are not as aged as these. High Chief Grendel, please accept one full wheel for your clan from the Family Clan of Weasley of the Burrow.”
“Accepted,” the Icelandic goblin said with a grin full of teeth.

The other two younger goblins were staring covetously at the other two wheels until Winky popped them out of the room to prevent a scuffle. They were pleased with the alcohol though and with the rest of their gifts. Besides they were still living in the Grendel Clan so they knew that they’d have the opportunity to taste the rare wondrous gift of ‘Wizard Rock Cheese’.

“We have invited Lord Harry Potter to train in Iceland during your school’s March Break,” Chief Borak said. “We are allowing him to bring friends to train alongside him. What say you?”

“I accept,” Ron said immediately. That he did so without thought caused the two Slytherins to snort. “What,” he faced them. “I don’t need to think about it. If Harry asks me to do something, it’s not without reason. It can’t hurt to learn something new from another corner of the Wizarding World and from beings that have been living in it far longer then a Wizard picking up his first wand.”

“You are wise,” Griphook said with a closed mouth smile, indicating his amusement at the young man’s expression.

“I’m a foolish youth, Griphook, and have much to learn,” Ron stated with a grin and rubbing the back of his neck. “I can always learn not to make the same mistake twice, though.” He was looking at Harry when he said this and they both knew that they were thinking of his ugly behaviour before the Triwizard Tournament’s first task and recent events.

“You should have taken some time to think about it,” Professor Snape said.

“Why,” Ron asked. “This kind of training, whatever it is, is obviously something that hasn’t been offered to a Human in a long while and I’m guessing that’s in years, maybe even decades. Bill told me about some of the better moments in history when I was younger. He said that back in the days of true knights and kings, Goblins and other magical creatures would be willing to train those Humans that they deem worthy. The training was always intense and very different from anything the human would know. Kings and Lords would always seek out a Wizard that had been trained in that fashion because they knew that those Wizards were different and that people would listen to whatever they had to say.”

“Mr. Weasley you astound me with the fact that you even know about this,” Professor Snape said.

“We’ve been studying past wars,” Ron said. “Besides I accepted for a very different and totally selfish reason.”

“What would that be Weasley,” Draco asked.

“It’s training that my brothers have not been offered,” Ron said honestly. “Bill was hoping that they’d ask him so that he could improve his curse breaking skills, but they never did. He eventually figured out that it was because he didn’t need the training to improve those. Since they haven’t asked any Humans that we know of, in recent years then it is the opportunity of a lifetime like Harry said. Although if they did train Humans then it’s possible that the recent Humans didn’t announce it like they did in the past, but if what I believe is correct, we’ll be the first Humans to accept such training since 1768 or thereabouts.”

“You are quite correct,” Ignatia said. “You are the first Humans to our knowledge that have been asked, although...”

“If it weren’t for Lord Potter,” Malfoy said. “We wouldn’t be asked. He needs Human company so he doesn’t fall further into the insanity of being the Boy-Who-Lived.”
“Shut it Malfoy,” Harry said with a grin. “You’re right though, but since you two have decided to improve you unique skill, I believe that the goblins can help you direct your new energy.”

“What say you Malfoy,” Ron asked. “Don’t you want to do something that not even your father has done?”

“Now you’re talking,” Draco said. “Very well, I accept too, but only because you’d have no hope of improving anything without me.”

“That’s true,” Ron said nodding. He looked to the confused goblins and said, “We’re Synchronus.”

The High Chief grinned and said, “We have items that each of you must gather before coming for training. We will Owl you with a list. Lord Potter, if you’d send either of your house-elves to come prepare a place for the three of you within our Clan, it would be most useful. You may bring them with you too when you come for training. You’re going to need them. Our task here is complete. We accept you, Lord Potter-Black-Grindalwald and will make arrangements with your manager here for transportation.”

Harry bowed low and remained that way. The other Wizards followed suit and waited until the contingent of Goblins was completely gone before he collapsed to floor and let out huffs of breath. “That was very unnerving,” he said laughing and giving everyone a grin. “I can’t wait until March Break, this is gonna be so great.”

“I expect the three of you to pass all your exams with Os for this,” Professor Snape told them.

“We’ll do our best, sir,” Harry said. “What do you think they’ll task us with?”

“Does it matter,” Draco said. “So what was wrong with Weasley’s gift? Why did you make him take back two wheels of that cheese?”

“Griphook told me that the value of one of those was approximately four times its weight in Galleons,” Harry said. “It’s known to them as Wizard Rock Cheese and apparently only Witches or Wizards can make them. The recipe is rare and almost a fairy tale among the Goblins because they rarely ever see any of it at the market. Griphook did tell me that when some came on the market it is always sold in two inch cubes by some reputable restaurants in Diagon Alley.”

“My mother sold small wedges to several restaurants in the past,” Ron said. “They claimed that they used it to strange and rare recipes.”

“They might have used some of it,” Harry said. “But think about it. Most humans are greedy and perhaps less forthright when dealing with each other, which is why the Goblins were trusted to be in charge of our banking. They really don’t care about you, only your gold so long as you make more of it, they’re very happy counting it.”

“Bloody hell Weasley,” Draco said. “You’re family is rich.”

“I know that,” Ron said. “We just have different form of wealth.”

“No you bloody idiot,” Malfoy said. “One of those is worth four times its weight in gold. So how much does one of those bloody things weigh if you have to use a levitation charm to bring it anywhere?”

Ron blinked and then looked at his fellow Gryffindor, who only nodded. “I was giving them too much money-wise,” he said. “Is that why you...?”
“Yeah,” Harry said. “Professor, do you know a charm or spell that will measure the weight of something while levitating it.”

“Yes, a medical charm for weighing babies.” Snape said. “Winky bring one of those things back here.”

Winky popped in with one of the two foot, in diameter, cheese wheel. Snape cast the weighing charm and they watched the counter climb up, and up, and up, until the full weight settled at about four hundred and seventy-two pounds. There was no way that a human could lift that ever.

“Times four,” Harry said. “Its monetary value is approximately four times its weight, that’s...”

“One thousand, eight hundred and eighty-eight,” Ron said automatically. “Wow!”

“I think that you need to Owl your mum Weasley,” Draco said his eyes were equally wide by the total, but also by the quickness of the Gryffindor’s calculated response. “You’ll need to figure out how to disperse it without getting locked into a single fee. The law of supply and demand being what it is.”

“Mr. Malfoy is right,” Professor Snape said. “Invite your parents to come to the school. We can explain this to them in the Room of Requirements. It would be best if you kept the full contents and events of this meeting to yourselves.”

“Yes sir,” Ron said.

“Of course Professor,” Draco said.

Harry smiled and said, “Your counsel has been invaluable Professor Snape.”

The other boys in the room watched a paper pop into existence. It replicated into three copies, one popping out, one coming to Harry and the last being given to their Professor.

“I’m sorry about our plans for March Break,” Harry said to the man.

“This is more important,” Snape said. “We can meet during summer and I’ll do my research then, if you’re agreed.”

“Yes sir,” Harry replied.

“Very well,” the man said. “Don’t be late in returning to the school gentlemen.”

“No sir,” they all replied at the same time. This caused the man to shake his head at the coordination and cooperation happening between the two Houses.

‘Although,’ he thought with a small glance back at the boys who were chatting excitedly about their up-coming training and with Harry’s explanation about why he had the name of Grindelwald as part of his list of Families. ‘I believe this is more about the war and that the Houses in a school are not what they seem anymore. I wonder if it was Dumbledore’s who caused the greater rift in the beginning or on purpose?’

HPHPHP

TBC...
A couple of days after the meeting with the Goblins, Professor Dumbledore summoned Harry to his office in order to discuss the meeting that had taken place.

Harry was standing outside of the Headmaster’s Office, and pacing in front of the guardian stone gryphon wondering if he should rattle off the names of sweets or wait for the man to find him there. It was just chance that he hissed his displeasure in Parseltongue, (...Damn that man...) he said. (...He wants the bloody meeting, but why does he set up such stupid passwords and why didn’t he tell me what it was before requesting this meeting...)

(...To re-set the password or change the conditions put your hand on the beak of the gryphon and state the new word or the conditions for the password change...)

Harry looked around and noticed a one of the smaller paintings on the wall. It had a huge apple tree with a snake slithering in it. The bronze plate under it called the painting ‘The Tree of Eden’. (...Not a very original concept...) he hissed. (...Were you the one telling me how to change the gryphon’s password? ...)

(...But of course...) the snake hissed. (...We snakes must stick together...)

(...Do you like staying in this corridor? ...) Harry asked the picture. (...There aren't many paintings around this area to keep you company...) (...I miss my companion portraits...) The snake confessed. (...They used to be on either side of mine, but have been moved a few years ago by that colour-blind old buzzard who’s now the Headmaster of this school...)

(...I see...) The Gryffindor paused with a chuckle at that comment and then asked, (...Would you like to live in my quarters or be moved somewhere else? ...)

(...Why...)

(...I need to practice your interesting language, as I’m not always aware of when I’m speaking it and I would like to see if language will affect certain spells...) Harry explained. (...My door does not have a guardian portrait, but rather a set of programmed bricks. I don’t recall seeing any paintings in the corridor near my quarters, but I’ll be on the lookout for your matching pairs, unless Hogwarts knows where they may be. I could always bring in a couple of extra paintings my rooms that you’d be comfortable converging with or just to get a change of scenery, whatever you prefer...)

(...If I prefer staying here? ...) The snake in the painting hissed.

(...Well then I’d greet you whenever I happen to be summoned by the Headmaster...) Harry said.

The snake in the painting knew full well that the boy was there more often than most other students, but he wasn’t by often enough for a decent conversation. (...I will ask Hogwarts to move me to your rooms. At least there I’ll have company that can speak to me...) The snake in the painting said. (...I’ll talk with her to see if there is a way for her to help you find my companion portraits. They have the
name plates of “Gate to Heaven” and “Gate to Hell” …)

(...Someone Muggle-born or Muggle-raised, must have painted the three of you…) He speculated and the snake hissed his agreement. (...I’ll see you when I get there...) Harry said turning to face the stone gryphon that seemed to be looking at him to see what he would do.

‘Dumbledore still hasn’t sent me a notice about the password,’ he thought. ‘I wonder if I should add an override just for me…’

He was about to put his hand on the gryphon’s beak when it suddenly moved out of the way. He waited to see if anyone was there before stepping onto the bottom stair and riding up to his appointed meeting time. As he was about to knock on the door he heard, “Come in young Harry.”

Harry frowned and stepped into the room. “Headmaster,” he said to the old man behind his desk full of nick-knacks and paperwork that the man was shuffling about on his desk. He noticed that Professor Snape was also in the room, so he greeted the man. “Professor Snape.”

“Mr. Potter,” the dark man said politely.

The Headmaster was surprised that the two of them were cordial, but then he hadn’t seen them interact for the majority of this year. He was too pre-occupied with the Order of the Phoenix and with Fudge’s idiotic issues to notice that there were no more disparaging remarks about Boy-Who-Lived from his Potions Master during their staff meetings. His eyes twinkled brightly at the thought that it was something that he had done to bring them together in peace and in a gruesome sense it was. Not that they told him about it because it was clearly obvious that the old man had chosen to forget most of his past, at least the Dark part of it.

“Well my boys,” Albus Dumbledore said. “I’m pleased to see that you’re getting along. Now, Harry why don’t you have a seat and we’ll discuss what the Goblins wanted with you a few days ago, hmm?”

“Sir,” Harry said still standing in front of the desk. “It was simply a matter of personal financial business.”

“No need to keep it a secret,” the old man said jovially. “Severus has told me all about it.”

“I sincerely doubt that Headmaster,” Harry said. “He is a man of honour and would never divulge private financial information. It is beneath him to do such a thing.” He looked at the Potions Master who rubbed his temple to indicate that the old man had tried to get the information by using Legilimency, but failed. He looked more closely and with a concerned tone he asked, “Are you all right sir? You don’t look to be feeling too well.”

“Yes, but shouldn’t you be paying attention to the Headmaster,” Severus said, but that’s when he noticed that the old man was sitting there not doing anything. It was like he wasn’t aware of his
surroundings. “Potter?”

“He’s a bit busy right now,” Harry said with a smirk. “Would you like to stop by for tea after we’re finished here? I could use your advice as to what to pack for our March Break.”

“Of course,” the man said. “That is if your wonderful house-elf will have those fruit tarts that I like.”

“I’m quite certain that she would,” Harry said. “She likes you.”

“I don’t see why,” the Potions Master said in a huff. He crossed his arms for a show of irritation that he did not feel. “Now would mind explaining to me how it is that he’s occupied?”

“He’s in the dark,” Harry said slightly rubbing his own temple to tell the man that the Headmaster was still in the boy’s mind.

“I don’t understand,” Severus said. “You’re doing something?”

“You haven’t tested me since last year sir,” Harry said. “If you had you’d know what’s happening to him, but let’s get him out of there now before he gets even more irked at his failure to do so himself.”

He sat down quickly and winked at his Potion’s Master.

The Headmaster refocused on the two sitting in front of him quite quickly, but he felt slightly disoriented. “Harry,” he said and then looking at his Potions Master he asked. “Young Harry has not been acting up in class again has he, Severus? I haven’t heard you complain about him yet this year and I was hoping that the peace would be kept between the two of you.”

“No sir,” Harry said. “I’m here because I’ve come to realize that I’m might still be in need of Occlumency training. You’ve said that Professor Snape here is the most proficient in the school regarding that talent and I’ve since come to believe it too. So I’m here to ask if you could arrange time for him to teach me again, that is if ‘you’ believe I still need that training.”

“Excellent idea,” Dumbledore said with his eyes lighting up. He turned to his Potions Master and noted the thoughtful look on the man’s face. “Would that be agreeable with you Severus?”

The dark man scowled slightly and then sneered, “I suppose I can give up some of my precious time to attempt to teach the Gryffindor something useful.”

Dumbledore just chuckled at the dark man’s antics. “Very well,” he said. “I will leave it to the two of you to decide on the time of the lessons. Severus, I expect you to be fair and keep me up-to-date on how the two of you are doing. Owl me when you’ve picked a place and time for the lessons.”

“Yes Albus,” the Potions Master said standing up, knowing that the last statement was a dismissal of their presence.

“Yes, sir,” Harry said looking down at his clenched hands. It was a show for the old man and he was buying it. He too stood up, but he hunched over looking ever like the boy who was being punished.

They left the old man thinking about how the two were seemingly getting along or at the very least not fighting with one another and he said to his Phoenix, “It does this old heart good to know that those two trying to get along. This war needs its fighters working together.”

Fawkes looked at the Headmaster and chirruped a tune to indicate that he didn’t disagree, but the beautiful creature knew about the darkness in the old man. He had never bonded with this Headmaster, as he had with others from time to time. He allowed the man to claim him as a familiar verbally and it helped to be around when the humans were fighting the ‘good’ fight against the Dark
that was seeping into the land and their culture. That was the reason he stuck around and allowed them to use him as a symbol for the Light.

He had even permitted the use of his feathers in things and objects like wands, but these were only done when he felt like it. But he was beginning to regret releasing the last two feathers due to the opposite natures of the humans that were using them. Also he felt that one of the Wizard’s, the one the other Humans were calling the Boy-Who-Lived was not truly well matched with his wand. However at this point in time, he remained where he was observing the meetings in this room and sleeping when they were over. He tucked his head under a wing to snooze, tuning out the mutters from the old man currently in charge of the school.

HPHPHP

Harry waited until the stairs stopped moving and with a mischievous grin he asked the Potions Master, “Does he make you come here and force you to guess at the password using the names of sweets?”

“There have been times,” the man confessed, not liking the look on the young man’s face. It was too much like his father that he had to reign in a need to hex the brat.

“What’s your favourite potions ingredient,” Harry asked thoughtfully.

‘Why is he standing there asking me these questions,’ Severus thought. ‘He promised me some of Winky’s treats.’ He paused and looked at the young man’s face. ‘It doesn’t sound like a prank question, maybe he really wants to know.’

“Basilisk Venom,” Severus said with a dark grin at the fact that he had quite a bit of that rare ingredient now.

Harry smirked, knowing that the man liked his ‘new toys’ in the form of Basilisk potions ingredients. He placed his hand on the beak of the gryphon and hissed softly in Parseltongue. (...Instant override of any password to Hogwarts’ Headmaster’s Office only for Harold James Potter, Harry Potter, Boy-Who-Lived, keyed to phrase Super-Cala-Fraga-Listic-Expy-Ally-Doe-Cious or by magic fingerprint stamp of the finger with the Family Ring to the left eye of the statue...)

(...Password override and alternative conditions accepted for Harold James Potter, Harry Potter, Boy-Who-Lived, Fingerprint Identification required...) Harry put the finger with his Family ring to the left eye of the gryphons and heard. (...Fingerprint accepted...)

“Potter, what are you doing,” the Potions Master asked.

“Your turn,” Harry said. “Put your hand where I put mine and just let me do the talking. I’ll explain later.”

“I don’t have to poke it in the eye do I?” The Potions Master asked.

Harry shook his head and said, “No. Just put you hand on his beak.”

Severus put his hand on the beak of the sentry gryphon statue and listened to Harry hissing something to it. It was clear that the young man was doing something, but the older man could have sworn he heard a reply hissing back at Harry.

“You can let go now, sir,” Harry said with a grin. It was his contagious one, but Severus wasn’t about to play nice until he found out what just happened.
“What did you just do, Mr. Potter?”

“Would you care to join me for tea Professor?” Harry asked completely ignoring the question. He did notice that the portrait that used to hang next to the door was no longer there and he hoped that the Snake in the Portrait had moved to his quarters.

“Yes,” Professor Snape said. “Now will you...”

“Thank you,” Harry said. “Winky...” He called out to his house-elf, trying to drive his Professor nuts by refusing to answer any questions at the moment. When she popped up, he said, “Tea and treats for me and Professor Snape in my rooms. We’ll be right there.”

“Yessir, Master Harry,” Winky said with a curtsy.

“Potter,” Snape growled out.

“Come along Professor,” Harry said walking quickly. “The tea will get cold if we dally here.”

“Very well,” the man huffed his impatience and stalked off at a paced that announced his annoyance and frustration. This only caused the Gryffindor to chuckle and walk faster just to keep up.

Once they were safely in Harry’s assigned rooms with tea in hand Harry explained what he had done. “I’ve programmed an override to the current password for the Headmaster’s office,” he said sipping his tea and nibbling on a strawberry flavoured biscuit. He looked up when he heard a plonking splash. His Professor had let the cookie he was eating fall into his tea when he heard that. “Sir?”

“You what,” the man asked.

“I programmed an override to the current...”

“That’s what I thought you said,” the man replied. “Are you out of your mind, Mr. Potter? What about the security of the office and the Headmaster? What about the security of all the personal files in there and you’ve just overridden the password, whatever for?”

“To quit playing the Headmaster’s games,” Harry said calmly. “He summons me there, but expects me to rattle off a number of names to sweets. How secure is that particular method? Everyone is aware that the Headmaster’s passwords are the names of sweets.”

Severus was stopped in his thoughts there because the Gryffindor made sense. Everyone knew what kind of password it was. The Headmaster wouldn’t even have to be in the office because anyone could walk up to statue spout off the names of candy and still get into the man’s office.

“So what did you do,” the Potions Professor asked.

“I programmed it to open up for me using two methods different methods,” Harry said. “I have a password and the other I’ll keep to myself at this point in time. I wouldn’t want someone finding it by accident.”

“So why did I have to put my hand on that statue’s beak,” Severus asked.

Harry timed it again for shock value. “I put in a password override just for you sir,” he said. “The Headmaster can’t change it because I programmed it using Parseltongue and so the only person who can change the conditions has to be a Snake Speaker. He can still re-set his password to whatever he wants, but we won’t be affected by it ever again.”
“That’s why you asked me…” Snape let out a chuckle and then a pleasant deep laugh. “So now I’ll never be stuck trying to figure out the names of sweets, thank Mr. Potter.”

“You’re quite welcome sir,” Harry said politely. “Feel free to call me Harry while you’re visiting here. I don’t want to feel as though I’m attending class in these rooms.”

“Very well, Harry. Now would you mind telling me why you didn’t ask for Counsel about the items you need help deciding to take with you,” the man said turning the conversation onto the original reason for his presence in the young man’s rooms.

“Well,” Harry began. “Since it wasn’t just for me and it wasn’t really a Wizarding matter per se, I just thought you’d be the best one to render an opinion or provide me with several options and opinions for how to pack and travel like you did this past summer. I don’t want to bring everything of mine with me because this school year is not yet done, but I don’t want to dishonour my new Family motto either.”

“You do not have to pack up everything,” Severus told him. “If you had gone home for the Winter Holidays, what would you have taken with you?”

“Mostly my essentials,” Harry said. “I was going to take very few changes of clothes because I already had some at home. I’d have mainly taken my books and things to study, plus all the extra assignments.”

“I suggest that you first get a piece of scratch paper and make a list,” the Head of Slytherin said.

“What is scratch paper?”

“Yes, get a piece of any old paper that you care nothing about and use it to create a starter list of things that you think you’ll need,” the man said.

“Oh,” Harry said. “Okay, will you still help…”

“Go get those things first,” Severus told him. “I still would like to at least finish one cup of this delicious tea without losing a cookie in it and creating unappetising sludge at the bottom of the cup.”

Harry laughed and walked over to the dark scroll-top desk in one of the corners of the room. His house-elves had found it for him to match the wooden accents in the room. From it he took a plain lined notebook of the old ‘Cahier’ variety that he was used to using in his primary school in the Muggle World, which came in a variety pack of five and ten and in multiple colours. He also fetched a mechanical pencil of the type normally used by drafters because the lead was larger and his special sharpener made for that particular type of lead.

Professor Snape just observed his activities and wait patiently for the young man to return. He snorted when he saw that the book cover of the ‘Cahier’ was a pale pink colour.

The Gryffindor noted the look and said, “I acquired a lot of these from someone who kept all of the other colours. These books come in packages of five, ten and twenty in a variety of base colours. They’re only available in, bland white or beige, pale pink, pale green, pale blue and pale yellow. They are usually purchased for use in primary school. It was the only school supply that I ever received that was never begrudged to me because of the colour, no boy wants to use a pink notebook, but since I wasn’t allowed to have any others I was grateful for these ones. I used what I could for primary school, but I still have quite a few of these pink ones left, so now I use them to plan out my essays.”

“Why would anyone begrudge you the basic supplies required for your education,” Severus asked.
“I’d rather not talk about it,” Harry said. “I made a Magical Oath to never reveal past issues relating to the care or lack thereof I may or may not have had before I entered Hogwarts. Please don’t pry any further.”

“Very well,” the Potions Master agreed. “Begin your list with basic clothes and necessities like socks, undergarments and toiletries. Those should always be first on any travel list. You need to make them first in your list as they are used most often and most necessary. They are also the things that tend to get overlooked if they are at the bottom of a list and be sure that you add twice as many socks and under garments as there are days for your travel unless you are certain that they can be cleaned in a timely manner. While you do that, would you mind explaining what you did to the Headmaster?”

“I...” Harry said in an exaggerated pose with his left hand to his chest. “I didn’t do anything.” He stopped his posturing with a giggle and said. “Test my shields and you’ll see.”

“Hmm,” Snape noised. He took out his wand and said, “Next add any school assignment that you have due and everything you’ll need to complete the work.” As the Gryffindor continued to write his list he mentally cast the spell, ‘Legilimens’.

Harry smirked privately and continued to add a few things for extra study because he had a strange feeling that he’d need it.

Meanwhile his Professor was in a similar, dark, room to the one that Harry had used to confine the Headmaster. It was similar and yet vastly different because this one would not affect the man’s memory. ‘The Greasy Git needs to keep his memory,’ Harry thought fondly of the man. ‘Still that ‘cupboard in my mind will be enough to drive whoever is in there complete nutters because of the seeming cracks. They’ll assume that there are cracks in the shield when in fact it’s just light filtering from under the door or through the vent holes that only allow shadows to be seen walking by. Those bits of light will temp the infiltrator to actions and when they do...’

The young man was grinning darkly at his Professor’s attempts to ‘break out’. He felt every attempt, but they were only noticed as a minimal and vague in sensation. However, it was physically visual in the fact that the Professor’s eyes were unfocused and it looked like the man was about to drool. Harry quickly finished his basic list and that’s when he gently pushed the man away from his mind. The Head of Slytherin house never once found a single memory, but he had been able to form a very small light to illuminate his surroundings. What he had seen and smelled was shocking. It was so realistic that in a way he felt that he had experienced something utterly real. He was about to get frustrated by the lack of progress, but then realized that he was locked in the boy’s defence mechanism and without knowing what it was he didn’t know how to breach it.

Professor Snape blinked as his awareness to the here and now returned. “Interesting,” he said. “However that does not explain what you did to the Headmaster to make him forget about the fact that a contingent of Goblins came to the school seeking you?”

“Once you’re in that room I have a full reciprocal access to the mind trying to infiltrate mine,” Harry explained. “I was able to seek out that bit of data and basically remove it completely from his mind. I altered a bit of it so that from now on, anything mentioned of me related to Gringotts or to Goblins, the Headmaster will wave it off as unimportant and therefore he’ll be unable to meddle in my personal financial business.”

“Fascinating,” Severus said. “How were you able to come up that kind of defence?”
“I learned it through meditation and I had found a book on Muggle exercises for the mind,” Harry said. “It helped that the book was written for the purpose of organizing thoughts and other whatnot. The Muggles are strange sometimes. Some of the things I’ve learned, well did you that there are some groups of them come together to test their memory capacity? They’re official contests and there are categories based on faces, whole novels, articles and mixed media. I personally think they’re crazy, but that doesn’t mean that they don’t write books about how to improve your memory and how to create chambers in your mind to store things.” He shrugged and let the man decide if he wanted to believe that the boy used Muggle methods to improve a magical talent like Occlumency.

Severus looked at the young man and knew that what he was talking about might be exaggerated. Unfortunately he was fully aware that he had been living in the Wizarding World for quite some time. He may have been raised partially in the Muggle World, but his whole adult life was centred on being a Wizard and living the life of a Wizard. Now it was clear that he might be missing a few things.

‘This sounds like Draco’s questions about those North American trees and his other potions questions,’ he thought. ‘My godson refused to site the source of where his queries were coming from, but I’m now having strong suspicions that the Boy-Who-Lived is responsible.’

Harry noted his thoughtful expression and waited to see what his Professor has to say about his sources for improving his mind. It wasn’t like it was difficult once his magic had settled, but those books did help him to find a method that suited him to Occlude his mind and create the defences for it. He didn’t have proper magical instruction in this matter and so what should have been impossible has now been changed because of a different set of belief in ability.

“You are the source of Draco’s questions related to the strange flora that Muggles have access to,” Severus stated firmly, finishing his cup of tea and declining another from the ever-eager female house-elf attached to Potter.

Harry grinned at that and then laughed. This statement was way out from left field and it just struck him as absolutely funny. The Professor must have been wondering, for quite some while, about the blonde’s strange new curiosity about Muggle plants. The dark man only grinned wryly and waited somewhat patiently for the boy to finish.

The Gryffindor nodded and said, “Yes. We’ve been meeting every Wednesday based on ‘your’,” he gave the man a pointed look stating he knew just where the idea came from. “Suggestion to improve his magical Defence and sometimes we discussed potions in Defence and have came up with several ideas. He was going to present them to you regarding which would be the better ones for supplementing the weaker spells or re-enforcing the abilities of other spells. We used the books that the Room provided, but we also accessed the Internet through my net-book.”

Severus waited for the boy to explain the ‘net-book’, but the stubborn Gryffindor was refusing to volunteer the information. The Potions Master had to admit that the boy was learning caution. Still he was forced to ask, “What is a net-book? Could you please show it to me and demonstrate it?”

“Oh course,” Harry said. “Follow me.” He led the man to his corner scroll top desk. He conjured a second comfortable high-back chair for the man and then pulled out the interesting device from its hidden compartment. He showed the man everything that he had showed to the blonde Slytherin during the train ride to school.

His Professor asked several questions to search on the little computer under Muggle and Wizarding search engines. He was surprised by the variety of sites available and knew quite a bit about what he was asking, but any leads to new methods of curing, processing or preparing specific ingredients and their results in potions made him realized how he had been limiting himself by relying solely on the
magazines available in the United Kingdom’s Wizarding World.

Harry printed up anything that the man wanted and cautioned him that some Muggle data was actually true and tested and that the Wizarding speculations were the incorrect ones. He was sure that the man had received Draco’s proposal for extra-credit studies and had been wondering just how the blonde Slytherin came to make such strange and inspired connections.

“How much is one of these little devices and how can I acquire one?” The Potions Master asked.

“I found it in Muggle London on a street near the Leaky Cauldron,” Harry said. “The business is new and these are imports from other countries under the supervision of their Magical Exports Divisions. Stores in Diagon Alley aren’t permitted to import anything new and non-traditional for some reason, but businesses especially those opened and run by mainly Muggle-born students are smart. They’ve opened primarily Muggle businesses in the Muggle World because the Ministry prevented them from getting permits to sell these in primarily magical areas like Diagon Alley. Their stores are set up with a magical veil or shield to protect their magical products and Muggles don’t wander into those parts of the store.”

He paused and then answered the man’s next obvious question about where they can be found. “They can only be found by accident or by word of mouth. Accidentally it’s usually small Muggle-born children that wander into an area and those are the ones that learn early on about the Wizarding World. Others are like me, looking for something Muggle for semi-Muggle-type homes and suddenly find that they’re in a completely magical shop that is not governed by the UK’s Ministry of Magic because the Ministry refuses to allow the mix of new merchandise in primarily Wizard Areas of the Magical Commonwealth.”

Again, this was a strange new and yet completely unsurprising revelation. “Have you found other stores of this nature in the Muggle World?”

“Yes, I was given a list and I visited them briefly,” Harry said. “There’s book store that imports magical books that can’t be found among the regular offerings, a clothing store, a cobbler that specializes in mixing new teenage Muggle-trends and converts them to their Magical equivalent, plus a glazier that specializes in unique bottles and glass ornamentation. These stores only allow serious Muggle-Wizard buyers to visit their hidden sections and one has to plonk down a substantial amount in one of them before getting the name of another store or location. They are also prejudiced against those that are considered ‘pureblood’ in the Wizarding World and someone like Malfoy would never get anything from them unless accompanied and vouched for by someone like me. He’s expressed interest in getting a net-book of his own, but I haven’t told him about the conditions to purchasing one, other than to mention that it could only be found in Muggle London.”

“I’m sure that when you tell him, he’ll have a fit, but then again, it might be something that he has to learn on his own,” Severus comment on. “What about me?”

“I don’t think that you’ll have a problem,” Harry said. “It will only depend on how you act in the Muggle World and how well you are comfortable by walking into such an establishment.”

“I do not believe that I would be comfortable, but I would appreciate the recommendation and your company for such a trip and purchase,” Severus told him truthfully. He was used to the young man’s presence and had found that over time it was somewhat peaceful and less grating on his nerves than certain others, ‘the Weasley Twins’ in his class, have affected him in the past. “I would prefer to know the total amount for all the equipment you have and how to get supplies during the year.”

“They have Owl Order for standard things like machine parts for the printer, ink, and scroll paper,” Harry said. “For servicing the machine, you’d have to go in person and hope to Merlin that the
programs have not changed so much. They tend to come out with new versions or ‘updated’ versions of the standard stuff. I will caution you on those because this is still relatively new to the Wizarding World whereas the Muggle World has been using something similar in house-holds since the late nineteen eighties."

"Would you list the standard equipment that you have and the method that you use to re-charge them," Severus asked. "I’d also appreciate a cost list per item. Now what about your list of items for your week long break and what supplemental advice were you looking for."

"Well," Harry began. "Since I have this open could you please look at a couple of things for me and give me your advice or opinion about them, if you’ve experienced using such or not."

"Of course," Severus said watching the Gryffindor pull up a back-packers web page of the Wizarding variety. It contained supplies like ‘magical tents’, with a number of rooms. There was a listing of portable, collapsible loos and showers, plus food storage devices of many shapes, sizes and configurations.

Severus gave his opinion on several and watched the young man make notes regarding the basics versus better comfort versus top-of-the-line products. Harry was making dialogue type notes regarding the comments that the Potions Master had from the experience with the different products. “I do recommend the towels that we used this past summer,” the man said. “They were useful and would be easier to use for clean up, depending on what the Goblins expect the three of you to learn during only one week’s time."

Harry developed a strange look on his face, but it was quickly replaced by his usual open expression that clearly stated that he had nothing of import on his mind. The Potions Master knew differently, but wasn’t about to question the boy about it.

They developed a couple of lists for the boys’ week away from the school and then Harry said, “Do you think that we’d be able to get leave to go to Muggle London during one of our Hogsmeade week-ends before the week long break?”

“Some students do, but that is only because their parents come to fetch them for ‘family outings’ and such,” the Professor told him. “I believe that you’d only be able to go with adult accompaniment and only if that adult was an Order member. Why do you ask?"

“I was thinking that depending on what the Goblins demand that we bring with us, we might need to access those stores that I mentioned to you,” Harry said. “We’ll see soon enough. They don’t ever delay their correspondence especially if they expect us to bring something task oriented for training purposes."

“You are quite correct,” Severus said, standing up. “When you get their task lists, meet up with the other two to analyse your needs. Then come to me, I will make sure to be available to escort the three of you. You will be responsible for their behaviour."

“Yes sir,” Harry said, putting his notes away, until he could meet up with Draco and Ron. “Thank you for your assistance."

“Thank you for the tea and the excellent biscuits,” the man said leaving the rooms, with a plate full of fresh fruit tarts, in order to prepare for the next day’s classes. He still had things to mark and he wasn’t looking forward to that. Many of the students seemed to be having difficulties producing adequate work and he didn’t know how to correct that and still keep up his distant attitude.

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On the Saturday following the boy’s Hogsmeade meeting with the Goblins, they each received a letter delivered by a most unorthodox bird. They weren’t Owls, that’s for sure. These birds were completely unexpected and two could be considered very rare sight in the Wizarding World period.

In front of Ron sat a ‘Silenced’ Fwooper with the most colourful plumage. It was looking at him waiting for something after the letter had been taken from its leg. The redheaded Gryffindor was polite and hand fed the bird some sliced fruit that he knew the creature liked. He had actually learned something in Hagrid’s class that day and it was a good thing that he had paid attention when the class about Fwooper’s took place.

“I need to meet a friend of mine,” he said to the bird, quickly pocketing the letter without fully reading it. He didn’t want any of the Gryffies to be peeking or reading the contents over his shoulder. “Would you like to come along?” The bird hopped to the boy’s shoulder with a clicking of its beak as a sign of agreement. Ron took a small bowl of mixed fruit with him.

Hermione was preoccupied with her book, as she had learned to never pay attention when Ron was eating because his eating habits had truly irked her over the years. She never noticed the recent changes in him and at this point in time she was preparing for exams that were approximately two months away. She didn’t want to be distracted.

“See you later,” said some of the other Gryffindors that had been sitting at the table.

Harry had chosen to spend most of his mornings eating in his rooms. He found that he preferred to go to class directly from his rooms rather than from the Great Hall. Mornings for him were too hectic if he did that, so he normally ate breakfast in his rooms and the rare few times he ate his evening meals there too. Depending on the day his training sometimes surpassed the evening meal times in the Great Hall.

He received his letter from the Goblins too, only his was delivered with an actual ‘Snidget’, which was odd since no one can own one and they are a known protected species. However he did recall that his Godfather, Sirius Black, had asked an Owl to deliver a note and it was obviously not an Owl sold in a magical menagerie of some kind because he had been on the run from the Ministry of Magic back then. That was how Ron obtained his little Pygmy Owl, affectionately named Pig. Therefore he shrugged at the sight of the Snidget and he wasn’t about to advertise the fact that the bird came to the school.

The Snidget arrived with a letter in its beak and then it chose to roost in his hair just like Pig did whenever it delivered a letter to him from any of the Weasley’s. It peeped now and again, but still had not left him for some reason. The Goblins were not waiting for a response so the Boy-Who-Lived suspected that there was another purpose for the bird to remain with him for now.

Winky had brought a small bowl of ‘Pink Sweetflower’ and ‘Blue Sweetflower’ petals for the small bird. She used a sticking charm on her Master’s head for the bowl and spelled the bowl to never spill its contents. The bird and the bowl were so deep in his thick rat’s nest hair that they were almost not visible.

He didn’t care and he was glad that Winky knew what the bird would like to eat before it journeyed back to wherever it came from. He took his time reading the letter and then re-read it more slowly to absorb the contents, trying to understand what was being asked of him.

‘Why would they want me to get those things,’ he wondered as the doorway to his rooms slid open to allow the very few who had permission to enter, to come in.

Ron had learnt where those rooms during the Winter Holidays. The Boy-Who-Lived had
programmed a password just for him and Draco. The password for them was ‘Chamber of Secrets’ because, as Harry explained, it was in the Chamber of Secrets that the two had cooperated with each other without fighting and that the password would serve as a reminder that they were capable of getting along to accomplish great things.

“‘Weasley,’” Draco said getting his attention, while a Jabbernoll was perched on his shoulder.

“‘Malfoy,’” Ron responded with a smile as Draco’s bird was preening the blond shoulder length hair. They both stepped into the concealed room one after the other and were both hit with the smell of fresh home baked bread. “That smells wonderful Harry, like the Burrow.’”

“Come in and join me for breakfast,” Harry said walking out of his mini-kitchen nook area.

He pulled out additional stools from under the table and magically set two additional settings for the two boys. He turned to see Draco take a fork and transfigure it into a perch for the bird on his shoulder, while Ron did the same with a spoon, but his included a place for the dish of fruit that he had carried with him.

“I take it that you both received a letter from High Chief Borak of the Goblin Clan Grendel,” Harry stated, sitting down at the table. Winky popped in the breakfast foods for all of them including something for the Jabbernoll, which was the only bird that didn’t have a dish of treats.

“Good observation Mister Obvious,” Draco snarked and the huffed. “What’ll you do for your next trick? The real question should be why are they still hanging around?”

“No reply was needed,” Harry agreed, moving his head very little so as not to disturb his passenger.

“I think it’s because of my task,” Ron said.

“What is it?” Harry asked buttering the warm bread lightly and adding mashed strawberries to it, as opposed to jam. He was curious about what the others were asked to find.

Ron bit his lip. The letter did say not to tell the others, but that wasn’t a very good idea because he knew that he’d need a lot of help to gather the things that the Goblins were asking for.

“Don’t tell,” Draco hissed at the red-head. “The letters are very specific about that.”

“Yes they were weren’t they,” Harry said in a tone that made the other two look at him. “It makes me wonder, if that isn’t some sort of test?”

“Why would you think that Potter,” the Slytherin asked.

“The letters gave us a date and time to meet in order to get Port-Keyed to the Grendel Clan Compound. The letters would turn into the needed Port-Keys that are programmed to let us leave from the Shrieking Shack,” Harry said. “They did mention that they’d send a request for us to gather a few items or at least it was implied when we met them last Saturday. However the letter also also said that we were not permitted to ask for help to gather the items when it’s obvious that we’ll need help. I just find that a strange thing to demand is all. It was mention in three different lines and three different ways too.”

“Well I know for a fact that I will be needing help,” Ron said. “Do you believe that knowing we need help and asking for it is the test?”

Draco thought about that and then added, “Maybe it’s about knowing who to ask, as well as gathering these things. I know that I’d need help too, but these things are strange to me and I don’t
know where to even begin looking for some of them.”

“Well let’s look at the lines regarding help,” Harry said. “I have one that says, ‘do not ask an untrustworthy trusted friend’. I guess they know something about my friends to be stating something like that.”

“One of mine says, ‘the hand that supplies the food is not providing nourishment,’ I don’t get it,” Ron said. “Because the house-elves are the ones supplying the food here, so why are they not providing nourishment?”

“Maybe it’s referring to something else Weasley,” Draco said. “Have you been taking potions or other stuff like sweets from someone? What about the stuff you get in Hogsmeade?”

Ron shrugged and said, “I’ve been eating different flavoured peanuts and trail mix stuff that Hermione has been bringing to school. But I’ve been having that stuff since second year. I like the dried fruits with the seed mixed ones. I don’t buy much in Hogsmeade, but when I do doesn’t last long.”

Harry nodded because he knew about that stuff of Hermione’s. He never accepted them from Hermione after he had gotten sick one day and discovered something in the homemade packets that she prepared in Muggle ‘zip bags’. He had been known to spit up banana bits when he was younger and he figured that it was just one of those things that he had to watch out for. Muggle news was always full of food allergy type stories and that’s what he figured he had. When he couldn’t eat the mix, he figured that he had more than just a banana allergy. He never told the girl and always gave his trail mix to Ron by putting it in the boy’s trunk whenever he had the chance. He didn’t think that Ron knew about it, but now he was wondering if there was something else going on.

Ron had been acting strange on occasion which is why Harry was reluctant to trust him too far. He was still cautious about it because of the conversation that he had overheard this past summer. It was one thing to guess, but quite another to ‘know’ that he wasn’t liked.

Draco told them that his line was, ‘find comfort in the new and discard the old as they are not reliable’.

“None of those indicate who they’re talking about,” Harry said. “I think it only means that we have to choose who to trust and just not show the lists to anyone we would usually trust or ask for help.”

“I’d normally go to Hermione,” Ron said. “And you Harry, but usually I’d go to her because she’s brilliant at research.”

“I would too,” Harry said. “Draco?”

“I have a few ‘old’ friends that I’d normally consult, but I guess this line means I should trust my new friends,” Draco explained. “That’s how it’s coming across to me.”

“I think so too,” Harry said. “So do we share our lists with each other?” Draco and Ron looked at each other and then to Harry. “Should we do a blind vote about it?”

“How would we do that,” Ron said.

Harry summoned a small bag that made a clacking sound when it dropped into his hand. He opened it up and pulled out six small marbles. Then he used a colour charm on their inner contents, turning
three of them to all green and three to all red. “Green for yes,” he said. “Red for no and Dobby will walk around to each of us taking our decision and put it on the table.”

Dobby nodded happily to be of service and created a small round wooden vase from a cup. It had one hole in the top big enough to accept the marble and conceal it from the other boys’ sight. He walked around the boys who all turned their backs making their decision by putting their colour choice into the vase. The house-elf turned the vase over into a clean cup and left it there after three plinks fell into the stoneware cup. It was up to the boys to remove the vase in order to see how they had voted.

“Ron or Draco,” Harry said. “Do you want to do the honours?” The Slytherin snorted, but shook his head. Ron put his hand on the bottom of the vase and lifted it. In the bottom of the cup were three green marbles. “Well then I guess we’ll work together to see how we can help each other. Maybe we can suggest the name of someone else, if we get stuck.”

Ron produced his list first and it was a strange list of nine items in various quantities.

1) 9 Snidget feathers, mixed
2) 9 Jabbernoll feathers, mixed
3) 9 Fwooper feathers, mixed
4) 6 Phoenix feathers, mixed
5) 30 Onyx stones, various sizes, 24 of similar size and grade, 12 paired
6) 30 Jade stones, various sizes, 24 of similar size and grade, 12 paired
7) 10 Feet of chains or spools of the following: boxed metal, snaked metal, twine, wool, small double-chained metal, stringed beads (varied), silk, fleece, & ribbon (varied colours)
8) 96 Pieces of unformed cherry wood planks
9) 96 Pieces of unformed white birch planks

The boys looked at it and immediately knew that three could be accomplished by asked the birds that delivered these letters and by asking the Headmaster’s Phoenix, if it would allow the feathers to be taken. The Slytherin and Ron have yet to notice that Harry had the ultra rare Snidget sleeping in his hair.

“Be polite,” Draco said looking at the birds that were paying attention to what they were saying. “Be very polite, but first let’s get you something appropriate to contain them. You wouldn’t want them to be ruined during transport.”

“Suggestions,” Ron asked them.

“Boxes with silk lining,” Harry said. “I bought something that I had thought to use for transporting things like jewellery from the properties was I cleaning up this summer. Winky,” he called his other happy elf. She brought him one box that had several separate sections and drawers. The separate sections each had their own lids so they could be individually charmed to not spill over. “What do you think?”

“This will do just fine,” Ron said. He opened the two drawers and noticed that they were compartmented into three quadrants the top tray had three long compartments and four half sized ones. This was obviously a box made for the larger jewellery like bracelets and necklaces. “I can probable charm the interiors to hold more in order to bring the larger items, the top tray too.”

“The silk is new and the box looks unused,” Draco said suspiciously. “Did you find any jewellery during your inspections?”

“I did,” Harry said. “I bought several types of these boxes. However most of the jewels that I did
find were the small stuff like rings, broaches, hairpins, hair combs and earrings. I bought two of these one for the longer stuff like necklaces or bracelets, but I hadn’t found any yet. That’s why it’s still unused and new. They already have preservation spells to prevent tarnishing of the contents and they can be expanded in their interiors up to a certain point. Each section or compartment can be individually spelled and the reason for that is to put dummy ‘temptation’ pieces in some part of the box to catch thieves, or so the clerk said.”

“Makes sense,” Ron said. He turned to the Fwooper and asked politely. “Would you be willing to donate nine of your feathers for my task, please?”

The bird clacked its beak in an agreeable fashion. It flew to one of the top tray sections. It sat for a minute and then flew out of the room through the Owl entrance leaving behind, two tail feathers, a top or cockscmb feather, three flight pinions and three small down feathers.

Ron put the lid over them and used his penknife to carve a couple of spell holding specific runes. The runes were then spelled for content preservation, security, which included a locking charm, an apprehension charm, a loud alarm and an untouchable charm, which prevents the contents from being touched at all until he released the overall charm by touching the runes and saying his chosen password. Those he was planning to set up when he was on his own or by using Harry’s bedroom.

He repeated the process with the Jabbernoll receiving six flight feathers and three tail feathers before it flew away. He was wondering about the Snidget when Harry gently took the bird out of his hair and set it on the box.

Draco gasped and Ron was stunned. The red-headed Gryffindor repeated his request stammering his sincerity. The bird chirped and hopped to one of the smaller openings and dropped one tail feather, two flight features and six mixed down feathers. It peeped again and flew back to Harry’s head, settling down for a nap in the black hair.

“Wow,” Ron said looking at the yellow-gold feathers. “Thank you,” he told the bird and quickly, but precisely repeated the process to protect the precious contents of the box. “Do you think these are gifts for the Goblins?” He asked them.

“Maybe,” Draco said. “Here’s my list and I must say that I don’t where to get some of these things, but others I think that’ll need your help Harry.”

“What are they,” the Boy-Who-Lived asked.

Draco’s list was composed mainly of books and seeds, but he too had to get a number of stones.

1) “Magical Programming for Animation” (6 copies)
2) 362 Onyx stones of comparable size, approximately a half inch cubed
3) 362 White pearlescent mage-coral of comparable size, approximately a half inch cubed
4) 12 Branches or planks of the following: Greater Red-Wood, Petrified Wood, Whomping Willow Wood, Black Oak, Yellow Cypress and Blue Evergreen
6) “Transfiguring for Action & Charming for Fun” (6 copies)
7) “Dirt Diggers Drama” (6 copies)
8) Magical seeds harvested by hand (20 of each): Tiger Lily, Fairy Lily, Purple Dragon Orchid, Rosemary Green, Pink Dill, Yellow Buttons and Hot Sprouts
9) Muggle seeds (20 packets each) - Green-Bean (varied sizes), Tomato (varied), Radish (varied), Potato (varied), Cucumber, Zucchini & Carrots (varied)

“Weird list,” Ron said with a mouthful of tea biscuit.

“The books we can pre-order and pick up,” Harry said. “I know a place that can get them, same with the Muggle seeds. I don’t know where to get the magical ones, plus those have to be hand harvested.”

“Most are here at the school or in the Forbidden Forest,” Draco said. “I can get my godfather to take me for the ones that aren’t here. But the branches or planks...I don’t know where to begin.”

“With me,” Harry said. “We can check out the internet for those. I think that we can check it out for most of our items. I know of a place that they can get shipped to, depending on the cost or amount. However I think some of these items are going to be harder to find. Ron?”

“I know that there are some mines in the area and since I don’t have a lot of money, I’d rather see if I can pay a fee to harvest the stones I need from the mines around here. That is if they’re they have the stones I need,” he said. “Some stuff we already have back at the Burrow, like the wool and twine, but we have several types and I guess I’m going to have to provide one of each. These lists look like their testing our ingenuity to produce some things.”

“True,” Draco agreed. “Books are simple, but I guess they could be difficult if they’ve been through several printings and I don’t know which ones are needed. I do know that first printings may contain different information from third or fourth printings or ‘revised’ editions.”

“That’s right,” Harry said.

“What about your list Harry?” Ron asked. “Are you going to tell us what you have to get?”

“Sure,” Harry said. “Here it is.”

The list was different in that he had to get a mix of things, but most looked like tools:

1) Wood Carvers set, Wizard & Muggle (6 sets)
2) Stone Carvers set, Wizard & Muggle (6 sets)
3) Engravers set for engraving on varied surfaces, Wizard & Muggle (6 sets)
4) Handyman’s Kit, Wizard & Muggle (6 sets) and must contain the following: three hammers (different sizes), screw drivers (varied), planes (varied sized), hand-sanders (varied), etc... (get varied items Mr. Potter, at your discretion, but you get the idea) This note was written by the Goblin High Chief in a different colour.
5) Varied hinges, handles, latches, locks, etc... all must match in standard configuration of four, six and eight (different types, like wood or metal, etc...)
6) Skin from a magical large animal (100 yards total), teeth or fangs from same (9 if possible), hair or scales or feathers from same (24 if possible)
7) Skin from a magical mid-sized animal (30 yards total), teeth or fangs from same (9 if possible), hair or scales or feathers from same (12 if possible)
8) Skin from a magical small animal (10 yards total, if possible), teeth or fangs from same (9 if possible), hair or scales or feathers from same (6 if possible)
9) Magical drills and threading drills, sewing machines (industrial & commercial, Wizard & Muggle), clamps, hobby tables, anvils (varied sizes), scissors, glue (varied types Wizard & Muggle), large scale sanders and varied saws (6 of each, if possible)

“There’s only three in there that you actually have to go out and harvest,” Ron said. “Why is that?”
“They’re Goblins,” Harry said. “They’re well aware of what I can and cannot afford. Also I’m going to have to probably buy specialized trunks or carrying cases for all of these. I doubt that it’ll even make a dent in my vaults and even if it does I still want to train with the Goblins.”

“I agree,” Ron said and he looked over the lists again. “Don’t you think that this is an awful lot of stuff for only one week of training?”

“I’m thinking that we’re going to be given a very unique opportunity,” Harry said. He pulled out his other list and the two boys scoffed at the colour of the pale pink notebook, but they didn’t say anything about them.

As Wizards they were used to seeing a variety of colour and quite frankly some Wizards did chose to wear pink robes with blue shooting stars or something of that nature. They were the odd ones, but even Dumbledore had been seen at the school with such a combination although his was an old pink with bright yellow snitches whizzing around.

Harry had prepared one for each of them and handed them a similar notebook with the list of items that he had created with the help of the Potions Master at Hogwarts. “These are simple lists,” he stated. “One for classes and supplies, another for our clothing and there are three lists of potential items that we may need depending on what Winky and Dobby have to say when they visit the place in order to prepare it for our arrival. We can spell our lists into the book and track the items that we collect.”

“Where will we store them,” Ron asked. “It’s not like I can keep them in the dorm, the guys would have a field day and I certainly wouldn’t want to lose these feathers.”

“You can leave it here,” Harry said. “I have a huge bedroom and no portraits in it either. I can store the stuff there and can set up a way to pack them once we seriously begin the harvest of certain things. However I need both of your advice on what is considered a mid-sized animal and a small animal?”

“You’re going to use the Basilisk for most the large magical animal,” Draco stated. “That’s actually a smart move because I know that Goblins have a difficult time getting parts from such. I wonder if we should cure some of the Basilisk meat for them or would it be too rotten?”

“Winky,” Harry asked.

“I can be curin’ the meat,” she said. “The older the beast the tougher the meat and they’s be liking things that are ‘off’ for humans. Remember the meeting.” She told him to get him to remember that some of the food was definitely not for the digestion by a human, but it was obvious that he would have to question her about the actual recipes that she used. He was planning on asking only when he wasn’t about to eat or after he had just finished eating.

“I guess there’s no harm in doing it,” he said and the other two just shuddered at the thought of eating Basilisk meat, let alone something that had been sitting in a cold, dank cavern for four years. “I’m going to be looking into magical trunks our stuff and magical packing crates for the tools that I have to buy.”

“Unicorns,” Draco said.

“What?” Harry asked.

“Unicorns or something of that size would be considered mid-sized,” Draco explained. “However the forty yards of the same would be difficult unless it came from the same herd, what do you think
“It’s a herd,” Ron said with a nod. “Maybe you could find out about some place has been hit with a natural disaster and then you’d probably find a lot of the animals that you’re looking for. Just be careful though because it might all depend on what the Goblins truly want.”

“So Potter,” Draco said, drawing the conversation back to a point that Harry had deftly avoided speaking on. “What makes you believe that our ‘unique opportunity’ will not last only a week?”

Harry grimaced at that and had hoped to avoid speculating, but he had the book from the Room, so he showed them the passage. “When I had that meeting with the Goblins, I had told them that I studied some of their greeting and customs from a book,” he said. “It’s called, ‘Wizard’s History & Relations to Other Sentient Magical Species’ and was written by Braxton Hufflepuff. Here’s the part that makes me wonder about the amount of time that we’ll actually be away. They’re end chapter notes.”

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End Chapter Notes:

“...My great-great Gran has told me tales about the Goblins and their First King, Gruggenhiem Alloskang. The First King decreed that in times of need that Goblin Tribes would offer to train Human Wizards in various magical ways that may eventually be lost to time.

All training was planned at the discretion of the Goblins and never to last longer than one Human week, however all training will be held Under Mountain, using Under Mountain Rules.

Training begins with a series of tests. Tests can be comprised of intelligence, strength, skill or other. Only one Goblin teacher can instruct one Human student, but is not limited to the student should there be multiple students invited at the same time for training.

I have never seen nor heard anyone in my generation being accepted for such training, however there have been tales of Muggles wondering into the Under Mountain and disappearing forever. Therefore I caution any Wizard that be offered Under Mountain training. Consider carefully before accepting as the Goblins have never once provided us Wizards with a full listing of their Under Mountain Rules...”

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“Well what do you suppose those rules will be,” Draco asked. “You have an idea so spit it out Potter.”

“I’m only speculating, but the tales about the Muggles come from the Muggles and have been set down in books known as fairy-tales, fables or other,” Harry said. “The most common element in relation to any reference to Under Mountain is that once you go in there, if you don’t follow the rules you’ll never get to leave at the right time or at all. Should you leave before it’s time to go, you’ll find yourself out of time in some fashion, either decades or centuries later only to die by aging rapidly. There are other stories where they came back to find all their friends and family have aged and they have begin living their life once more, whereas others are driven to insanity by trying to get back to where they were in the Under Mountain because they had been happiest there.”

“We’ve already agreed to the training,” Ron said. “We cannot change our minds about it either no matter how this might seem. They’d consider it a breach of contract. Do you think that we’ll get the
proper rules before we go?”

“I have a feeling that we’ll get them once we’re there and not a moment sooner,” Harry said. “Do you guys still want to train with them?”

“Of course Potter,” Draco said vehemently. “Only a fool would turn it down, but we’ll have to be careful too! We’ll have to plan accordingly and maybe they’ll hint at your elves what we need. If we’re actually going to be longer we need to plan for it now instead of last minute or if it turns out to only be a week, we’ll have to have everything we need for some other magical adventure with the famous Harry Potter.”

Harry snorted and said, “That’s if I invite you a second time around, prat.”

Ron grinned and agreed. “We should plan for the additional time anyway and then wait and see what happens. The notes indicate that they’ll be training us in some fashion, but I guess that will depend how we’re tested by them.”

“All right,” Harry said. “Most of my stuff and some of yours I can order and have ready for pick up. Do you guys want me to do that?”

“Sure thing Potter,” Draco said. “Get me the books, some of the planks and the muggle seeds. Can I look the seeds up on your toy? I’ll harvest some of the planks or branches from their Magical Counterparts in the Forbidden Forest with Snape’s help.”

“Sure,” Harry said. “I’ll set up my net-book in the Room when the three of us are together. I need to charge it completely before we use it.”

“Could you get me the planks of wood on my list,” Ron asked. “I’ll need some help finding the mines and then I hope that one of the Professors will show me how to magically mine the stones. All of this depends on where the mines are.”

“I think that with Professor Snape’s assistance we could plan some week-end trips to various locations as Potions Projects or Detentions,” Harry said. “He’d be disappointed if we left him out.”

“Disappointed,” Ron said loudly. “What do you mean disappointed? We can’t tell him this stuff.”

“Why not,” Harry said. “One he’s a Professor and a Potions Master at that, which means that he’ll likely know about where we could go for a few of these things and help teach us to harvest them safely. Two, he’s a Death Eater, which means that he’ll be the likeliest to spot trouble and know how to cope with it, if he’s with us. Three, he’s the Head of Slytherin House and would keep our secrets as exactly that. I sincerely doubt that he’s one to gossip like some washer woman. Finally, he helped us with the Basilisk and I don’t know about you, but I think he needs to get out of the school or else he’ll crack. Didn’t either of you notice how the students didn’t lose points in Potions after the Holidays. How he didn’t give out that many detentions for vindictive things, but only sent away students that were causing trouble in his classes. He needs to get out of the school without going to a DE meeting or thinking about school stuff twenty-four seven. Tell me I’m wrong and we can figure out how to leave the school without adult support.”

“Blast you Potter,” Draco said. “When did you develop logic like that?”

“My mum would tan my hide if I thought of doing this without an adult present.” Ron agreed. “Snape is the logical choice.” He looked at the pink cover of his notebook. “Could you link the three of these together, so that when one of the items for our list comes in we’ll know about it?”

“Sure,” Harry said, stacking the three books and casting the spell. “I suggest you cast a spell that will
change the cover and contents to something that no one else would read, but also so that if it get destroyed or binned then you can get it back in one piece.”

The boys did the spells and agreed to meet regularly in order to gather the items from their lists. Harry was the one that the boys volunteered for speaking with the Potions Master and Severus agreed to stage the outings as Detentions only. If he turned them into projects, he’d have to let more students accompany him and that he flatly refused to allow.

The preparation of the crates and trunks took time, but Harry managed it with a little help from his house-elves and from his staff at Gringotts. They were affected by his plans too and were able to find the proper containers by using the new contacts that Harry’s Gringotts elf, Mandolin, had developed when she was looking around to properly store and shelve items in his vaults.

The boys were still nearly run ragged with their studies, extra-activities, supplemental training and trying to obtain the required items on the Goblins’ lists. However by the time the day came to actually port-key out of the Shrieking Shack, they all felt that they had succeeded in getting everything that had been asked of them.

Severus had accompanied them to all their locations and was pleased when Harry provided him with a net-book, plus all extras needed to maintain it and use for the remainder of the year as a thank you payment. The man was disappointed that his Dark Mark had made him an unacceptable candidate for training with the Goblins. He hoped that a day would come, when the Dark Lord was completely defeated that he’d have the same opportunity to train with them as well.

Ron and Draco each had a net-book so that if the boys were separated, they could email each other and stay in contact. They did agree to limit the time on the machines, as they were not certain how well they’d work during their time Under Mountain.

**HPPHPHP**

**TBC...**

(...i...) Pink Sweetflower & Blue Sweetflower - made up magical plant names.

(...ii...) Boxx Books (doesn’t exist) - first three titles are actual books available from “Lee Valley Tools”

(...iii...) Boxx Books (doesn’t exist) - last two titles are completely made up
The boys had all obtained the necessary items in order to complete the Goblins’ lists. They were all packed and ready to go for their one week March Break. However before they left Dobby had found two other house-elves that had been released from their Wizard Family bonds due to the fact that the family that they had been bonded to from their infancy had been killed in a devastating Death Eater raid.

Harry’s house-elves, Harry, Ron and Draco were there, looking at the two poor elves that had been turned out by the cold cruel hand of fate. Well Voldemort is just cruel and there was no fate involved unless it was the fact that they came to Dobby’s attention quite by chance. He had felt that they would be compatible to Ron and his ex-nasty boy Master.

Dobby was petitioning the two boys to bond with either one of them before they headed out to the Goblins. The two house-elves were leery of such, but Harry was there and would guide their bond because if they truly didn’t want the house-elves bonded to them, he was prepared to bond them to his house under the same bond conditions that Winky and Dobby had.

“Salix (...i...), this be Draco Malfoy,” Dobby said. “Ex-nasty boy Master Draco, this be Salix. He be good at man stuff, preparing clothes, shoes, rooms and travel. But not be wanting bad master, so bonding must include that yous be nice to Salix and let’im be wearing protectives too.”

“Potter,” Draco asked for guidance, because he needed someone to help him with some things and he didn’t want to muck up what might be his only chance at gaining a personal house-elf tied to him alone.

“Look at Dobby and Winky,” the dark-haired Gryffindor said. “They’re wearing protective clothing, shoes and have permission to wear outer-wear cloaks if needed. My only condition is that they make all their own things, keep them neat and tidy.”

“What are the termination requirements,” Draco asked.

“None,” Harry said. “You treat them nice, descent and they work for you for the rest of your life and the life of any potential future offspring or heirs. You beat them or curse them in any way shape or form and they have the right to refuse to do any work until you apologize with true sincerity in your voice and actions. They’ll remain bonded indefinitely because it’s complete security for you and your secrets.”

Draco blinked at that and Ron nodded his head understanding that Hermione’s way was not the right way, but Harry had thought of something else. “Quality of life,” Ron said. “Right, Harry?”

“That’s right,” Harry said. He turned to Draco and explained. “It’s a Muggle concept, but one that is easily translated to house-elves and their living situation. There are many quotes out there, but my favourite is, ‘Quality of life in a person can be defined as the way they treat, themselves, body, mind
and soul; the way they others with kindness, consideration and joys; and how they are treated in return by all who know them.’ (...ii...) I like it because it’s like a catch all for the kind of bond that I formed with Dobby and Winky.”

“So basically, put yourself in their shoes and treat them how you’d like to be treated,” Harry continued, stopping the blonde from saying anything remotely stupid, like ‘But I’m not a house-elf.’ He could see that response lingering and so he stated. “It doesn’t matter what species you are. Show any of them disdain and contempt and just see how much quality service you get out of those that work and live with you. Treat them fairly and pleasantly you’ll notice a huge difference in yourself by the way they are around you. Trust me on this.”

“All right,” Draco said turning to Salix to hold out his wand, which once the Bonding Oath was said by the Wizard, the house-elf would accept the terms and conditions by grasping the wand with both hands and letting the magic in the bond combine.

“On my magic I ask that you bond with me under the terms stated here with regard to secrecy, security, Family honour and strive for an improved Quality of Life, including any defensives needed by making them yourself or having another house-elf make them for you. Bonded into permanency to me personally, Draco Lucianis Malfoy of the Family Lineage Mal de Foy and all adjuncts. Bond to automatically transfer at my death onto any future named heir, heirs or children, until the day you pass into the great beyond.”

Salix liked that Oath and when he looked at Dobby and Winky, their Master Harry had his hands on their shoulders with pride. The two elves were smiling and nodding encouragingly and Salix knew that a lot of leeway had just been given to him.

He turned to the blonde boy who was holding a loaded wand filled with the Magical Bond Oath and Salix did something in return that no elf had thought to do.

He said, “The quality of my life will be defined by the way you treat, yourself, body, mind and soul, in way that you will treat me with kindness and consideration, I will return all in joy and honest servitude. We will endeavour to deserve how we are treated by all who know us.”

The magic flew around the room, tendrils of silver, blue and green wrapped in intricate runes and marks on both their arms. The runes formed a single line of unbreakable magic and rune code, in the colour of the blonde’s magic. These runes ran along the outside the arms from shoulder to elbow on Draco’s body and in the form of a two inch cuffs around both of Salix’s wrists.

Dobby nodded. “Master Harry,” he said to his shocked Master. “This be very new.”

Harry grinned and said, “I agree, but I think that I like it. We’ll have to write this down somewhere for posterity. An Oath like this should never be forgotten.”

“I think that I like those terms too,” Ron said. He turned to look at the other male house-elf. “I won’t force you to bond with me unless you’re sure that that is what you want.”

“Maze need be bonding with a good Wizard Family,” the little elf said. It was slightly younger than his brother Salix, but he was still capable of learning new things and he liked the bond that his brother had made with his new Master. The marks were clear and no house-elf would dare say anything about the bond.

“Maze likes red,” he said in a slightly shy tone, commenting on Ron’s hair.

“Then you better bond with him because his whole family is chock full of redheads,” Draco said in an amused tone.
The little house-elf looked excited by that and Ron nodded. He thought about the Oath he wanted to present, but then he thought that the blonde Slytherin had the right of it. He took out his wand and repeated Malfoy’s Oath word for word until the house-elf fulfilled his side of the bond.

Maze followed his brother’s path word for word and the results were similar only Ron’s magic was coloured in dark coppers, golden yellows and a hint of green in the mix. The house-elf was so pleased with the resulting cuffs that he hopped from one foot to the other in happiness with little squeaky giggles.

Ron patted his head as if it was the most natural thing in the world and said, “We’ll hash out duties and tasks once we get to where we’re going.”

Each house-elf had their arms wrapped around their Master’s legs in order to be able to Port with them when the time came. Harry said, “It shouldn’t be long now. We should have our envelopes in hand.”

The boys took out their envelopes and soon on a timer they were Ported away the UK Ministry of Magic’s magical tracking radar and into a cavern of cold unforgiving winds. The Ministry was not aware of this absence due to the fact that these Port-Keys were Goblin made.

The boys quickly cast warming charms all over themselves and their house-elves. They moved further into the Mountain and away from the entrance that allowed below freezing temperatures to crawl across their skin like the icy fingers of something nasty.

(...Halt...) A goblin’s voice growled out in Gobbledygook. (...Who dares enter the Under Mountain?...)

It was a ritual that all three boys had memorized and were able to reply with confidence. (...Human Wizard students have been called to train under the watchful eye of the ever, vigilant High Chief Borak Grendel’s Clan...)

(...Do you bring offerings to our halls in payment for this training...) The Goblin grinned knowing that this was a perfect way to trip them up and to get first look at the gifts demanded. If he was lucky they wouldn’t know that they didn’t have to bring offerings, but if they showed anything from the mystery lists that every Goblin knew were sent out, he’d be able to pick out a prize for himself.

Ron and Draco turned to Harry who was scowling in anger. They realized then that something was up and they too frowned. They were both perfectly willing to wait and follow Harry’s lead in this matter as it was clear that the Boy-Who-Lived was much more aware of what was going on.

(...Why would we bring offerings of ‘things’ or ‘objects’ when the training was ‘freely’ offered without a price attached...) Harry said. (...Why do you delay announcing our presence to those that have requested it?...)

(...Show your offerings or leave...) The Goblin said. He didn’t want to guard this entrance, but he was on punishment for coveting the trophy of another member of the clan.

(...Nope...) Harry said crossing his arms. He turned to Winky and said in a quiet enough tone that the guard couldn’t make out what he was saying.

She popped away and then popped back quickly having only popped into the room where the High Chief was awaiting his guests and getting irked at the delay. She said two words and popped out before the High Chief’s guards could do anything to her.

The words were, “The guard.”
That was enough for the High Chief to go find out who was posted there and why they were delaying their guests. Once it was determined who it was, he stormed through the Halls and pulled the Goblin Entrance Guard roughly by the ear. He magicked away the now ex-guard’s armour and gear and thoroughly demoted him to slop work in the pigpens. Two guards dragged that Goblin away while two more took the post and repeated the same ritual question and receiving the same answers.

Borak grinned and said, “Gentlemen and lady,” he said to Winky who giggled behind her hand and wiggled her ears. “Please follow me. We will take a brief meal together before we test your strengths and then view the accomplishments of the tasks assigned to you.”

He led them into a Feasting Hall with long tables and benches that only fit two to three Goblins. They were invited to sit and dine at the High Chief’s table, which they accepted because that’s where they had noted the different coloured serving dishes.

Borak explained to the other two young humans that the custom of using coloured plates was because of Harry and the system that he had used at their first meeting. It further served to remind the Goblins that not all foods could be digested by the Human system. “We used your colour coding and hope that we have succeeding in creating a fair that is acceptable to your palettes. We will not be offended if you cannot eat it, but we were honest in our attempt.”

“Your honesty is greatly appreciated,” Harry said. “We will attempt every dish made for us and give an honest answer as to its taste.”

“Good going there Potter,” Draco said.

“What,” Harry asked.

“You don’t say that we’ll try a bit of everything only to critique it,” the blonde said. “It’s just not done.”

“Draco,” Harry said in a lecturing tone that the blonde had come to hate when the Gryffindor was helping him to review Defence Spells. “Goblins do not do subtle. They don’t appreciate politeness and hidden compliments that are really masked lies. By not telling them where they went wrong in the making of certain foods, they won’t be able to fix it. They need to learn this in order to correct their error, it is an insult not to do so, because cooks and chefs only want to please guests by making things that are edible for all. I prefer their forthright honesty in this case.”

“Harry’s right,” Ron said filling up his plate with a little bit of everything from the blue serving dishes and eyeing a few items in the green and red serving dishes as something he’d like to try, but only once Harry showed him how to ‘soften’ it up for consumption. He stayed completely away from any of the yellow serving dishes having been warned about their ‘lively’ contents. “I know that my mum would be insulted if we told her something was good and we actually hated it. She’d make more and that’s just wasting food that could be used in something that we’d all prefer eat if cooked differently.”

“All right,” Draco said. “I see your point.” He too helped himself to items from the blue serving dishes and watched as Harry took a couple of things from the green and red plates with a side helping of oils and vinaigrettes dolloped on a special plate that had many sections to keep the oils and blends separate from the others.

The meal was finished without much incident other than Ron choking on one of the red dished offerings. It was very hot and very spicy despite tempering it with a bit of flavoured oil. His reaction caused all round levity and it was much needed. The Goblins were afraid that the demoted guard had
offended the Humans, but these particular Humans, if they were aware of offence, didn’t mention it or probably didn’t care at this point.

The group was reduced to essentials and all moved to a meeting room that contained a very familiar face to Harry. “Magistrate Bonebreaker,” he exclaimed in pleasure at seeing the Gobliness. “May your enemies falter at a crucial moment and may your gold increase because of it.”

“So mote it be,” Ignatia said with a wicked grin and yellow gold twinkle in her eye. “You are one kind young pup.”

Harry bowed and asked, “Why are you here, m’am, if you don’t mind me asking?”

“Not at all,” she said. “I volunteered to test the three of you. Since I am most familiar with you, young man, I wanted to know what alter-gifts you are capable of learning.”

“I’m honoured,” Harry said with honesty.

Ron and Draco observed this without comment, but bowed too to show respect to the elder Goblin.

“Gentle Wizards please be seated,” the High Chief said. “I will explain the Under Mountain Rules to you.” Once the young Humans were seated he began, “Training here does not include any Wizard studies. It will not allow you to advance in most your scholastic studies. The only one that I can think of being the exception is the study of potions.” Harry looked wryly at the other two and shrugged, not caring if they were going to advance in that subject or not. The other two young humans replied in kind and all turned their attention back to the leader of the Grendel Goblin Clan as he continued to inform them of what they were planning to teach.

“You are here to be tested for weapons preference and use, as well as for something that we call alter-gifts. These gifts could be big or small, but they always take time to learn. You will be living in a special section of this compound and you’ll not be able to leave it until all of your training is complete. You will not be learning any life skills or anything of that nature. Am I clear?”

“How are we going to explain this to our families or friends?” Draco asked. He had a task that he had to do for his father before he could actively rebel against the current form, but he couldn’t be delayed by remaining here for training and then he remembered the conversation with Potter about the tales from Under Mountain.

“You needn’t worry young man,” Borak said. “The rules are quite clear. We cannot keep you here for more than one Human week. The training compound is in a completely separated section of the Mountain and ‘time’ is different there. Time spent learning will depend on your gifts and any additional training that you may feel free to request before you go down there. The minimum time is one year and the maximum is twenty-five years. However I doubt very much that you’ll need that full length of time to learn to manage your gifts.”

Harry looked at the other two Humans in the room and said, “We have the ‘time’ to learn.”

“But what about the time that we spend there,” Ron said. “We’ll be older than everyone when we return.”

“Physically you will all be unchanged,” Ignatia said. “That’s part of the Under Mountain Rules. When you return by Port-Key you will have only been gone for one week and outwardly there will be no change. Internally and with new skills you’ll just have more confidence with your magickal nature. None of the training here converts to life skills, experience or the kind of wisdom you gain when you actually physically age. Just think of it as your first year going to a new school.”
Draco looked around the table and asked, “Will we be training together or separately?”

“You three will see each other and your trainers only,” Borak said. “A Goblin or other teacher will be with you depending on the alter-gifts you have, but that will be all. Your Winky has prepared shared quarters and any extras that you may need, I’m afraid that you will have to do without. Once you’re in the compound the time spell will be activated and I will apologize right now if your training will have different time-frames, but should you go ‘stir crazy’ as the expression goes, you can be placed in a stasis sleep until your companion(s) have finished their training.”

Draco looked at Harry and nodded. Ron did the same and Harry for his part only wondered, ‘Why the hell are they looking to me like that for?’

Harry shrugged and nodded in agreement too. “We agree.”

“Good,” Borak said. “First we’ll test you for your magical maturity and see if you’ve gone through that process or not. If not, we will have to induce you in order for you to access your magickal alter-gifts, although I suspect that each of you has already done so.”

“I haven’t,” Ron said. “I know that I haven’t, but I have studied it and have already decided where to allocate whatever magical influx I receive.”

“Me neither,” Draco said. “I have not passed that phase, but since we are known as ‘Animapar’ I have a bad feeling that we might go through it at the same time.”

Ron sighed, but only nodded and said. “I believe that too. I’ve read the book and a few others that were in the Room, you?”

“I did,” Draco admitted. The Goblins were listening with curiosity. “We have ‘Synchronus’ magic too because of the Animapar condition.”

“Interesting,” Ignatia said. “Well inducing an Animapar into magical maturity is simple enough and don’t worry about the Synchronus magics. It only means that you’ll have a larger pool to use and the division will be equal between the two of you. If you’re ready we can do that now.”

“Wait!” Harry said loudly. “Please test them first for any additional things like lingering spells, charms, potions or whatever. I don’t want anything to skew the results or their potential during the inducement of their Magical Maturity.”

“That is quite a wise statement,” Borak said. “We’ll leave them to the Magistrate, while we discuss the lists that we sent you.”

“Of course,” Harry said gathering the backpacks from the other two in order to prevent their contents from being affected by the magic that was about to take place. “Good luck guys.”

“Thanks Potter,” Draco said, turning his attention inward to prepare for the influx of magic, but also to prepare for the results of the pre-test against any lingering foreign magics.

“Yeah, thanks Harry,” Ron said. He was nervous about being induced. Their conversation this summer had him worried about not receiving any new magic and worse it was obvious that his friend felt that he might be under some kind of magical influence. That much was obvious even to the redhead, because Ron was fully aware that his attitude fluctuated drastically and he couldn’t pinpoint why or where it was coming from.

Both young men were fully aware that if they were under any sort of charm, spell, hex, potion or other, they wouldn’t be happy. Yet, from the letters they had been extremely cautious about letting
any of their immediate friends know what they were planning for this holiday. No one knew and not even Hermione had guessed at the plans they made.

Harry stepped through the door and was escorted to another room where the Icelandic Goblin High Chief explained that the lists were of items that they’d need to use in order to occupy their down time. “We have several manuals that are part of the rooms that you’ll have access to,” Borak said. “You’ll have the time to do whatever you wish including building things like your own board games. The reason we asked for those books is that we need updated versions in languages that you’d understand. You might find the books currently in the rooms frustrating to read unless you are already familiar with the ‘olde’ runes and languages. They’ve been accumulated over time and some of the spells are no longer used for some reason. All supplies that you’ve brought with you are there to supplement the items already in the rooms. We just thought that a few more items from you would be ideal for different projects that each of you may wish to undertake.”

“So if everything we’ve brought is for after lessons,” Harry began. “Just what are we going to learn?”

“Let’s wait a bit,” Borak said. “You’re companions are going to be occupied right now, while they’re being tested for lingering spells and whatnot. If there is anything of that nature to be found in them, they’ll have to be treated with the proper counter-measures first. The Magistrate will take care of that right away and then they’ll be induced to gain their Magical Maturity. Feel free to occupy your time now constructively in this room. Your house-elves are free to prepare meals for you and your companions. I believe that they will need something filling to eat before we test the three of you for your magickal alter-gifts.”

“Thank you for your time and assistance in this High Chief,” Harry said with a bow. “We have taken up enough of your time.”

“Nonsense,” Borak said. “It is entirely my pleasure. You need the time to learn, so you will have it. We usually schedule for a full week because those two will not be the first ones we’ve invited that have to go through some kind of cleansing before even beginning our tests for skills and weapons preference.”

“Will we be tested together or separately?”

“That will be up to the Magistrate,” Borak said. “However I do believe that those two will need to be tested together due to their Synchronus Magic, but we shall see. I’ll leave you for now.”

“Thank you sir,” Harry said. He watched the High Chief leave and then found a place to settle in the room. The room had a small square table and it was enough for him to pull out his net-book and send a quick note to the Potions Master who was waiting for a notification that they had arrived at their destination safely.

HPPHPHP

Green_Lightning: Sir, we’ve arrived safely and will not be able to communicate with you until the end of the week. Due to the location where the training will occur, we will be out of reach for quite some time.

Snarkmaster1960: This is a bizarre way to communicate. I am grateful that we practiced this mode. Do you think that you can send emails even though we cannot communicate in this manner?

Green_Lightning: I’m not certain about that. If we did write them up and sent them I don’t know if the magic will destroy your machine or do something else. Perhaps it’s just best for us to open
communication once we are free from our training location.

Snarkmaster1960: I don’t like it, but if you feel strongly about it, there must be something to it. Never discount those kinds of instincts. They may save your life.

Green_Lightning: They already have. Oh, by the way, you know all of the stuff we accumulated for the Goblins in our lists?

Snarkmaster1960: What of them?

Green_Lightning: They’re to occupy our time when we aren’t training. Borak stated that most could be used for creating our own board games and I’m quite certain that Ron’s going to want to make his own custom chess set. So would you like me or us to create anything in particular for you? I’m not sure of everything that we’ll be able to make, but we can honestly try to make something for you.

Snarkmaster1960: Those things will all take time. How will you...

Green_Lightning: There will be time. So do you want anything special?

Snarkmaster1960: We have met a few times for false Occlumency lessons and have played several strategy games. I seem to have developed of fondness for GO.

Green_Lightning: So that’s why we’ve been playing it at every other meeting. All right, I’ll see if we can make you a board. Oh, Ron just stepped into the room. He and Draco were being tested for foreign magics before we get tested for magickal alter-gifts, as the Goblins are calling it.

Snarkmaster1960: Fine! I expect to be notified with an email from each of you, once you’ve been released from the training facility and before you travel back by Port-Key.

Ping!

Snarkmaster1960 has logged off.

HPHPHP

Harry snorted and logged off the instant messaging chat room that they had specifically created for the four of them. He put it away quickly and then put his hand on Ron’s arm. The redhead’s face showed utter devastation.

“Ron,” he said. “What is it?”

“I been an utter prat to you,” Ron said, his eyes filled with water that would drop and there was a look of shame in his stance. “I’m so sorry Harry.”

Harry smiled gently and said, “Has it been removed?”

“Did you know,” Ron asked.

“Suspected only,” Harry said. “I wasn’t sure most times and I couldn’t pinpoint the when or the how.”

“Can you guess why?”

“You have a different set of smarts,” Harry said with a shrug. “She couldn’t take the competition and she hates being ignorant of some custom or culture thing in the Wizarding World.”
“It was the trail mix stuff,” Ron said with conviction. “I really liked that stuff because it was a filling snack for between classes, but now. It’s the only thing that I’ve ever accepted and have been eating on a regular basis.”

“Don’t worry about that,” Harry said. “You can make your own that way you know exactly what goes in it or you can have the unopened store bought stuff that I had Winky pick up.” He pulled out a couple of packages that were sealed and that his friend could see had not been tampered with.

“I’d love to, but I can’t,” Ron said and when he noticed the look that Harry was giving him, he explained. “The Magistrate gave us potions to clean our systems. We can’t go through our Magical Maturity with anything in our systems, but its fast working. I just thought I’d let you know about it. I really gotta go to the loo now, see you.”

Harry nodded and was glad that Ron had told him about the problem. He had long since suspected that Hermione was doing something to the ‘healthy mixes’ that she brought from home. He didn’t think that she dosed them all the time, but there was enough of a difference a few of the times, that he had noticed when something wasn’t quite right with Ron’s attitude. He was fully aware that sometimes the attitude was just Ron being Ron, but the nastiness that he had heard during his very brief stay at the Burrow this past summer and had overheard before they had met up was just too volatile to only be Ron being Ron.

‘I hope that this will change things now,’ Harry thought. His contemplation was turned to Winky and Dobby who were trying to get his attention. “Yes,” he said kindly to them with a gentle smile. He really liked his house-elves and never once thought of them as ‘the help’, although he knew that they did a lot of things for him that he was unaware of, but he never commanded that they do any of it.

“What is it?”

“Winky be wantin’ to add to our bonded Oath,” she said clutching her skirts nervously.

“Can that be done?” He asked, curious about what they wanted. “Why?”

“We’s be wantin’ to add Life Quality too,” Dobby said. “More protecting and permanent,” he explained rubbing his wrists, wanting the magical cuffs that were a part of the new House-Elf Bonding Oath.

Harry blinked and then said, “I won’t deny you whatever you two need. But how would we do that when we already have an Oath of Bonding.”

“Oath of Bonding, can be said many times,” Winky said. “Masters’ sometimes be wantin’ renewal and Oath of Bonding is said again and again and again.”

“But doesn’t that change your magics and what you’re allowed to do in a Family,” Harry said. “Is that book wrong?” He was referring to the book written by Braxton Hufflepuff. He had read passages about the house-elves to his own in order to find out if what was written was true or not.

“Master Harry’s Oath was kind,” Winky said.

Dobby nodded and added, “Was not takin’ anything away, but was giving. Adding new Oath to existing Oath will change original Oath and not be takin’ anything away.”

“You be giving more with new part to Oath,” Winky said. “Master only states an opening to existing Oath and Winky and Dobby be adding the new part, is all.”

“Oh,” Harry said taking out his wand. He looked at it critically and knew that he should have gone to Olivander’s for an explanation about his wand not working too well. However it looked like it
would work for this magical Oath. It wasn’t like he was casting a spell, just re-opening one that had been cast. Still he did say, “My wand is a little wonky, how about I just do this wandlessly?”

“Anything be okay,” Winky said getting excited.

Harry put away his wand and held out his hands for both his elves to take. They were shaking, but he was fully comfortable doing this. “Magic in my veins and core, open and listen to my plea and the plea of my house-elves. House-elf Family Bond open; now at my command.”

Magic was fun, exciting and strange. The Gryffindor, not knowing what was possible or not, had just used an ‘Olde’ form of wizard magic. Wizard’s of old used to address their magic, commanding it to come forth and act on their will. They were stronger because of it, casting great spells to aid or harm as the case may be. Such ideas were eroded over time and when a Ministry of Magic was formed along with other Governmental bodies. Rules, regulations and laws took over and the right to command your own core and the knowledge of it was gone from Human memory.

The house-elves knew about those ‘Olde’ ways because that’s how their basic bonds were formed. They were created by beings that could command their own magical core. That’s why dragons were the way they were and how many magical creatures came to be. These two were in awe that their Master had done something that hasn’t been done in several millennia. They didn’t think that he was aware of it, but they were going to fully inform him about it once they were in the secure location for training.

Holding his hands between theirs they felt his strong, powerful and gentle magic course forward and flow into the room. Their ears were flapping in happiness and they repeated their part in the New House-Elf Bonding Oath. Their Master’s old Oath was different from the other two boys, but their Master’s was better because he had actually listed in his own Oath his expectations of them and their work. Now they only needed to add their part because it was something stronger and it formed a better protection for all three of them.

The magic of Harry’s core was rainbow of colour. It flashed in the room like festival ribbons, twisting about in play and joining to form a shimmering effect. All sorts of colours, bright and dull, shiny and matte, metallic and flat, whizzed around the room while the two house-elves stated their New Oath.

“The quality of my life will be defined by the way you treat, yourself, body, mind and soul, in way that you will treat me with kindness and consideration, I will return all in joy and honest servitude. We will endeavour to deserve how we are treated by all who know us.”

The ribbons of magical light formed rune cuffs in a shimmering rainbow of colours, always changing. Two small lines of ‘Olde’ runes formed from Harry’s top of shoulder to elbow, just it had in the other two boys. He hadn’t been aware of that part of the Oath. So once the magic had returned to him and re-settled where it belonged he took off his shirt in order to have a look at the marks.

Harry conjured a mirror and had Winky make notes about the rune words. “Obviously they are to be read from top to bottom, but is it left to right or right to left,” he wondered out loud. “Take them down in both forms and I hope that there are new rune books in the training compound that have this form down. I wonder if Draco and Ron have something similar.”

Dobby was looking at his cuffs and knew that there was an old book in the Malfoy library that had this kind of writing in it. He was still wondering about telling his Master about it, when his ex-nasty boy Master came in the room.

“Merlin Potter,” Draco said. “Can’t get enough adulation from your fans that you have to admire...”
“I think the word you’re looking for is envious,” Harry said. “Anyway when the cuffs formed, these marks formed on me and I was curious about them.”

“What marks?” Draco questioned and looked at the Gryffindor to see what was supposed to be there. “You don’t have any bloody marks.”

Harry blinked and then looked at his arms and then the mirror. They were there, but it didn’t seem like the Slytherin could see them. “They are there,” he said. “Do you guys see them?”

All the elves nodded and Dobby was the one to say, “They’s ‘olde’ language of Bond. No master has ever been able to see Bond contract with elves before.”

“Oh,” Harry said. “Is that what it is? It doesn’t have any bad stuff in it, does it?”

“No Master Harry,” Winky said. “They’s our promise to youse.”

“I’m glad,” Harry said putting his shirt back on. “I’d still love to translate it though. Could you make a Runes table for it?”


“How do you know that,” Draco asked.

“Dobby be cleaning library and be seeing it,” the house-elf explained.

“Can you go and get it,” Draco asked.

Dobby shook his head. “Dobby not Malfoy Family elf anymore. Dobby could tell Salix where it is.”

“You do that,” Draco said. “Map it out for him and I’ll make sure that he’s not disturbed by going there for the first time. I’d suggest that all of you leave this room.”

“I’ll go see Ron,” Harry said. “Winky you come with me now. Dobby, you tell Salix what he needs to know and then come and find me. If we’re not in the room then Draco won’t be seen associating with us.”

“Potter,” the blonde said trying to explain.

“Easy there Draco,” Harry said. “I completely understand. I’m also getting the idea that you’re about to summon a Family Elf direct from your home. So I’m just going to remove myself and those linked to me away from whatever it is your doing, okay?”

“Okay,” Draco said watching the Boy-Who-Lived seek out his other friend.

He waited for Dobby to show Salix where the book was, after which when Dobby popped out. He turned to Salix and then thought about the training that he was going to be doing. He sat at the table and made a list of books that he wanted from the Malfoy Library. It wasn’t that long a list, but he
added to the note a note for the Librarian elf that took care of the Malfoy books.

“Here hold this,” Draco said giving his new personal elf the note. He took out an empty ‘Hold-All’ pouch that he usually had on him for gathering herbs and such from the forest. “Take this too. I’m asking the Librarian elf to give you books to put in this pouch.” He knelt in front of Salix and said, “Now I’m about to call the Head Elf of Malfoy Manor and I’m letting you know that the way I treat it, is because I have to. It can’t know that I’m different now. It’s not time for me to rebel, do you understand?”

Salix nodded and was glad that he had not put on ‘protectives’, yet. “Salix be knowin’,” he said. “Salix be glad about not putting on protectives, but…”


The house-elf held out his wrists with the Runic Cuffs and said, “They’d be seeing and seeing be knowing.”

“Hmm,” Draco paused. He walked over to his backpack and pulled out a tatty and heavily patched jumper. It was the one that he had used during his hunt of plants in the Forbidden Forest and when he had harvested the Basilisk. “Put this on and it will cover the markings.”

Salix cringed because it was ‘clothes’, but it was a conditioned flinching action and not one that was bond related. He reflected on his bond and he felt a peace. He shook his head and took hold of the jumper, holding his breath waiting for the bond to kick him out of service, but it didn’t. That was no longer the nature of the bond he had with his Wizard.

He put on the jumper, noticing the interesting smells that still permeated it. Washing never quite took away the smell of a large reptile or the various herbs that his master had gathered.

“Thank you Master Draco Lucianis Malfoy,” he said addressing his new master for the first time. He used elf magic to shrink it and make it fit, but he purposefully left the arms of the jumper slightly long to let only his fingers be visible.

Draco snorted at the long name and said, “Call me Draco or sir, not that long winded thing or you’ll be taking too long to get to the point.”

“Yes, sir,” Salix said. “Master Draco, sir.”

“Try to contain it to one form,” Draco said kindly. “Now let me do this so we can get those books.” His expression turned bored, bland and bordered on disdain. “Bippy, come to me.”

Salix observed an aged house-elf appear. It was old and had power, but it cowered in the presence of one of the Masters of his Wizard Family. He stepped up when Draco pointed at him ordering the other, “Take this one to the Librarian Elf at Malfoy Manor. He’s to pick up a list of books for me and will be returning once they are in the ‘Hold-All’ that I’ve given him for that purpose. Are we clear?”

“Yes Young Lord Malfoy sirs,” Bippy said looking over the new Malfoy elf and noting that the bond was a personal one not a household one. He sneered at the younger elf, but knew that because it was a personal elf he couldn’t boss this one around. “You be following Bippy.”

Salix didn’t look to his new Master for fear of not being able to do it, but he sensed the feelings of his Master and he wondered just how different the New Bond was. Maybe it was too strong for an elf to hold, but he sincerely hoped not. He popped away following the path of the Malfoy’s Head Elf.

They popped right into Malfoy Manor’s Library and then Bippy left him there on his own. Salix
called out, “Chaucer!”

“Who be callin’ Chaucer,” another house-elf popped close by. “Who be ye?”

“I be Salix,” Salix said. “I be Master Draco’s elf. Please Chaucer, Master be wantin’ these.” He gave the list to the Librarian Elf and waited.

Chaucer read the list of books and then using his elf magic he pushed a bit into the paper to reveal the private note from the Young Lord. The Librarian elf grinned and said, “Give Chaucer the ‘Hold-All’. I be fillin’ it with proper books.”

He popped away room in the Manor that the recent Masters were not aware of. Valuable books were stored away here and they were slowly fading from a lack of use, however now was the chance for them to come to the light again. He did a special form of release magic on the bookplates that blanked them out and prepared them for new ownership. It was how second hand magical bookstores did it when Family books were sold to them for re-sale.

Chaucer made three piles of books. They were wrapped and addressed to Ron, Draco and Harry respectively. He put together Draco’s requested list in a forth pile with the same emptied bookplates. Then he added several others that he felt might be of use to the group that were about to receive a very rare training opportunity. He was hoping that those books would never make their way back into the Malfoy Library and if they did then it would be because the Young Lord wanted them and not for a covetous, hoarding purpose.

He popped back into the Library and made a show of gathering a couple of the Darker books from the shelves, but these were written in Parseltongue. He knew that Harry Potter, Boy-Who-Lived, could speak that language and so would probably find these ones useful, especially a couple of the private journals on creating Dark Bonds.

Chaucer looked at the new elf and asked, “Youse bond is different?”

Salix stepped forward to take hold of the ‘Hold-All’ that Chaucer was holding out to him. Once he had a firm hold of it, he pulled up his sleeve to show the Bond Marks. The Librarian elf grinned and let go of the bag.

“Good!” He said and still grinning he popped away.

Salix put his sleeve back down and popped back to his Master’s presence at the Goblin compound. He put the ‘Hold-All’ pouch with Master’s travel backpack and waited in the room with Harry, Dobby, Maze and Winky. His master was currently going through his magical maturity now. He and Maze could feel the changes happening in their Masters.

“Salix are you all right,” Harry asked, pulling out a knitted beanbag ball from his pocket.

“Yes, Salix be fine,” the house-elf said watching the Gryffindor drop it to the top of his foot.

Harry had moved the furniture out away from the centre of the room and began to occupy his time by popping the beanbag up and down on his foot.

Dobby and Winky were familiar with this game and sometimes they played it with their Master so they knew that they basic rule was you had to catch with your foot when it was passed to you and don’t let it touch the ground. They stood in a loose triangle form to play the passing game. It was an exercise that warmed up their legs, but it was also done just for fun or to pass the time, which is why they were doing it now.
Winky explained the game to the two new elves and then provided them with a larger bag that was slightly floppy to get them used to popping it up and catching it. “No magic be used for this,” she said watching them go slow until they were used to it. “Youse be doin’ it on your own for fun and slowly, so no getting injuries.”

“This be fun,” Maze said and with that they all passed the time.

HPHPHP

Hours later the three Hogwarts sixth students were now in a vast Goblin armoury room. It contained the spoils of many a war and the weapons that the boys were testing were only going to be loaners until the time they made their own. That was going to be an important part of their training too.

They were being tested for weapon compatibility and had to select one long-range type, one-short range type and a compatible shield.

Two of the students had just gone through a rare phase in the lives of witches and wizards called, ‘Magical Maturity’. They were still getting used to the magic that they had redirected internally and were both surprised to realise that they received more than they thought they would. This was due to being known as a rare combination known as ‘Animapar’ (...iii...). With that extra they were able to strengthen the gifts they already knew about, like Draco’s potions and Ron’s chess logic.

The new magic was still settling internally, but the two boys were now watching the third student test weapons and shield combinations. He was currently arguing about necessary versus ideal, which was difficult for the Goblins to understand at the moment. So he told about his past encounters with Voldemort and the Death Eaters.

“Look,” Harry said with a sigh. “I’d love to have training in a weapon that would suit me, but the Human men that I’m currently stuck fighting are not going to follow some protocol of battle. I sincerely doubt that they had weapons when I first saw them because any long sword would have prevented them from grovelling properly at that Monster’s feet.”

The Goblins blinked and then looked at the other two boys. Ron answered the unspoken question. “It’s true,” he said causing Draco to look at him too. “I was at the Department of Mysteries with him and a couple of other students. You can’t lock Harry into a conventional training regimen with only a limited number of weapons. He uses everything he can and some are just objects lying around like the shelving units he knocked down in the Hall of Prophecies. A long sword would not work for him so why not let him try out a short sword or a pair of long daggers instead. Don’t you have a sword that can alter at will for someone like him, maybe a ‘Varius Blade’ (...iv...) of some kind?”

“There hasn’t been a ‘Varius Blade’ made in a number of years,” Borak’s son Henrik said. “Those that do exist are in Families that will not wish to part with them. You also need a Master of that particular blade to teach him, but I know of no one available.”

“I know of someone,” High Chief Borak said. “I can even lend you a blade of that kind Lord Grindelwald, but it would be limited by the purpose for which it was built.”

“I’d be honoured,” Harry said. “However I’m not quite sure what you mean?”

“The only reason that a ‘Varius Blade’ exists or is known is because they are made by the men and women who’re known to use them,” Borak explained. “If you would have one, for whatever reason, you’d be best advised to plan and forge it yourself.”

“Ideally,” Draco said cutting into the conversation. “Wizards and Witches of old used to build their
own weapons, wands, staves and other things, like their own armour. This was because they used to spell them so that no one could steal from them and they would normally be placed at final rest with these items, unless they had planned beforehand to release them into Family keeping by undoing certain spells or spelling the items to find their next owner.”

“Following Under Mountain Rules,” Ron began and looking at his two Human companions, plus his new bonded house-elf he said. “We’d have time to do what needs to be done in order to be prepared. You stated that once we are Under Mountain, we’d have one teacher assigned to train our alter-gifts, but nothing is going to stop more than one teacher being or choosing to teach us ‘other’ things that they have the knowledge to teach us, while we are there.”

High Chief Borak and many of the other Goblins grinned. That was entirely true and they were planning on it, but they didn’t think that the boys had realized that yet. They were surprised that all three didn’t seem to think anything about it. However it had been centuries since any Goblin clan or tribe had offered this kind of training to a Human Wizard.

“Very well,” Borak observed. “You are strong in your logic young Human. You are indeed correct. The training in your alter-gifts is one thing. Training in your weapons is another. The alter-gift testing and training will be largely up to you how far you want to take it. Weapons and combat training is the main purpose for your invitation. Should you learn something else, like forging your own weapons, well we can’t stop you.”

“Thank you,” Harry said with a slight bow. “I’ll continue to test the weapons in your armoury here.”

“Henrik go get your great-grandfather’s blade,” Borak said. His son’s eyes widened, but he bowed to his father and left the room. “I agree that you’ll still need to choose single solid blades, but now we will pick out several for you to train and practice with. You’ll need to familiarize yourself with the various lengths.”

Ron’s blade selection was something like a Bastard Sword or Claymore. His was of the Wizard variety, which meant that it could be wielded with one-hand due to the spells it had been created with. He was looking forward to making his own weapons though because it would be advantageous during future battles to maintain control of it. His long-range weapon was a sturdy compound bow with multiple stings for changing the tension and speed of his arrows’ flight path. His shield was mid-long and ideal to use as a weapon itself once it can be customized to his fighting style.

Draco’s blade was a wicked looking scimitar, with an additional dagger at his hip and his shield was smaller than Ron’s. However for his long-range weapon he was in a similar dilemma as Harry with the blades. He preferred and was familiar with the traditionally curved bows and was proficient in using both long and short bows. No one had ever heard of a ‘Varius Bow’, but at his Sychronus partner’s suggestion and agreement to help, he was seriously considering taking some of his ‘time’ to create and build one.

Harry ended up picking several types of swords, long and short, including various daggers, but all with the simplistic straight edge design. His shield preference was for something quite small because he was a dodger first and foremost. He preferred to keep his distance when he could and had told all of them that. His long-range weapon was going to be a crossbow, small and large due to arrow size and depending on the situation. He was contemplating on making it a ‘Varius’ too or else find a mid-size one that suited his dual needs.

The house-elves were instructed to go to the Under Mountain compound and set up their masters’ belongings. All that remained was make sure that they had the room for training and that they had room to ‘be alone’ when they needed it. They also made sure that all needed supplies were available...
and now they were just waiting on the results of the alter-gift testing. Their masters would be joining them soon.

Two specialist teachers were called and had accepted to train the boys. One specialized in preparing them to use ‘Varius’ weapons and was going to able to teach all of them how to forge their potential weapons, including how to plan the construction stages and the select the necessary materials.

Their second teacher was a weapons instructor for the long-range weapons. It was a female, high-elf, who would teach them their basics. Mostly she’d teach them how to comfortably use their weapon choices and she’d be there to monitor their training regimen. However she was not confined to the Under Mountain Rules because, technically, she didn’t live in the Wizarding World or Earth as they knew it, nor would she be affected by the ‘time’ issue that limited many of the other magical races.

The alter-gift testing was about to take place in the room where Ron and Draco were induced into ‘Magical Maturity’. They both noticed that Harry didn’t need to be induced for ‘Magical Maturity’. They both shrugged it off and figured that since he was deemed to be a muggle-born or half-blood that he wouldn’t have to go through it, but it was then that Ron said, “He can’t be a muggle-born.”

“Why not,” Draco asked.

“His parents were not pure Muggles,” Ron said. “His father was a full-blooded Wizard and his mother was a full-blooded Witch. She was known as a muggle-born because her parents were pure Muggles, but Harry told us that she was technically a half-blood and…”

“Harry’s a full-blooded, pure-blooded Wizard because he had two fully magical parents,” Draco said. “Holy Merlin, he needs to be induced for ‘Magical Maturity’ too, unless…” He turned with wide shocked eyes, to look at the Boy-Who-Lived who was looking at the both of them with a quirky, smirky grin.

“Unless, he’s already gone through it,” Harry finished the sentence for them, still smiling at their shocked expressions. “Yeah, I did. Oh, and just to further shock you my mum went through it too. Even if the current rumour is that Muggle-borns and Half-bloods don’t, I wouldn’t be surprised if many Half-bloods go through it and never bother to mention it to anyone. Everyone keeps saying that what happens is no one’s business and yet the School and the UK Ministry of Magic keeps trying to stick their long winded laws and regulations into it. No wonder the statistics are not accurate.”

“Bloody hell Potter,” Draco said. “You’ve already been through the process and no one knew about it.”

“It’s not any of their business is it?” Harry asked pointedly. “Besides could you have attended those stupid information classes and listened to the teacher, who only drones on about the ‘Acceptable Approportioning of Magical Influx’. They’re trying to dictate how we chose to direct the magic from the influx by only mentioning a few possibilities when the possibilities should be near endless and varied.”

“That’s enough gentlemen,” Ignatia Bonebreaker cut in. “You’ve all had greater choices then those of your fellow students, but that doesn’t mean that time is standing still in these Halls. We must determine your alter-gifts and then get the three of you to the Under Mountain for your training.”

All three were contrite and sincere when they said, “Yes Ma’am!”

They chose to put off the conversation for a much later date, so now they were all seated around a small table with a vial of something being placed in front of them by a young Goblin. “Sinius,”
Harry said, “How are you?”

“How are you?” The young Goblin said. He had been present during their meeting, but he never believed Griphook when he said that Harry Potter would know him by name.

“Of course,” Harry said. “Your training goes well I presume?”

“Yes Lord Grindelwald,” Sinius said. “I made these for you, but they will not taste good.”

Draco snorted and said, “No potion has ever tasted good. The properties would be rendered ineffective.”

“True,” Harry said. “But something should be done about it, especially for families with small children.”


“Small children fight more against the taste of something,” Harry said. “I remember some students in my primary school who refused to take any foul tasting medicine. Muggles have long since accepted that in order to get a child to take their medicine there must be a reward factor, like chocolate or a sucker to get rid of the awful taste. Although, now most Muggle medicine is flavoured by the common tastes of Orange, Cherry or Grape.”

“I don’t understand,” Ron said echoing his Animapar’s confusion.

“Winky,” Harry called out.

“Master Harry,” she said popping into the room.

“Can you go to a Muggle drugstore quickly and quietly and return back before we go Under Mountain?”

“Winky can,” she said, altering her appearance to that of a short, but elderly human female. He gave her some Muggle money and wrote out a quick list of things to pick up.

“Take them directly to our Under Mountains rooms when you have them,” he said. “See if you can pick up several microscopes with various lenses too. I have an idea that we’ll need them to test something, once we’re there.”

“Yes Master Harry,” she said popping away and quickly getting the purchases that she needed. She picked up several Muggle microscopes and stumbled across a couple of magical versions, so she bought those ones too.

Meanwhile the boys downed the nasty concoction and waited for the Magistrate Ignatia Bonebreaker to cast the spell that would reveal their additional Wizarding alter-gifts. Many of these kinds of gifts could be linked to a person or just be something that they have a talent for learning.

They were each giving a special potion laced paper and quill that would use their magic to write out a base list of alter-gifts as interpreted by the Goblin potion. The potion is quite harmless, unless a Wizard was specifically allergic to some of the ingredients, but the boys were fine and they each wrote out a short list of alter-gifts that they could explore during their time Under Mountain.

HPHPHP

RON
1) Instinctive mining – which he partially learned while seeking out the stones requested on his list of items from the Goblins.
2) Dousing varied – water, mineral & precious stone. All of which he could use in a treasure hunting profession, should that be his future choice in careers.
3) Logic & Calculations – increased improvement to understanding Arithmancy, Runes and combining them into combinations for the purpose of spelling items, weapons, objects, etc…
4) Instinctive crafting – metal and stone specific. In short he could create magical weapons, jewellery, but would not have any results in using natural materials unless he had assistance.
5) Telekinesis - ability to use only the mind to move objects

**HPHPHP**

**DRACO**

1) Telekinesis - ability to use only the mind to move objects
2) Logic & Calculations – increased improvement to understanding Arithmancy, Runes, Alchemy and Potions, all of which increased his already instinctive potion combinations and creations. An overall complimentary alter-gift to match his Animapar counterpart.
3) Alchemy – branching into a potions speciality that involves spells and non-conventional ingredients like precious stones.
4) Language Interpretation – a partial instinctive gift that only becomes available if the Witch or Wizard already knows a minimum for four Human languages and a basic understanding of Runes. This gift will aid him in reading some of the books that Chaucer, the Malfoy’s Librarian House-elf, had packaged away for him.
5) Plant knowledge and logic – increased understanding of plant interactions and gaining plant curiosity to the point that he’d be able to keep up against Neville Longbottom’s Herbology scores and sometimes surpass him. Only this ability does not increase a need to learn how to grow the things, but will improve his understanding of the plant cycles and would know if it had an ideal growth period or a poor one in relation to creating or brewing potions.

**HPHPHP**

**HARRY**

1) Instinctive crafting – wood and stone specific. In short he could create magical wands, staves or anything that involves wood crafting, but would not have any results in using forged or natural metals, unless he had the assistance of someone else to shape the metals.
2) Non-traditional magical combat – evidenced by his personal training experience. He would only need to keep up the training regimen that he had already established at the School.
3) Telekinesis - ability to use only the mind to move objects
4) Increased Calculation Ability – specific to the merging of magical and non-magical elements, such as used in creating magical wands.
5) Spelling Objects – adding magical properties to items, objects or other, during their curing or creation process and upon completed objects that have not been enchanted previously. That would be perfect for converting Muggle inventions to work properly in the Wizarding World.
6) Mage Sight – enhanced sight for seeing the magical properties of certain objects. This is only an add-on ability to his already increased magical sight which includes the ability to read Auras and Lie Detection. It will be useful when he has to forge his own weapons. It will also allow him to help Ron and Draco when they forge theirs.

**HPHPHP**

The lists were only guidelines to their abilities and it would be entirely up to the boys just how much
or how little they plan to train these in addition to their weapons training.

HPHPHP

TBC...

(...i...) Salix (Latin) = Willow (English)

(...ii...) “Quality of Life” quote, in this story, is completely made up and belongs to me. Should something similar exist, please let me know and I will credit the creator of it properly with disclaimer and all, if not, then I must be brilliant to come up with something new. (LOL)

(...iii...) Animapar (Latin) = Anima + Par, Anima means ‘soul’, Par means ‘match’. They are not soul-mates as the translation I’d have used would reflect that which for those of you who’re curious would be something like, Animasocius = Soul + Mate. I could have also used, ‘Animageminus’ = Soul + Twin (which if I ever re-read or review I might change it because of the strength that twins have, however the pairing will still be as stated in chapter one, Ron/Draco, once all the Dark Lord hoopla is done.)

(...iv...) Varius (Latin) = versatile, changeable (English)
Fifteen

CH 15

HPHPHP

Professor Snape knew that a one week holiday for the students would allow them to come back alert, refreshed and supposedly ready to take on a final term of school, where end-of-year exams loom in their future waiting to test the comprehension and knowledge of all things learned for their year level. It was also a week that was supposed to go by quickly for many of the Professors, but this time around it was slow moving for him.

He hated it. He hated the Dark Lord and his infernal Dark Mark that prevented him from attending a specialized training session with the Goblins. He brooded on and alternately sulked about it. He worked on potions to take his mind off of it, but at the end of the day he drank only two glasses of his strongest brandy because he was still pissed off about the missed opportunity due to the foolishness of his youthful ideals.

He wanted to be by Harry Potter’s side for this and he didn’t care that it was Potter’s brat that would have kept him company. He wanted to learn something new. He wanted that chance, but he was fully aware that the rejection might have been because he was too old as well as having the Dark blight on his arm.

Two weeks before the boys left, the dratted Gryffindor Gold Boy had extracted two promises from his Potions Professor. One to oversee the launch of the ‘Hogwarts’ Student Presentation & Creative Assistance Centre’ and two to keep an eye on the young Sooty Owls and Hedwig, which the three house-elves who were bonded to Snape had prepared a similar delivery tree to the one in Harry’s assigned rooms.

‘It’s a bloody boring name for a place, but you can’t mistake it for anything else,’ he thought taking a sip of Brandy.

The boys had argued about it and in the end it was Ron Weasley that stated, “You need to be clear about its purpose. So do it with the name.” He was also the one that stated only five items per House from years three and up should be displayed. “All artists can’t have a place on the first floor, as there are only about twenty cases there. There has to be some honest judging by the teachers. Start with the ‘Top of Class’ for some projects and as for the second floor. The students should do it on a first come first request basis and it should be limited to a maximum of two or three weeks in the display cases, as there are only thirty display cases available on the second floor.”

“The limit of the years from three up makes sense, as students can only visit Hogsmeade beginning in their third year anyway,” Draco had agreed. “The time-limit will give the students time to review any ideas presented by the general public. Also you should consider extended hours on weekends to match the shop hours, that way all students get a chance to visit the place. How are you going to run it?”

“Goblins and house-elves,” Harry said. “I’ve already lined up a couple of younger Goblins who’ll earn supplemental training in security and how to be proper guards by putting in hours there. They’ll have a Managing Leader, they’ll report to, who’ll be the school’s liaison with the Centre. The leader will report to my manager and the house-elves were purchased, unfortunately, from the House-Elf Relocation Section of the Ministry, but they’ll live there full-time and be responsible for the
maintenance of the building completely.”

The Potions Master was present at that debate because it had taken place in the third floor meeting of the old ‘Shrieking Shack’ during one of the weekends that they were together planning their outing to Muggle London. He was given a list of things that needed to be in place before the opening of the Centre during the March Break. It was obvious to him that the Boy-Who-Lived didn’t want it to be known that the Centre was his idea and that he would not be present to authorize anything related to it.

**Minor Flashback**

Severus had ensured that all paperwork for the Centre was taken care of prior to letting his colleagues know about it. He presented everything at the Staff meeting and handed them the outlined contract the School’s Board of Governors had agreed to. It was interesting to note that every member of the Board had voted positively for the Centre to be opened. Now it was just a matter of getting the most promising projects on display.

‘That Brat has just given me another headache,’ he though listening to the various Professors argued about which project should be presented. He sighed deeply and that cause Dumbledore to take notice.

“Severus,” the Headmaster said. “Perhaps you should find an arbitrator here for this.”

“No arbitrator is necessary Albus,” Severus said. Then he raised his voice and said loudly, “That is enough. All of you have students that you’re proud of and I understand that very well.” He sneered at the scoffs he received. “However due to the timing not all students will be permitted to show off their projects and I quite agree with the time-frame on the per term basis set up.”

“We’re going into our third term,” Professor Sinistra said. “How exactly is that fair, when the two previous terms haven’t had the chance to select items for display?”

“The problem is choosing which project to display,” Professor McGonagall said.

“Rotate them,” Severus said. “Perhaps you should all consider that come summer something will still need to be displayed in order to keep the facility open year round. First term projects can be shown then and third term projects will be displayed during next year’s first term. Choosing the, ‘Top of Class’ projects shouldn’t be that difficult because you graded your students and know who they are.”

“What if there is nothing physical to display,” Professor Flitwick said. “Some ‘Top of Class’ students are there because of the essays that they’ve written, not because they created something tangible. Not all years create anything magically either.”

“The concept or idea was developed so that students who’re in ‘Club’ activities like ‘Creative Arts’ could participate in displaying their efforts,” Professor Snape said. “Not all students wish to put their projects on display in such a fashion anyway, but those that do will be given the opportunity. The ‘Top of Class’ suggestion by the owner was only that, a suggestion. However the limit is still going to be five entries per House. The only reason is because the facility spacing is limited to twenty displays, of various sizes and not because of any other reason. Make your choices and let me know who they are and what the projects are by next Monday. You all have leave to visit the facility to see what it looks like and to get an idea of the presentation of the place. End of discussion.”

“I have a related question,” Albus Dumbledore said with a small smile on his face. He was amused
by the whole deal, but this question had to be asked. “Why are you in charge of managing such a project?”

Severus just scowled and thought about what to say. He couldn’t tell them that he promised some brat to look out for this project. That would lead to questions that he didn’t want to answer as to who could ask him to do such a thing without expecting anything in returning. So he said the only thing that would guarantee him some privacy in the matter and get everyone to stop wondering why he was involved.

“I took an Oath,” he said.

In essence that’s exactly what he had done. His promise was as good as an Oath and Harry knew that. The young man never once took advantage of his Potions Master position, even when asking for his Counsel the young man never overstepped the bounds of their contract. So making a promise to oversee the launch of this for the boy wasn’t difficult to do.

Professor Dumbledore knew then that asking for any more information would harm his Potions Master and therefore the line of questioning was dropped.

Even the other Professors knew when to stop asking questions and at least they now had something interesting, non-War related, to focus their time on. Not only that, but the promise of displaying future class projects was a kind of incentive to alter some of their upper class syllabus to include a physical project per term rather than only one or two for the end of the year.

‘Sneaky brat,’ Severus thought as he listened to some of the syllabus projects being changed for the third term. ‘He’s changing the school from the outside. I wonder if there is something that I can do get a Potion Project displayed and how it could be presented.’ He looked around and noticed that some of the Professors had left the meeting when the Headmaster had dismissed the school business. The old man was looking at him strangely.

“Albus,” Severus said, keeping a general appearance of normality. “Is something wrong?”

“Just wondering if the Dark Lord is behind this,” the Headmaster said. “It seems quite sudden to have a Facility that would attract a lot of students don’t you think.”

“That’s just like you Albus,” Severus told him. “I can safely assure you that the Dark Lord knows nothing about this place or this project. It was some old person who died, leaving behind money and a Will stating that lacking any Heir they wanted to do some good for the Wizarding World, specifically for the Students of Hogwarts, like opening a facility or Gallery that would improve some corner of the Wizarding World or rather some such nonsense. The Goblins took the Will and made appropriate queries and found that this was quite within the purview of the Will. The place will act in a Museum-type capacity which permits them to charge people to visit or walk through the place.”

“Charging the students to see their own projects,” Albus questioned. “That’s highly unorthodox!”

“Practical,” Severus then explained. “I believe they got that idea from the Muggles, who charge nominal fees to visit such types of institutions. They only plan to set up minimal fees to assist in the maintenance of the place and students can all well afford the few ‘Knuts’ for the entry cost.”

“Knuts,” Albus said. “Why only Knuts?”

“Ten Knuts to be precise, as for why, well it’s probably because students will always have Knuts in their pockets and that not much in Hogsmeade costs only ten Knuts,” Severus said. “I’m guessing that the deceased old fart was very well off because I’ve been given to understand that the vault
donation will be using the vault's interest accumulations to oversee the bigger fees. I was only asked to oversee this first time set-up to ensure that by the time that the Hogsmeade week-end before March Break is here that the Facility will be opened and accessible. This is to allow those students choosing to leave for Break will have a chance to see it. Now if you’ll excuse me, I have a few detentions to monitor.”

“Of course, of course,” Albus Dumbledore said watching one of his youngest Professor’s leaving the meeting room. “That’s such an enterprising idea. I wonder why no one thought of doing something like this before now?” He muttered making his way back to his office via a shortcut that very few knew about. His attention was once more riveted on the pile of paperwork waiting for him at his desk.

HPHPHP

Minor Flashforward, Opening of the Facility

Students were lining up outside the new ‘Hogwarts’ Student Presentation & Creative Assistance Centre’. A few there were nervous because some of their projects were on display, but each House had come up with a system of nomination and grades that would permit a student to place one of their projects on display.

Professor Snape was there to re-read the rules of the Centre and to post them at the entrance, exits and next to a few of the wall displays. There were other rules, like ‘No touching the displays’, ‘No magic is permitted by visitors to the Centre for whatever reason or you’ll be fined’, ‘No consumption of food or drink is permitted in the building or you’ll be fined’, etc... The list was basic was going to be ‘subject to re-evaluation by the discretion of the building’s owner based on... ’, whatever law the building owner decided to use.

The one notice by the doors or at various locations inside was a small magical placard that said, ‘These premises are under surveillance and any infraction of these rules will be fully recorded and dealt with in severe accordance to Magical Law.’

The Mayor of Hogsmeade was there because he had been formally invited to a ribbon cutting ceremony to open the Centre. A crisis-type distraction at the Ministry meant that the Minister of Magic wasn’t able to show up to usurp the Mayor’s right to have this little ceremony to open a brand new business in his town.

A couple of reporters from the Prophet and the Quibbler were there to take pictures of the place and to write honest articles about the new business. Copies of the rules were handed out to them so that they may be included in their articles.

Prominent business men and women of the community were given a ‘sneak-preview’ before the formal opening that early Saturday morning. This allowed them to see the displays before the ‘Grand Opening’ in order to be able to maintain their normal hours of business for the Hogsmeade weekend. Only the Heads of House were permitted into the building prior to that, as they had chosen to be responsible for bringing in the first of the projects to be displayed on the first and second floors.

The students were given an explanation of the second floor displays a week before the ‘Grand Opening’ and that’s when the total number per student was limited to three and only for three weeks time. That rule was added quickly as one over exuberant ‘know-it-all’ female Gryffindor sixth year student came forward to submit twelve projects to get public opinion and ideas for acceptable conclusions.

Students were given strict instructions that this was not to be used to gain assistance in homework
matters and any caught would be severely punished with detentions. They would also be forfeiting
the right to display anything for two active school terms, including the summer holidays, should the
infraction occur during second or third term.

The Mayor of Hogsmeade was fully aware about the limited patience of teenagers, so he kept his
speech short and to the point. The newspapers had commended him for it. The entrance fee was
negated only for that first opening day, but when the students found out that the price of admission
was only going to be ten measly Knuts they felt that it was a fair price because they were just
students. Besides those that wanted the chance to show off, felt a boost in their confidence to know
that someone, it didn’t matter who, actually ‘paid’ to see their works.

Albus Dumbledore was present to see if he could find out who the mysterious owner of that building
was, as the building currently has a secret entrance to the school. He had been exploiting it for his
Order members throughout the year, but it seemed that entrance was now completely bricked off and
warded by powerful Goblin wards that even he couldn’t penetrate without destroying the building
too. He was hoping to persuade the owner to allow the entrance to continue being used, but it was
looking like a hopeless endeavour. The goblin manager in charge of the place was not forthcoming
and the younger guards just didn’t know.

The house-elves would have been able to tell say something about their Master, but they could not
mention his name, such was their bond. Besides they didn’t like the nosy old man trying to poke his
long beard in their business. They caught him trying to find the entrance to the basement and to the
third floor, but were glad that the wards had firmly blocked him.

The Goblin noticed this and said, “Headmaster Dumbledore, cease and desist this behaviour. You
are coming close to being fined for trying to access rooms that are unauthorized for use by the
General Public.”

“Perhaps you should inform the owner of the building that I wish to speak with them,” the
Headmaster stated.

“You’re request has been forwarded to the appropriate personnel,” the Goblin said. “You will
receive a response in due course. That is the best that I can do in this situation.”

The Headmaster fully aware that he had an audience, twinkled at the creature that just showed him
his teeth in a hostile gesture, nearly growling. The old man shrugged and turned his twinkling looks
to the students that were watching him and he said, “As you were.”

The children started to chatter and whisper making speculations about who the owner of the building
was. However they were quickly diverted by the projects on display. It made many of the think
about other types of projects that they could create to display here in the future.

Hermione was there without Ron or Harry and that was only because Harry refused to be anywhere
near sneezing distance of any news reporter of any kind.

“Can you just imagine all the articles in the papers,” he told her when she asked if he was going to be
there. “If I showed up at such a place and on their ‘Grand Opening Day’, the stories would have
nothing about the business, but the fact that Harry Potter had been there. They’d print all sorts of crap
stories about who he was with and all sorts of speculations on whether I displayed something in the
cases. So you’ll have to go on your own. In fact I think I’ll remain at the school and a get a head start
on my assignments for the Break.”

She had huffed and then had tried to rope Ron into going with her, as a date, but that failed when he
said that he’d stay with Harry to keep him company. “I’m going to make sure that he doesn’t drown
in his studies,” the red-head had told her. “I figure that I can pull him away for a game of chess or
maybe take him to the pitch and fly around a bit.”

Hermione didn’t think that there was anything wrong with that. She was quite pleased that she had
been able to get her ideas posted somewhere. There were a few projects that she had wanted to get
public help or opinions on, so she couldn’t wait to see how they were shown to the public. She was
disappointed when they limited her on the number of projects that she would be permitted to show.

HPHPHP

Flashforward - Training

The boys were taken to the Under Mountain Training Compound. They were all fascinated to learn
that it was actually an old military compound or old fortress type of Keep. There were buildings
around the outer walls and it had an internal courtyard for the physical training aspects. Each
building had a purpose, Barracks, Forge, Kitchens and eating area, and several rooms that used to
house families, but had been converted into a massive Library. Several other rooms were slated for
independent studies and for hobbies such as carving, spell-crafting, growing plants in a magical
atrium and internal greenhouses, etc... There was even an underground room that was specifically
built to contain powerful magical excess when training with new magics.

They had their lists, but they didn’t have the chance to look them over before they were instructed to
make sure that they had everything that they needed. Their house-elves were already there making
sure that their belongings were safely stored.

Their teachers were going to show up and they’d be introduced in the morning. It had been
explained that the compound would be ‘Locked Down’ and sealed in such a way that once the time
spells were activated they would not be able to leave until they had finished their training complete to
their own satisfaction and that of their teachers.

Harry walked around the barracks and noticed that Dobby or Winky had formed upper bunks on
which they’d sleep and that under the bunks their packs were opened and most of their contents were
moved to the dressers under the bunks. There were silk screens that could form walls to separate the
bunks and in effect give them privacy. It was a good thing that the room was large enough for such
because it had been created to house at least twenty humans bunked.

“Very practical,” he said praising them. “Now where are we going to put the stuff we had to
collect?”

“This way,” Henrik said coming to view the barrack room assigned to the Wizards. It was the only
one with the appropriate height for them.

“Henrik,” Harry said in a surprised tone. “What are you doing here?”

“I’m here to teach you about armour and how to properly forge your own,” the Goblin said. He
didn’t get the sense that he was unwanted and he had admitted to his father that he wanted the
chance to get to know the new Lord Grindelwald. One of them had to stay behind and take care of
the Clan, besides his father had trained the last human in the compound to forge his weapons.
However that human has passed away.

“I’m glad,” Harry said as the left the room in order to seek out the others. “Do you know who will be
here to teach us?”

“I do,” he said. “But I’d rather keep it a surprise for the morning. I do know that the Elders were
speculating about the actual length of ‘Time’ that you’d have to be here. They suspect that it will be likely three to five years.”

Harry just shrugged and said, “It takes time to develop skills like proper forging and such. I kind of figured that it’d take longer than one year.”

“What would take more than a year Potter?” Draco asked. He was seated at a conference table that looked big enough to be a good gathering location for end of day discussions.

“Our training,” Harry said, pulling out the parchment that contained his list of alter-gifts. “Telekinesis, how cool is that?” He paused and then said, “Oh my god this is incredible. Wizards have that as a gift or talent, but I wonder... is it questionable like the Muggles or is it certain fact?”

“Cool? What does the weather have to do with this?” Draco asked. “What are you talking about? Muggles don’t have that ability because it’s purely a Wizarding trait.”

“It is not,” Harry said. “I wonder if our net-books will function Under Mountain? Weather is not involved Draco. It’s a Muggle expression for something interesting, fascinating, etc... It’s like when someone says ‘wicked’ in the Wizarding World, but not as a description of something foul.”

“Oh,” Draco said. He turned to look at the Goblin who answered Harry about the functioning net-books.

“They will not,” Henrik said. “Interference from the enclosing spell will not allow for the access you used to have. Also, we are far underground and closer to the Earth’s core than you might realize, but that is only because within this compound there are mines below that you boys can access. You’ll find it interesting to harvest in there and this will be your only chance to do so.”

“That will be good training for my alter-gifts,” Ron said re-reading his list. “It will be interesting to see what the dousing for minerals will turn up.”

“Yes, but what about telekinesis,” Draco said. He turned to Harry and explained, “That may be known as an alter-gift, but it’s not as rare as all that.”

“Muggles have made a study of it,” Harry said. “It works for some and doesn’t for others so it is fascinating that the Muggles have been studying what you call an ‘alter-gift’. They consider it a part of entire field in Science.”

“They do not,” Draco said.

“They do,” Harry stated firmly and without a hint that he was making a joke. “The Scientific Field is called ‘Parapsychology’. That’s where they study many things that the Wizarding World might categorize under Divination. If we could use our net-books without fear that we’d ruin them, I’d show you, but as it is I don’t think it would even be a good idea to remove them from their protective covers.”

“Well we only brought them in order to write to Severus,” Draco said. Whenever they weren’t in a classroom or studying the Slytherin had always used the man’s first name.

“We can’t,” Harry said. “Don’t worry. When the two of you were getting magically cleansed, I wrote to him to let him know that we had arrived safely. He stated that he expected us to communicate with him before we return to Centre. I think that he wants to be there to provide us with an adult escort back to school.”

“Yeah right, Potter,” Draco said. “It’s more like he wants to find out what we’ve learned while we
were away and if we brought him anything back.”

“I did mention that I thought we’d have enough time to create something for him,” Harry said. He looked over his list of gifts and said, “I’ll make most of it. It will help to have something to do that will calm our minds.”

“You’re right about that,” Ron said. He didn’t want to get into his gifts. They were interesting and it was clear that they had a lot to learn. He looked at the Slytherin and said, “You know you’ve been calling us by our last names for a while now, even though we started training together in November. Why don’t you want to use our first names?”

“I haven’t been invited to do so, Weasley,” Draco said. “That you two disregard proper etiquette doesn’t mean that I’ll do so.”

“I never had etiquette classes,” Harry said. “I don’t know what the proper form of address is for most people. In the Muggle world, if you’re of the same age you call a person by their first name. There are no more ranks in the Muggle World unless you count your educational rank and then only Doctors get an actual title. There are few now that are knighted by the British Monarchy and then it’s seems like they get that kind of title if they do something extraordinary or something. I’m not sure how that works. No Muggle-born or Muggle-raised would understand the need to respect titles unless they’re history buffs.”

“That is so strange,” Draco said. “However that does explain quite a bit about them.”

“If I knew you were waiting for my permission to call me by my first name,” Harry explained. “I’d have told you to do it the same day you showed up for training. Still…” He paused and bowed while looking at the blonde Slytherin in the eyes and said. “Young Lord Malfoy, as my peer, I’d appreciate it if you would address me by my first name, in casual situations like this.”

Draco bowed in turn and said, “As my peer, I’d appreciate it if you would do the same.”

Ron shrugged and repeated Harry’s request, although he did say, “I prefer to be known as Ron and not Ronald, if you don’t mind.”

“Understandable,” Draco said. “So what do we do first?”

“First you will be trained and tested,” Henrik said handing each of them a packed schedule. “We will begin slow and figure out what level you are at in each of these activities and then we will schedule around what you need to re-enforce and learn.”

Harry’s eyes widened. It was like the school blocks of work only this schedule was far more packed and had a lot less down-time or study-time. “We’ll need to be careful not to overdo it.”

“Don’t you worry about that,” a melodious voice said. The boys turned and their jaws dropped at the presence in the room.

“I was wondering when you were planning to show up, Amaya,” Henrik said the ethereal looking High Elf with a side glance.

“I was unavoidably detained,” she said looking at the three Humans that were clearly surprised to see her. “Is there something on my face?” She asked rubbing different parts of her face to wipe imagined dirt.

“No m’am,” Ron said.
“We’re just surprised to see you,” Draco explained.

“Why,” Amaya asked.

“We didn’t know that any of your race existed,” Harry said. “I read several books at our school that states that your race had either died out or left. It was never conclusive except for the fact that your people were no longer around.”

“Well, I like that,” Amaya said. “High Elves have always existed. We just live in another dimension because we felt that it was the right time to move on. We’ve always come back to visit.”

“It’s been quite a few centuries since any Human has interacted any of your ethereal kind,” Henrik said.

“Really,” she said looking at Draco. “But this one…”

“Veela,” Draco said shaking his head. “We have a few Veela in the mix, not High Elves.”

“Oh my,” Amaya said. “Very well then, I’m here in a healer capacity and my twin Lahki is here to train you in your long-range weapons. She’s strict, but fair and will further ensure that you’re suitably compatible with your chosen weapon type.”

“Thank you,” all three boys said at the same time.

“Now why don’t the three of you plan out your future free time and training and we’ll meet here for the evening meal at six o’clock,” Henrik said. “Don’t be late or else you’ll do without. That goes for every meal. You’ll meet all of your trainers then and we’ll approximate how long the full training will take once we’ve been here for a month.”

“Thank you Henrik,” Harry said. “I think I’m going to go see where Dobby and Winky have chosen to stay.”

“I’ll join you Harry,” Ron said. “I’d like to get to know Maze.”

“Likewise with Salix,” Draco said.

“We’ll see you at six,” Harry said to his future healer and instructor for forging.

The High Elf and the Goblin nodded and then turned their heads to think about what the three Humans would need in the form of care. Should things go wrong during training they wanted to be ready for it, plus the Goblin was explaining that there were four ‘other’ elves that were bonded in service to the boys.

Amaya was surprised to hear that, but then again since none of her kind, have interacted with Humans for a long time. It was going to be refreshing to visit with them again, even if it was for the purpose of training them for War.

HPHPHPHP

TBC...
Sixteen

CH 16

HPHPHP

Training’s Complete!

HPHPHP

The training that took place Under Mountain had changed the boys, but it didn’t. They left the facility technically six years and three months later. However in actual physical time only four days had passed from the day that they Port-Keyed to entrance the Grendel Clan in Iceland.

No changes had occurred physically to them other than they all gained some muscle mass specific to their talents. They gained bit of height, but nothing out of the ordinary for Wizards their age, as this was the time of year that they tended to begin to ‘sprouting’, as it were. They were all approaching their seventh summer with a view to surviving what they had to survive and live in a hopefully peaceful future.

They had two additional days to sort themselves out and the first thing that they did was distribute thank you gifts to all their teachers before they left the Under Mountain Hall. They had one gift to present to the Grendel Clan, as a whole, before they parted company on the following day.

“High Chief Grendel,” Harry said bowing to the High Chief in the Clan’s Grand Hall. Draco and Ron followed his example and bowed, but did not say anything to the Goblin sitting on a stylized chair. “We wish to present your Clan with items worked from our hands and with our magic.”

The other two had voted without Harry’s input about who was going to be the spokesman to the Clan in order to present their combined gift. “We made many things during out ‘down-time’, but do not wish to offend any of the receivers by gifting them with something that they cannot use. Therefore this trunk carries many items that we wish for you, High Chief Borak and your Counsellors to distribute as you will to all the members of your Clan on our be-half.”

The High Chief stood up and made his way to the low, but wide trunk, it was still as tall as he was though. The size didn’t matter with magic, as he was still able to view it fully. He did notice the locks on each face of the trunk and said, “Keys please.”

Harry handed him a ring of five keys with matching symbols to the locks that they would open. Each panel was worked with different symbols and runes. Magic was imbedded into the panels of the trunk and every Goblin present was able to read the contents that could be found in each section of the trunk.

The Harry had worked on the wood panels, Ron had worked on the metals fastenings while Draco researched and came up with the outright design and symbols that they used. All the boys had taken their time to learn the Goblin language in full. They had included all their house-elves when they had learned that language, so that these bonded creatures might be able to handle the correspondence for their Masters in a more informed capacity.

The House-Elves had learned many different things about their Masters and had all come to several understandings of the tasks expected from them. They had been quick to try and do too much, but
Harry had been firm on some things, which was reflected in the actions that the other two young men took by following some of his example.

The House-Elves were tasked to take care of their rooms and clothes, but not their training gear and equipment, as the boys needed to learn how to care for their own things of that nature. It was for the best because it was the only way that the boys would know when their weapons and armour would need to be repaired or sharpened.

Harry had actually ordered his house-elves to learn a hobby other than just cleaning up after him, so it was that Dobby had learned from the Goblins and the High Elves how to handle and care for wild birds of all sorts. He wanted his Master to have a complete Owlery, but he also wanted to have an aviary that he could take care of and let his Master earn income by training personal Post Owls. It was a very different process from the Regulated Birds that were trained en masse.

Winky learned how to sew, knit, weave and crochet. Funny enough it was Ron that taught her how to do most of it. The reason he had been able to teach her was that his mum had trained all her boys on those basics so that they could make and repair their own scarves when they were younger. It was also her way of making sure that they were out of trouble and it was a suitable form of punishment for whenever they acted up.

The red-head shrugged it off and by saying, “Sometimes I used to do it because I just needed to be doing something with my hands.”

Draco was the one that taught her how to sew using various intricate stitches and he explained his knowledge as needing it for when tailors, even magical ones, let them down. His mum was the one that taught him how to do this because she sometimes had to alter her own gowns by hand.

The Goblins in the Great Hall were now all eager to see what these Humans could conceivably believe to be appropriate gifts, but the markings on the panels were clear. They were curious folk when it came to things like this. The High Chief had chosen to open the top lock, which they could all read the word, ‘Weapons.’

The magic coming from the weapons was something that had all the Goblins grinning in anticipation. Two of the guards were called forward and they were the most bulky of all Goblins. They looked like they had enough mass to lift the first tray of weapons out in order to reveal others underneath. Not that the first tray contained big or heavy items, it contained mostly bows, arrows and string for the bows.

The next tray contained knives and daggers of varying lengths, but nothing too awkward for the natural size of a Goblin. The third tray contained hammers and axes and the last were swords of differing structure and lengths.

All trays of the weapons were lined up so that all those present were able to see these gifts. There were comments and exclamations over their construct, the way they looked and the magic that could be felt emanating from them.

The High Chief had received a brief explanation about the contents of each, but had only decided to reveal the weapons for now. “The front panel contains work from the house-elves and me. I tanned and tooled several types of leathers, only preparing them for use, I did not presume to make clothing. The house-elves were taught to prepare and spool various strings threads and wool. They were the weavers for the bolts of material that you’ll find within. They even dyed some using the plants that Young Lord Malfoy cultivated for the purpose creating colourful dyes. I believe and hope that you’ll be pleased with the outcome,” Harry whispered his explanation.
"The left side panel contains cuttings, potions and preserved plants that were cultivated and produced exclusively by Young Lord Malfoy," Harry carried on. "All potions were created for the Goblins use only and would have no value in the Human market. Henrik was kind enough to assist us with them, as he was one of our frequent sparring partners and was in need of a few of them. The right hand panel contains tools and everyday items, like tankards, cauldrons, pans, etc... A gift created by Mr. Ron Weasley. He had also developed a deft hand at creating interesting trinkets and children’s tin toys, which we hope will be amusing to your young ones. There are game boards of various types in there that we shared in their creation, some are fully magical and others are Muggle requiring manual dexterity to use or the alter-gift of telekinesis to move the pieces."

The High Chief noted that Lord Grindelwald didn’t mention the back panel. He noted that the young Human was looking at him wondering if its contents should be mentioned. There was an air of nervousness regarding the boy’s hesitation.

“What is stored in the last panel?” Borak asked with what could only be deemed a gentle demeanour.

Harry rubbed the back of his neck, looked at his two companions and then sent them a look for the other two to join them. “We all corroborated in the creation of these,” he said. He nodded to the keys in Borak’s hand and asked, “May I?”

The High Chief, curious handed them over. He watched the other two Humans line up on either side waiting for Harry Potter to open that panel. Harry turned the key. Holes appeared and he immediately put his hands in to pull the drawer out from the trunk. Two more holes appeared where the other two Humans were standing and they helped pulled out the drawer. The contents had a somewhat familiar feel to them.

The three humans lifted one tray to reveal another layer in the bottom of the drawer. They looked just like the normal weapons that were arranged in rows that the other Goblins were looking over, pulling out and testing their sharpness and heft.

The first tray here had a row of short staves, some plain, others capped with metal at one or both ends. There were a lot of heavy knives and heavy daggers too with slightly longer than normal wooden handles or hilts. The bottom tray had several rows of hammers in various configurations of single head, double head, spiked with one spike and a head or spike at the top and double headed.

“They could have been presented with the others,” Sinius had said, when he joined them. He wasn’t one that had been there for training with the boys because he was studying under his grandfather and his father, Henrik, felt that he had needed to learn more about running then clan.

Henrik joined them and clapped a large hand on his son’s shoulder. “Easy there,” he said and he looked to the Humans. Grinning he asked, “May I?”

Harry bowed and said, “Please. You might be the one better suited to explain and demonstrate them.”

Henrik picked up one of the double-headed hammers. He lifted it and checked the weight. He stepped out of the way of the others and glanced at his father the High Chief. At his leader’s nod, he erected a clear magical shield that would allow him to move through a few of his paces without fear of hitting anyone. A warrior of his experience would never hit someone, but the Hall was kind of crowded as more Goblins were coming in to view the gift of weapons.

The warrior began his paces slowly until he was at his ease with the new weapon in his hand and then doing several other movements the High Chief gasped as the war-hammer changed to a double-bladed axe in mid-swing. His son continued to demonstrate the versatility of the ‘New Varius’
weapon. It was limited in that it could only change from hammer to axe, but it was very useful to a warrior that may need to bash something like crushing animated skeletons, which could not be defeated with a sharp blade. The axe was extremely useful for taking down enemies on horse-back, among other things.

Goblins often carried several weapons on their person, but to have something like this would free up space on the carrying belts for other things. “Fascinating,” Borak said as his son slowed down and the axe returned to its original configuration of a double-headed hammer. “Explain these.”

Harry stepped forward and began, “They are ‘New Varius’ Weapons or perhaps ‘Other Varius’, we haven’t really thought of a name for them. We were interested in the differences between those and normal blades and weapons. We took the time to learn from the ones that we were permitted to take along with us in our training and with the books we found in the library Under Mountain we created these. ‘Varius’ weapons were always built by the ones that needed wield it, but when I was working on developing my own, I created a dagger-penknife. I wasn’t looking to make anything more complicated than that. A penknife is something that everyone has on hand for cutting quill nibs, but I was thinking more of an emergency weapon for when I’m caught without and so I came up with this.”

He pulled out an ordinary looking penknife, but with a quick flick of his wrist he had a very sharp and long dagger in his hand. He demonstrated various methods of concealing it, along his arm, hidden in the folds of his robes and once it was back to its original mode he tucked it away.

“We did create a few new things which we’ll have to register in the UK Ministry of Magic Patent Office and get the designs added to the Magical Book of Patents, complete with Copyright contracts. However we’ve kept all our originals and a copy and have gifted you with our duplicate efforts,” Harry told Borak. “It seems that we can magically copy a finished product through a mix of spells, transfiguration and conjuration, but only in a limited amount. We each created twenty copies of each for the Clan of Grendel. They are complete and can be put to immediate use. Our crests are branded in the wood and etched in the metals of these weapons. Any of these products can be only reproduced for market, once we have filed everything accordingly.”

The High Chief bowed low to the boys to acknowledge that they had used their ‘Time’ well. He returned to his seat and told them, “Put all these away please.”

He waited until he had the ring of keys in his hand once more. The other weapons were slowly put away with many a lingering glance by those that were interested in a particular type. He looked at the three of them and noted that they were armed with the weapons that they had forged and created. Their travel gear had been taken to their previously assigned room. Their gear was currently under guard by their house-elves who refused to be present among so many Goblins of a warring tribe.

That single trunk in the middle of the room spoke loudly of the Boy-Who-Lived’s worthiness and whether he liked it or not it was enough to gain an Oath of Fealty from this Goblin Clan. The High Chief came to a conclusion about these Humans, but first, “All those gathered here agree, Yay or Nay, that this gift is worth of the Humans who’ve been trained Under Mountain.”

His voice was drowned out by the roar of ‘Yays’, shouted out by near everyone in the Hall. “However, before we release them completely back into the care of their Wizard School, we require a demonstration of their skills and training. A tournament is been set up and prepared for this afternoon beginning at thirteen hundred hours. You three,” he addressed the young Humans. “Are permitted to invite one person of family, familiarity or trusted counsellor to view the results of your training. Oh and Lord Grindelwald...”

Harry looked at the Goblin and said, “Yes High Chief.”
“Please see to it that you dispatch your correspondence with your Sooties,” the Goblin said amiably. “They arrived this morning making no delivery and have yet to leave.”

Harry pursed his lips to keep his pleasure inside. He bowed and said, “As you wish High Chief, I will make sure that they are properly employed to their tasks. May we have leave to go and prepare ourselves for the afternoon?”

A regal nod and the boys were escorted out of the Grand Hall. Once the doors were shut the Goblins all began to speak nearly at once, exclaiming over the quality of the weapons and speculating about the other gifts that they hadn’t seen yet.

The three young men looked at each, grinned at one another and followed the young guard to their shared room. It was set up similarly to the barracks that they had shared Under Mountain. On each bunk sat a Sooty Owl waiting for their Master Harry to see to them and it was done quickly with much petting, soothing talk and the handing out of special made treats.

“Potter,” Draco said falling back on the last name of his ex-school rival. He only did this out of nervousness. “I would like to invite my father to witness this. I’m planning to break off from his influence as soon as I can destroy those evil items in my room at the school.”

“Of course,” Harry said. “The choice is yours. Do you mind that I invite Professor Snape?”

“I was hoping that you would,” Draco said.

“It was either him or Remus Lupin,” Harry said. “However Remus has not been in contact with me since the Department of Mystery thing and Snape is my contracted counsellor.” The other two nodded, having had long heart to heart discussions of many things, including how much the Professor had helped Harry out during his past summer.

He watched as the Boy-Who-Lived place a ring that automatically shrank around the leg of each of his black owls. On the band was Potter’s Family Crest, but that couldn’t be helped. The green-eyed youth instructed each black owl to deliver their messages swiftly and accurately.

Dev allowed the blonde Slytherin to use him as his courier. “I have a protective chain that will allow you to deliver this directly to my father and it will get you out of the Manor without harm,” he said softly to the owl. The owl looked at Harry who nodded and the owl responded by bopping its dark head up and down. The blonde said, “Thank you.”

“I’m going to invite my father,” Ron said, writing up his note and while Amida waited on his bunk preening a dark wing. “We’ll have to keep an eye on them while they’re in the same room, but I want him to know about this.”

“I agree,” Draco said, writing a note to his father, demanding his presence. He spelled the parchment to an activation word and time of twelve hundred hours thirty-five minutes, which will allow the aristocratic man to appear directly in the Grendel Clan’s Grand Gathering Hall.

Harry wrote to his Counsellor via email telling him a few things and on the parchment, there were only the words, “Read, ‘EMAIL’,” which was followed by twelve hundred hours forty minutes. He sent this one off with Lulong. This would cover his request to his Professor should he not read the email, but just used the activation words at twelve-forty to activate the Port-Key.

Harry had no trouble spelling the parchment to the coordinates of the Grand Hall. They were taught how to do that using Goblin words and spells because this way any Port-Key they made would never be tracked by the UK’s Ministry of Magic.
Ron did the same, but he only asked that his father show up and advised him to dress warmly.

The Grand Hall belonging to the Goblin Clan of Grendel was filling up quickly. Word had gotten out the day previous that the Humans were ready to come back from training Under Mountain. There were already several Head Goblins from other Clans and Tribes. Seven were representatives from the UK Bank of Gringotts.

Tiers of benches rose up from the floor as soon as it was full of seated folk. The rarity of three adult Humans present caused some speculation, but they were given front row seats, at different sections of the bench spectators.

A redheaded male was seated on the right side and the aristocratic sneering blonde male was seated on the left side benches, across from the redheaded male. Finally the black haired fellow that smelled of hot iron and potions was seated near the ‘Throne’ section at the head of the Grand Hall. He was sitting next to a young Human male that arrived in the company of ten other Goblins and one hybrid house-elf that was clothed in sturdy shoes, wearing serviceable and warm attire. These were Harry Potter’s employees that he had hired from this past summer and those assigned to the old ‘Shrieking Shack’.

Arthur Weasley had received his Port-Key and even though he was sceptical he knew that he would be there to support his youngest son. Ron’s letter was pretty vague about where he was and what he had been doing, but the man informed his secretary that he would be away for the remainder of the day. He Flooed to his home immediately, he had time to gather a bit of warm weather gear as indicated in the letter and was tugged automatically by Port-Key at the time that the letter stated.

Lucius Malfoy was frowning the entire time. The completely black owl was a marvel and he had hoped that he could capture it in order to steal it from its owner, but it had been wearing a protection piece that zapped his hand. The owl was able to fly away quickly after delivering a ferocious swipe with its sharp claws. Reading the letter did not improve his mood, as it was from his son who had yet to act in favour of their ‘Dark Lord’. He was even further displeased to sitting in a room surrounded by Goblins, watching Arthur Weasley make nice with his fellow spectators and neighbours.

Severus Snape wasn’t surprised to see Lucius Malfoy and Arthur Weasley there. He wasn’t surprised to see Harry’s employees nearby and he wasn’t even surprised to be sitting near them either. He had received the note from Lulong just before he dismissed his morning class and was able to post instructions for his afternoon classes on his class door.

As soon as he was free to do so, he nearly raced to his private quarters to read the email that Harry had sent him. It was detailed, but to the point. “Wear warm clothing, don’t tell anyone where you’re going and please come. You don’t want to miss this, oh and pack a few emergency potions for humans, just in case.” The Potions Master shrugged and nodded to no one in the room. He put on his warm cloak and boots. Severus took his normal satchel of emergency potions and he put on his belt of potions for combat, just in case. He activated the Port-Key at the time stated and was wondering just what was going on.

The Goblin’s Grand Audience Hall expanded and every guest noted distance markers and archery targets appear down the length of the hall. A row of judges were seated in front of the ‘Throne’ section, where the ultra-rare sight of the actual Goblin King was there with his entourage to oversee
this rare event. The judges were magically in charge of the Hall, protecting it from stray spells and projectiles, as well as maintaining the magical point system that would allow everyone gathered here to see the results. Most were elder goblins and magistrates.

Once the tiers of benches were at their regulated height, spell-light in rings, four feet in diameter, appeared in the floor at three points of a triangle. From within the spell light, rising up from the floor in each point, the invitees were able to see three young Humans emerge from the darkened shadows of the floor.

Each young human was dressed in dark leathers with buckled boots up to their knees. They had an array of items looped in their belts and had various types of bows strapped to their backs alongside something that looked like it might be a pole weapon. They all had their hair slicked and tied back at the nape of their necks to prevent it from interfering with their display. The audience could see the leather armour that they were all sporting include something buckled to their arms, in the form of arm braces or what used to be known as ‘Vambraces’.

They didn’t wear robes, capes or any flouncing type of clothing. They looked dangerous, deadly and ready for near anything. There leathers were coloured faintly, but it looked like the young men had broken them in thoroughly because the idea of doing such an exhibition in unbroken leathers was just asking for rashes and rubbing burns in the wrong places.

A Goblin Harald stepped forward, marching up into the centre of the triangle and made his announcement. “Magical beings,” he began in a clear cultured tone that was rare for Goblins, as their vocal chords were usually roughened by their own harsh language. “We are here to view the skills and achievements of these young Human Wizards in a standard test of Archery, followed by a test of Shielding and pure Defence. After which we will have twenty minutes to break before they demonstrate a range of differing Weapon Proficiencies against ‘Mage-Light’ opponents based on their own shadows. The mage-light battle will occur in four ten minute stages, which will be further explained at that time. There will be no spell-casting combat and no magic will be used during any of these tests. Magical equipment and potions do not count.”

There were groans from some of the Goblins and the Harald explained, “As we have differing political viewpoints sitting in this very room, we will not force the young men to display something that could be of tactical value or advantage to their future battles.”

The Goblins were quite aware of that and knowing who was in their midst did alleviate some of their irked feelings. The Goblin King was aware that this was unorthodox, but then again these kinds of displays had ‘Gone the way of the Dodo’, as some Muggle-borns were fond of saying in the Bank, which the Goblins had adopted as a saying. These kinds of displays or tournaments used to take place on many Wizard Family estates, in Goblin Clan Halls, at High-Elf Compounds and other Arenas of many kinds. They used to be hosted by many magical races, which used to interact on a regular basis in the past.

These tournaments were the testing and proving ground that helped prevent many, many Wars. It was the perfect place to display the strengths of a particular grouping, Clan or magical race. They only displayed their common strengths and skills, as these were nearly universal during those days.

The Harald looked at the Goblin King who nodded his agreement to all of the conditions. The Judges prepared the score books, the magical shields rose up to protect the audience and the distance markers had stopped glowing. The Judges also set up a distance image viewer to float above the area of the targets so that the spectators would be able to see where the arrows hit the targets the further the markers were. They signalled their readiness to begin the tests.

“Choose your bows,” he said stepping out of the way.
The audience watched as each young man stepped up to a line of colour that matched their leathers. Ron was dressed in dark browns and blacks, which could only be determined by the flickering of candlelight in the Hall. Harry was dressed in dark greens and blacks, while Draco was dressed in the darkest blue with a hint of silver in the stitching.

They took their preferred bows and strung them quickly and efficiently. They were judged on that too. One hundred arrows were provided to them in their colours for this particular test.

“Ready,” the Harald called and they took an arrow, arming their bows. “Aim,” two quick breaths from the Harald and said he said, “Fire.”

“One hundred points each,” the Harald said as the markers were moved to the side and the next was revealed twenty-five feet further away. The first four were paced at twenty-five feet away from the next one, until they reached one hundred feet and then the increments were at fifty feet intervals.

Bulls-eyes were coloured in the normal Muggle-standard of yellow, red, blue, black, white and offside. It was the easiest for all to accept for this competition, even though magic could have produced many different types of bulls-eyes or targets in various shapes and size.

Scoring points were as follows: the bright yellow centres began at one-hundred points, the red zone was worth seventy-five points, the blue zone was worth fifty, the black zone was worth twenty-five and the white zone was worth five. If they fired an arrow outside the white zone or offside three times, the competitors had to stand down until the last man loses the challenge in the same manner.

The point system changed after they fired at the one hundred foot mark because all scores after that included the distance plus the total points achieved. The young Humans were quick to follow through to the next arrow and the next few distances.

Harry faltered at three hundred and fifty feet with a final score of 2275 points. He had used a short bow.

Draco finished at 2750 points using a long bow at the four hundred foot mark.

Ron dominated with the compound bow with an impressive score of 3325 points at the four hundred and fifty foot mark. He missed three times at five hundred feet.

“Next skill test will be Shielding and Defence,” the Harald said gaining the audience’s attention as the young Humans tended to their equipment. When they were ready, they bowed to the Goblin King, the judges, and their audience. “This next test is singular and each contestant will return to their original entry positions. A circular magical shield will be activated and will discharge beams of light to the shields belonging to the young men.”

The audience watched as a clear yet easily seen through magical shield encircled each young Human at the ring’s perimeter. The young men hadn’t even pulled out their shields yet, because this was also a test of defence. Mainly they had the choice of using a physical shield or dodging the attack. The fact that no one knew if the boys had shields was a bit worrying to the Human adults. Only one of the Human adults present knew that there was such a thing as a concealed shield and therefore he was the more relaxed about this situation.

“This is a timed event and will be based on effective dodging, practical shielding and the number of hits on the shield versus the number of hits successfully landed on the body,” the Harald. “The difficulty level will increase by colour of attack lights every two to five minutes. This test will last twenty minutes and all attack lights will be activated randomly, therefore what is used against one opponent in time or mage-light attack will not be the same for the others.”
The Harald glanced at the Goblin King and he looked to the Judges for the signal to start. Each young Human was standing at the ready and once the signal was given, he shouted, “Begin.”

This initiated the slower beams of light, which began pinging from the protective shields against the young Humans within the shield range. The speed of release increased nearly every two minutes, but after five minutes had passed everyone in the audience was suddenly aware that the boys had physical shields that took the spell-light hits. They were mesmerized by the speed of the coloured lights and scores were adding up exponentially.

After twenty minutes the Hall’s magical shields dropped and the three young Humans were panting from their exertion. The physical shields, wherever they had appeared from were no longer in sight and the audience was baffled by it. However none of the boys were considered to have failed this particular event, as the shields that they were using were physical and not magical. They’d have been disqualified automatically should they have used magic to shield themselves in this test.

They stood up and bowed to the Goblin King, the Judges and the audience before they retreated into the floor of the Hall. This break in time was useful for the audience members to mingle and discuss the display that they had witnessed. It was also the perfect time for the boys to cool down in a separate location to refocus their energies for the last skill test.

HPHPHP

“What do you think they’re saying up there,” Ron asked looking up at the ceiling of the room that they had been placed in.

“Does it matter,” Draco said. He turned to look at their dark-haired compatriot. “Potter you’re not playing up to your potential!”

“I am,” Harry said. “Archery it not my strength and you know it. I beat the both of you in defence, which is entirely expected.”

“You could have done better Harry,” Ron said. “You should have used your crossbow instead.”

“I didn’t want to,” Harry said. “You know that my magic flows automatically when I do, especially after two hundred and fifty feet, I’d have been disqualified.”

“He’s right,” Draco said. “But you could have done much better in the defence.”

“I did better,” Harry stated. “I’ve done tons better than I normally ever did and the combination of my scores puts me in top place at the moment.”

“Fine,” Ron said, but he waggled a finger in his friend’s direction. “But you don’t downplay during the next section.”

“I wasn’t downplaying,” Harry protested mildly. The other two just threw him looks that clearly stated that they didn’t believe him. He shrugged and didn’t argue further because he really was trying to downplay his actual skills just a little bit.

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The Goblin King and his entourage, plus many of the prominent members of the Goblin Clan of Grendel, retreated into a secluded meeting room at the rear of the Hall. Other members and the invitees were left in the Audience Hall to mingle and be served by the numerous house-elves present with near overflowing platters of food and drink.
The Humans naturally gathered together even though Mr. Weasley and Lord Malfoy were absolutely not talking to each other. Severus was amused by it, but it was interesting to note that they were not using him as a middleman. They just talked at someone else, but they all speculated on the boys’ training and experience, but never voiced it out loud. It was something that they were planning to discuss with their sons privately at a later date.

The noise level in the Hall increased when an argument broke out among some of the younger ones that stated that the boys’ had retractable shields as opposed to having shields that only shrunk and could be tucked away. The older warriors said that such did not exist and that the young ones had better mind their elders. It was an interesting debate until the Harald came back and ordered everyone back to the seats for one last time.

“The final stage of this tournament is weapons skills,” he said as the audience returned to their rising seats. The Great Hall changed its configuration once everyone was seated and he continued the explanation from his central position.

“The young Humans’ opponents will be created in ‘Mage-Light’ and will be direct copies of the young men themselves. They will battle their shadows for the first ten minutes. They will then battle each other’s shadow for twenty minutes total. A switch to shadow opponents will occur at during this test after ten minutes have passed. Finally three of our experienced warriors have agreed to direct the shadows in the battle changing the skill set for each. The young Humans will battle all three different opponents from their own battle rings.”

The Hall finished its transformation and the audience now found themselves placed in a circular formation with one battle ring in front of them. A viewer was raised so that the upper tiers had just as clear a view as the lower tiers.

Battle music thumped out silencing the whispers and increasing the excitement that the spectators had. Drums banged out rhythms and differing pipes tooted out marching tunes. The young men emerged from the floor once more and this time they had their shields in hand with a hand held weapon in the other. Their faces were grim and determined, completely focussed on their task.

The judges called for the magistrates that would be using spells to create the Mage-Light opponents. Copies in the boys’ coloured leather split from them without features and they faced off in the centre of twenty diametric shielded feet of space. The battle rings were ready and the boys were thumping their weapons against their shields in time to the music until the final bang of the drums.

Silence followed and this was the signal, which caused the battles to begin. The audience was riveted at the speed and skill that the young Human men were displaying the central floor rose while the battles were taking place and suddenly the opponents were switched. The floor rotated too, and the audience had a clear view of another young Human with a different weapon, opponent, shield and skill.

They were being granted the opportunity to view each of these young men and adult Humans watched in silent horror and awe that the boys had learned these skills. ‘Where and when did they learn this?’ Lord Malfoy thought. He watched as his son’s points tallied quickly. ‘They’re near evenly matched. I wonder how our Lord will feel about these mundane skills.’ He watch longer and then decided, ‘I don’t believe that I’ll tell him about it. It’s nothing that the Dark Lord needs to know and Draco won’t need these skills any longer after today, anyway.’

Severus Snape and Arthur Weasley only watched. They held their breaths when the boys’ took hits and released it when they had successfully returned the attacks. They looked periodically at the scores, but they were more concerned about the unknown goblin opponent that was going to ‘take over’ the shadows.
It was very easy to see when it took place. The pace of the battle had changed and the hits seemed to be stronger and affecting the boys more. There was no pause, but the whole purpose of this tournament was to display the skills that they had learned during their time ‘Under Mountain’, however no other Human present understood what that meant.

The three young men had fought against each other enough during their training to know the feel of just who it was they were battling. Therefore they absolutely knew when their Mage-Light Shadow fighters were taken over by a foreign mind. The minds controlling their fighters were obviously battle hardened individuals and they didn’t pull any punches, so the saying goes.

After another ten minutes of fighting, everyone in the Great Hall heard the sound to drum sticks being hit together. The Mage-Light warriors vanished and the drums began their rhythmic beating again. The three young men were bruised, black and blue, but all felt that they had fully demonstrated their abilities.

The Goblins in the Hall began to chant in their language. It was an after battle song that nearly everyone in the Hall knew, with the exception of the Humans that had not been fighting. The ones that had been fighting turned to face each other and did a three-way bow. Then they face the left audience and the right audience, bowing in turn.

Finally they faced the King of the Goblins and their judges. They bowed to the judges and kneeled before the Goblin King. The audience fell silent at that. The King looked at High Chief Borak the leader of one of the major Icelandic Clans and nodded, saying, (…They are worthy, but the Boy-Who-Lived was right…) He paused and then continued. (…Tradition is no longer a valid reason for your Clan to swear an Oath to a particular Wizard no matter the history. A series of tests, perhaps more in step with the times would be more appropriate before choosing to swear such to a Human. This tournament tradition may have gone the way of the dodo for the past few centuries, but perhaps it should rise again once more like a phoenix from its ashes. We have warriors that need a venue just like this to test their skills. It is something to think about for ‘our’ future and maybe one day we will once again, with all magical beings, be able to come together to witness such skills and tests…) The Goblin King stood still looking at the young men and the scores. He said in English, “Rise young Humans.” The three Hogwarts sixth years stood up at attention and waited. “You’re accomplishments speak for themselves. You honour your teachers with your display and you honour the gift that the Clan of Grendel has given you. I look forward to hearing about your exploits.”

The King’s entourage stood up and they departed from the room first. High Chief Borak turned to his son and said, “Well?” Henrik Grendel just grinned and said, “You guide this clan. We would be fools not to follow your decisions. However they still need a bit of seasoning, but it is not unreasonable to do as our ancestors have done.”

The High Chief thought for a moment and trusting his son, he walked down to the centre of the Hall where the three young Humans were waiting to be dismissed. He was looking at Harry and the young man just knew what was going to happen. He wanted to protest, oh how he wanted to protest, but he knew that he couldn’t when they were on such display in front of the High Chief’s entire Clan and the ruling Goblin Chieftains visiting from other Clans.

“Lord Harry Potter,” Borak began. “Earlier this year you stated that you didn’t feel trained enough to permit our tradition of giving a Clan Oath to the Wizard Family who had saved our Clan from savage enemies in our past. Do you feel that you’ve have enough training now?”

“Not to put a damper on that,” Harry said. “I believe that anyone truly training for any purpose are
never truly finished training. That being said, with the training that I’ve received due to your Clan’s intervention, I have more confidence now. My blade and my skills are yours to call upon in times of high need.” He knelt before the High Chief.

Ron and Draco followed him and said together, “Our blades are yours as well in times of high need.”

Borak grinned and then he chanted a new Oath of Fealty, binding his Clan to the current Lord Grindelwald, just like he had hoped. However he changed a few of the original words altering them to ‘in times of high need’. The spell light wrapped about Harry’s right wrist, attaching itself to an ever-growing band of Runes that linked with those who’ve sworn fealty to him. Those were not to be mistaken with the runes along his upper arms.

Harry sighed softly and thought, ‘At least they’re not visible to everyone. I wouldn’t want anyone to know about this just yet because they could see the Runes written in a particular language and in marked on my aura.’

The three young men just stood up and were permitted to return to their room in order to change into more comfortable clothing before meeting those they had personally invited to see the testing.

A short while later the boys returned to the Great Hall and were dressed in plain thick wizard robes. It was nothing that Mr. Malfoy had ever seen his heir wearing and therefore he voiced his opinion on the matter. “Draco,” he said calling for his son’s attention. “Those are not the appropriate robes for you to wear. Don’t you have anything more appropriate for your station?”

“No Father,” Draco said. “These are perfectly appropriate for a Journeyman.”

“What are you on about?” Malfoy senior asked with a sneer.

“Journeymen in various Wizarding trades wear these kinds of robes,” Draco said in a tone that could almost be seen as being a bit patronizing, however if you blinked you missed that intent and caught the excited earnestness of the blonde’s statement. “I made Journeyman in Potions and I’m currently working on gaining my Mastery.”

Lord Malfoy blinked at that and couldn’t figure out how his son had bypassed the Apprentice stage of training. He turned to his colleague and acknowledged ‘friend’ in the Dark Lord’s army and asked, “How is this possible Severus?”

“Apprenticeship time frames are fluid,” the dark man said. “My apprenticeship took very little time. It only takes a Master in the Field to determine that someone has learned all the possible basics prior to elevating someone to the level of Journeyman. This is done in writing and with magic. Professor Slughorn did this for me while I attended Hogwarts, you know this. It was only during the Journeyman stage of my training that I acquired my true Master Teacher in the Field. It’s at that level that a student truly learns their trade. Draco must have a writ stating that he’s been tested at the Apprentice Level and is now awarded the title of Journeyman. If you need to be assured of his status, I can investigate the matter with the International Potions and Alchemists Guild.”

“Yes,” Lucius said. “You do that and let me know.” He looked at his son with a calculating thought of, ‘Perhaps he’d be elevated in the Dark Lord’s circle and maybe one day he’d replace Severus.’

Malfoy knew that there was a chance that Hogwarts Potions Master might be getting soft working with the children at the school. He had been hearing disturbing things from the students by way of the parents of those students, who’d reported a change to Severus’ teaching methods for the lower years. He was brought to the present with the question that Mr. Weasley posed to his son.
“Ron are you, and Harry at a Journeyman level in Potions too?” Arthur asked. Harry and Ron looked at one another and seemed to be making a decision. Harry nodded slightly and his friend turned to answer his father. The exchange was noted by the adults in the room, but not commented on.

“Yes Da,” Ron said. “I don’t know how much further we can take the training. I just don’t have the feel for creating new potions that Draco has.”

Mr. Weasley and Mr. Malfoy blinked at the casualness of the blonde sixth year’s name coming from someone that had always fought with the boy. Arthur then asked, “If this was possible, then what happened with your O.W.L. scores?”

“That could not be helped Arthur,” Severus told the man. “These two were getting contrary information and were never corrected in the matter because they felt that couldn’t approach their teacher in that particular subject matter. However they both took the matter into their own hands and are currently working on supplemental projects that will hopefully,” he gave the two boys such a pointed look that they both looked to the ground with a grin. “Allow them to re-take their O.W.L.s, although if they truly are at a Journeyman level now then I would strongly urge all three to take the Potions N.E.W.T. this year instead.”

“Can we?” Harry asked hopefully. “That would be brilliant if we could.”

“You’ve all passed your O.W.L.s, so why not?” Severus told him with a calculating look. “Should you pass your N.E.W.T.s then I would be pleased to oversee part of your Mastery training for all three of you during your seventh year at Hogwarts.”

The three young men were stunned, wide-eyed and had open-mouthed expressions of incredulity. “Whoah,” Ron said. “That’s...that’s...”

“That’s something that we’ll discuss with your mother,” Arthur said.

“Yes, Da,” Ron said still smiling with the pleased thought that he was thought competent enough to be a Potions Master.

“Thank you Professor Snape,” Harry said. “I hope that we can meet your expectations on this matter.”

“Yes, Uncle Severus,” Draco said. “Thank you. This is a wondrous opportunity.”

“It seems that I have few enquiries to make first,” the Potions Master said. “Well,” he said holding out his hand.

Harry looked at his two companions and pulled out a scroll of paper from the hidden pocket in the folds of his Journeyman robes. The other two followed him and placed copies their Writ in the Potions Master’s hands. Severus pocketed them and then excused himself to return to the school. “I will see you three back in class on Monday. Lucius, Arthur, I will send you both an Owl with the results of my inquest.”

“Yes sir,” all three young men said watching their Potions Professor leave.

“Mr. Potter,” Henrik said coming into the Great Hall that the humans had yet to leave.

“Yes Henrik,” Harry said turning his attention to the High Chief’s son.

Perhaps you and your friends would be more comfortable continuing your discussion in one of our
smaller meeting Halls,” the Goblin said. “We are planning to expose your gifts in full to the rest of the Clan.”

“Ah,” Harry said. “I understand. Misters Malfoy and Weasley please come with us. We’ll make sure you have some refreshment and we can continue our conversations privately. The Goblins have need of this room.” He didn’t give them any choice in the matter and followed the Goblin servant out of the Grand Hall.

The other two young men followed him, therefore forcing their fathers to follow. The older men glanced back and noticed that the Goblins were currently levitating a large trunk back into the Hall and that was all they saw as they had turned back to their boys and watched them chatting with the Boy-Who-Lived.

Upon entering the smaller Hall, four house-elves popped up and began to set the table in the room. “Winky thank you very much,” Harry said to the only female one in the room. “Thank you guys for helping her.”

“We been makin’ somethin’ each,” Dobby said happily bobbing up and down. “We be leavin’ youse now,” he turned and growl-barked, like a dog, at the older Malfoy. He popped away before anyone could say anything. He had developed that habit to get out his anger at his previous master and Harry had laughed whenever Dobby mentioned ex-nasty Master, followed by that barking growl.

“Master,” Salix said to Ron, holding out a small pouch of preserved smoked fish.

“Thank you,” Ron said. “You did separate Mum’s original recipe from our experimental ones right?”

“Yes sir,” the youngest house-elf said. He popped away quickly not liking the look on the older blonde man’s face when he had looked at Dobby, who was his hero.

Winky stayed on making sure that everyone was served properly. She only left when she felt it was right to do so and promised to come back to clear away the dishes. Her master ever polite to her said, “Thank you, Winky.”

She giggled, fluttered her ears and popped away.

Lord Malfoy looked at the dishes on offer and noted that they only contained a simple fair. He sneered at the offerings, but chose not comment on them. Instead he brought up another subject altogether.

“Draco,” he said getting his son’s attention. “Would you mind telling me where you’ve been for the last five days?”

“What do you mean Father?” The younger blonde asked. “I received your permission to stay over with a friend for the week.”

“I did give you permission, so imagine my surprise at receiving a notice from Headmaster Dumbledore stating that you could not be found anywhere among your acquaintances,” Lucius said to his son. “I made an enquiry among your known friends to my surprise you were not among them either? So where were you?”

Draco sighed and looked at Harry, saying, “I told you so.”

Harry just shrugged and said, “Don’t worry about it. Did you receive that same letter Mr. Weasley?”

“Actually I did,” Arthur said. “However I already knew that Ron was going to be with you, since
you sent Molly and me a letter asking for him to join you.”

“Where did you go,” Lucius asked his son.

“Ice fishing,” Draco said.

“Ice...fishing...,” Lord Malfoy looked confused about it. “What?”

“I invited the two of them to go Ice Fishing with me,” Harry said picking at some of the food present and nibbling on it as he explained where they had been. “I was able to book a low cost trip to Northern Canada and we had the assistance of the Goblins in this Clan when we went there.”

“I’m afraid that I do not understand,” Lord Malfoy said looking at his son’s expression and noting that he was not cowering like he normally does.

“The Clan of Grendel are in charge of the Gringott’s Branch here in Iceland,” Harry said. “I had a couple of foreign vaults listed among my Family responsibilities list and once everything had been resolved, I was invited to go with them on their trip. The High Chief’s son Henrik was an excellent teacher and he was the one that showed us how to fish in cold waters.”

Ron pursed his lips to prevent a grin from escaping. Harry was telling the most outrageous lie and yet not one word was false related to the Goblins. There were tons of underground caverns that had cold to freezing temperatures. The fish that they did catch were of the same family of fish found in the Canadian North and therefore Harry’s story is believable because of it.

“What kind of fish did you catch,” Mr. Weasley asked with interest. He was particular fond of cured fish, especially in his wife’s brand of smoking and drying.

“Standard strains of Walleye, Rainbow Trout and we did catch a couple of North Canadian Pike,” Ron said. “Those ones were tough.”

“Tough,” Draco said. “Those were vicious. We were able to get two more than the legal limit because we had our papers related to our Potions Ingredient gathering status.”

“Well they were no match for the magical varieties that we found,” Harry said. “North Pole Muskies and Winter Cold-Water Salmon, those were the tough ones, especially since we couldn’t use magic to catch them.”

“Here Da,” Ron said handing his father the pouch of the smoked and cured fish that the boys had prepared with the help of their house-elves and the Goblins. “The blue bag, in the pouch, has the ones cured using Mum’s recipes. The others are of different spices and taste. The yellow bag for lemony, dill or citrus type flavours. The green bag for magical spices that we used, but don’t know if the taste will change over time and the red bag contains the super spiced varieties. Those ones we did for fun and they’re not half bad as long as you have something that will cool the spice in your mouth. Don’t eat from that one too much or you’ll get heartburn.”

“I understand,” Mr. Weasley said putting the pouch away. “It will be fun tasting them.”

Mr. Malfoy was looking at his son and listening to the conversation. There was nothing in his son’s demeanour to indicate that the whole thing was a lie. His son’s expression was equal to the other boys present regarding how tough or challenging the fishing was. Then he said something casually that got his son’s attention.

“Impressive,” he said. “I wonder why you boys didn’t invite your Professor in Potions along on this little adventure.”
“Pardon,” Harry asked. “Why would we do that?”

“You gathered potion ingredients,” the blonde said leaning forward, pushing his plate away and putting his elbows on the table in a thoughtful position. “It would stand to reason that you’d ask a man well versed in Potions to come along and supervise, wouldn’t it?”

Harry mirrored the man’s position as he was the one sitting across from and said, “Well of course he was asked to come along. Why would you think that we would go on such a venture without him?”

“Why wasn’t he with you then,” Lord Malfoy asked striking at a seeming invisible weak point.

“He wasn’t able to come with us,” Harry said. “We were always going to be under the supervision of the Goblins of this Clan, but do not make the mistake of thinking we wouldn’t invite a Potions Master when the purpose of our holiday was to train in the gathering of specific potions ingredients. We were working to gain our Journeymen status after all.”

Again Ron was struck by the elements of the conversation. Harry still wasn’t saying anything false. They were under the supervision of the Grendel Clan. They did fish those species from their location and they did gather potions ingredients. The only true lie about the whole thing was the location stated and even then they had all the proper paperwork to support their claims of having been to Canada for Ice Fishing and potions ingredient gathering.

“Draco, you’ve never mentioned anything to me or to your mother about wanting to become a Potions Master,” his father observed. “When did you make this decision?”

“I’ve been working towards this since last year,” Draco said. “I received the double O in potions and that’s when I researched the process to become a Potions Master. I discussed my options with Uncle Severus and he provided me with a way to gain Mastery in the pretty much the same manner that he received his.”

“I see,” Lucius said turning back to his plate and concentrating on slowly chewing everything. He didn’t feel the need to talk anymore and he was hoping that the others in the room would talk without his participation that way if something was worth revealing it would happen without his prompting it.

His questions had answered many of Mr. Weasley’s questions, but there was one that needed to be asked. “Ronald,” Arthur started. “Since you didn’t get a high enough O.W.L. in Potions to continue your lessons, how were you able to become a Journeymen in subject now?”

“A-hem,” the boy noised clearing his throat. “You can blame Harry for that.”

Mr. Weasley looked at Harry and noticed that he glared at his son before turning to look at him with an innocent face. “Hmph,” Arthur chuckled under his breath. “If my twins can’t pull that off what makes you think I’ll buy that expression from you, young man?”

Harry grinned, shrugged and said, “It was worth a shot.”

“Why are you to blame for Ron’s sudden and renewed interest in the subject,” the redheaded man asked kindly.

“He kept bothering me during my Saturday afternoon revision time,” Harry said with a mock-glare. “He was like a lost puppy sir, so I had no choice but to include him during the process.”


“Oh,” Harry returned with a grin. “What happened?”
“I...um...well...um,” Weasley’s youngest son couldn’t come up with any kind of reply. He threw a small bread roll at the Boy-Who-Lived who caught it and stuffed his mouth with it. “You tell him then.”

Harry shrugged, finished the roll and explained, “I had decided to review my previous years in Potions, starting with year one and Ron was there. He kept making remarks and comments about the way I was cutting my ingredients and putting them in my potion that I challenged him to a potions duel.”

“What is a potions duel,” Mr. Weasley said, horrified at the thought that the boys might have been throwing potions at one another.

“I know what’s going through your mind and it’s not what you think,” Harry said taking a sip of his juice. “I challenged him to make the same potion I was. He was to use the methods he was telling me to use and I was going to do the same potion with the processing method that was supposed to be used. We timed the whole deal and made marks at certain points in the recipe where we could pause to note what the potion looked like. I had Winky and Dobby monitor both potions and be the ones to make a final judgement on whether we succeeded or not.”

“So who won,” Draco asked curious about the idea of duelling potions.

“My potion was useable, but not enough for a top mark in class,” Harry said.

“Mine burned a hole in the bottom of the cauldron,” Ron said sheepishly. “But the comment that I had made about some of the stages were true and valid. We were pretty well matched with good and bad processes.”

“The overall the scoring system we were using proved that we both needed to review and improve some of our processes,” Harry said. “So we came together every week-end to review all of our past years in potions and we got Professor Snape to agree to an overall retest on them too. I think we surprised him.”

Ron just nodded and grinned. “It was great too,” he told his father. “We showed up for an overall test in first year potions and he nearly chucked me out of the room. Harry then told him that he had already pre-agreed to retest two students and that I was the second student. It was his own fault for not asking the name of the second student.”

“The Professor had already set up the papers at opposite sides of the room and the cauldrons and ingredients too,” Harry continued. At Mr. Malfoy’s raised eyebrow, he explained, “He was testing a new method of conducting an exam. In the case of just testing two students at opposite ends of the room there was less chance of something untoward falling into our cauldrons, it’s partly why we failed in our previous years.”

“Interesting,” Mr. Malfoy said. It was interesting, but there seemed to be another matter that was not being voiced. He looked at each of the young men in Journeymen robes and wondered if his son was actually going to follow through with the Dark Lord’s plans or not. However this was neither the time nor the place for such. “Now that your trip is over are you three planning to return to the school today?”

“They’re staying overnight,” a voice said from the doorway of the room. It was the High Chief of the Clan. “It’s the way that their Port-Keys were programmed.”

“I see,” Lucius said standing up. “The one that I received did not have a return time.”
“That is because you return Port-Key needs to be programmed by the one who sent you your invitation,” Borak said. “Of course the two of you may stay overnight if you wish,” he told the two adults.

Ron looked at his father and it seemed that there was a silent conversation going on, but Arthur only took hold of his son and hugged him. “I’m proud of you,” he whispered. “You have to promise to tell me about your training one day.”

“If I can Da,” Ron said. “Oh, could you look this over please.” He handed his father a copy of the Internship Offer that he had been holding onto from the Hatles Law Firm partners. “I was offered a chance to intern with this company for the summer, so could you bring this up with Mum.”

“Of course,” Arthur said. “Now how do I get home?”

“Easy,” Ron said. “Do you still have the note?” His father gave him the original request and watch in awe as his youngest son cast a spell in the Goblin tongue on the paper. “Here you go. Its voice activated and linked to your magic, so just say ‘The Burrow’ while you’re holding it and it will take you back home to your study.”

Mr. Weasley hugged his son one last time and then he hugged Harry. “You’re parents would be proud of you,” he said. “I know a certain ex-Professor of yours who’ll be proud too. Do you want me to let him know that you’re all right?”

“Yes,” Harry said. “I’m still only a Post Owl away. How’s he doing?”

“It seems that he’s courting,” Arthur said with a mischievous grinned. “I’ll let him be the one to tell you all about it.”

“Thank you sir,” Harry said. The two Gryffindors watch the Head of the Weasley port-key away and waited for their blonde hair companion to say good-bye to his father.

“Here’s you port-key Father,” Draco said with a hidden grin that the other two knew meant he had done something when casting the spell. “It’ll take you to your office in at the Manor. Say hello to Mother for me and let her know I’m doing well.”

“Of course,” Lucius said holding onto the same parchment that his son had sent to him earlier in the day. “What’s the activation phrase?”

Draco’s look turned Slytherin bland and without inflection of any kind he said, “Tom Riddle Sucks.” Lucius’ eyes widened hearing that, but he was ported away before he could do or say anything.

The younger blonde looked at the other two boys and at the Goblin that was still waiting for them to put in an appearance in the Grand Hall. Harry stepped out with the High Chief in order to let the Ron comfort his mate.

“High Chief Grendel,” Harry said drawing attention away from the two cuddling and talking softly. The Goblin turned to look at him and said, “That wasn’t an unexpected outcome because they are Animapar.”

“No it wasn’t,” Harry said. “But it was highly annoying the first two years until they figured it out. Lead on, sir. They’ll join us soon. Draco was very nervous about meeting his Father after so much time had passed, but I think that he’s in good hands.”
Borak chuckled and just nodded at one of his guard to stay at the door in order to guide the other two Humans back to the Hall when they were done.

HPPHPHP

Lucius Malfoy’s eyes widened when he heard the activation phrase, but he couldn’t say anything because at that phrase he was pulled by the port-key and transported back to his home. He appeared in his designated office within Malfoy Manor only... he was suspended about two-feet in the air for a couple of seconds before the transporting magic dropped him like a heavy stone. He landed awkwardly wrenching his right ankle.

His yell of shock and pain summoned a house-elf who was told to get the mistress of the house. He cursed trying to put some pressure on his foot and it was at this that his wife caught him under the arms and set him down on the nearby chair.

“Husband,” she said in a tone that indicated she wanted to know just what he had been up to.

“Port-key with bad coordinates,” he told her.

“Never trust the Ministry to plan coordinates for those of us known to be in His service,” she said blandly.

“Hmph,” Lucius huffed. “It wasn’t a Ministry Port-Key. It was our son that created it.”

“Oh...” Narcissa said. “Did you want me to call a healer?”

“Get Severus first,” Lucius said. “He’ll diagnose this and then I’ll see if I need a professional healer. I don’t believe anything is broken, but I do believe that our son needs stronger supervision.”

“I don’t quite agree,” she said. “He is a sixth year student and will be turning seventeen next year. He may need to spread his wings a bit.”

“A bit,” Lucius snarled. “Did you know that he’s now a Potions Journeyman?”

“No,” she said and wasn’t as surprised as her husband regarding the matter. “But he had always been fascinated by it. Is there something wrong with it?”

“He didn’t ‘Apprentice’ with a Master,” he replied. “Apparently you don’t really need to apprentice if you’ve studied extensively, pass a test and get the approval from an acclaimed Potions Master. The Potions Master that ran the exam, test or whatever it is that they do can then submit a Writ to the International Potion and Alchemists Guild for approval of the Journeyman status. Severus seemed eager to find out if that was true.”

Narcissa grinned and said, “Of course he’s eager. A Journeyman still attending Hogwarts or any magical school can be asked to take over certain classes. I imagine that he’d be eager to get rid of the classes he hates to teach, maybe young ones too dumb to study prior to getting to his class?”

“Gryffindor dunderheads,” Lucius sent his wife a grin. She understood why the Potions Master was eager to find out the truth. “Floo call him for his help with my ankle. We can find out before Weasley does about who tested our boys.”

“Weasley,” she questioned with a pointed raised eyebrow.

“I seems that our son may have gained his Journeyman status alongside Arthur Weasley’s youngest son and the Boy-Who-Lived,” Lucius said with a grumbling mutter. There was nothing she could
say to that so she had a house-elf bring her husband a stiff drink to numb down some of the pain she saw in his face, as she went to use the Floo to call on of their oldest acquaintances.

HPHPHP

TBC...
The results of the mini-tournament were presented to the boys before they left the Grendel Goblin Clan in Iceland. Predictably Harry squeaked into the top position despite wanting to underplay his new abilities, but he knew that he couldn’t hide them like he wanted. The other two were tied in the second position due to their combined marks, although they did excel in different categories, which helped to prevent bad feelings all around.

They had six years to learn from each other and that had helped Draco confront his own personal demons. He made his final decision two years ago to turn away from his father’s choices for him. He was going to refuse to follow the Dark Lord Voldemort and that was something that he wasn’t looking forward to telling his father, but he did have the support of two very good friends now.

So, bad feelings would never happen among the three of them for something like winning or losing in a tournament of testing.

Draco had worked hard to earn his right to apprentice in his chosen field of Potions. The High Elf healer that showed up from time to time in their little compound had done much to help him and his two friends improve their skills related to potions.

Harry and Ron hadn’t been looking into learning all that much about potions. However, Draco had dragged their butts around seeking the potions ingredients so often that they had no choice, but to actually learn something in that particular magical field. The blonde made them cut up ingredients with such precision that the two Gryffindors felt that they could do much of it in their sleep.

Luckily they were able to pursue their other interests with their other teachers and both Gryffindors had managed to pull the lone Slytherin out of the potion fumes long enough to get the blonde interested in other things too.

Harry’s existing skills with woodworking increased and rounded out solidly. He was comfortable making projects that only took a weekend to do. Anything that took longer depended on what he wanted to make and whether he had the tools on hand. He became adept at making magical staves and wands.

Ron’s mineral dousing skills were put to such good use that Henrik had a hard time keeping his hands off of some of the raw gems that the redhead had found. He was good at finding ore too, but not the normal stuff. He consistently found magical ore of different calibres that everyone in the compound was at a loss with what to do with it all.

That’s when their goblin teacher in forging, Henrik, suggested that they consult the older books and volumes in the library section of the compound. Draco then remembered the books that he had commanded be brought from Malfoy Manor. It was then that the separate book packages were found addressed to him and the Gryffindors.

Salix had explained that the Librarian Elf of the Manor had left the room for a bit before coming
back to gather the requested books from the actual shelves.

Draco chose to give the packages to the named individuals, knowing that the Librarian house-elf, Chaucer, would never let something leave the library unless it had to go. In looking at the books that had been included in his package he knew that he would be leaving a few of them behind.

Ron and Harry had done the same. They’d used what they could to learn some new skills, but left some of those books behind in the compound’s library. The books were old and were not really considered Dark or Light magic, but somehow it was better to leave them in a place that is used for general purpose learning rather than someplace like Hogwarts that mainly promoted Light Magic or Durmstrang that promoted Dark Magic.

However, it was their joint training that allowed all three to gain Journeymen status in various fields within the Magical World. Their teachers were acknowledged Masters and, as Severus had pointed out to the fathers of two of the boys, it was accepted practice nowadays to test apprentice equivalency without having to primarily study under one particular Master.

They had Writs, signed, sealed and recorded at several International Guilds and at a couple were for the Journeyman levels in the following: Potions, Healing, Magical Carpentry, Magical Mining, Spell-crafting and Enchanters’ Guilds. Most of the Guilds were non-human oriented, as the Humans tended to lean more Potions and Spell use rather than creation, but as always there are exceptions.

They only revealed the Writs for potions because it had been asked of them, but truly Harry and Ron could claim to have been Journeymen a few more fields. However, doing so would just have blown their whole fishing trip cover story. So they had exchanged that sidelong look that only close friends could gain after knowing each other for quite some time and handed over just the Writ acknowledging their Potions Level.

All their Journeyman Writs they had were issued by their respective International Guilds, but their scores and the ones who vouched for their levels were all sealed under the Guild Charters, Secrecy and Magical Preservation Laws.

The only way for anyone to find out who trained the boys, meant the request would have to come from someone with Mastery in that respected field they were making their query. That someone would also have to accept responsibility for continuing the young men’s training in the chosen field, even if that someone chose only to instruct them for one year of school.

**HPHPHP**

Severus arrived at Malfoy Manor shortly after receiving the request to help Lucius with his twisted ankle. He had been able to contact an old friend at the International Potions and Alchemists Guild to get the information he was seeking and execute his acceptance to be responsible for the boys for the remainder of this school year and their next.

He was shocked to learn just who or more specifically what the boys’ voucher was, but he couldn’t dispute it. He was all the more cheerful about it too because he could in good conscience state that he was willing to oversee the three boys further their Mastery under a one year term condition to begin immediately, not including their summer holidays. He was hoping that they would agree to return to the school two weeks before the start of their seventh year at Hogwarts in order to help him out with the potions required by the school’s infirmary.

‘I can’t wait for all three to take over teaching the younger years,’ he thought gleefully. ‘I’ll have more time to research a few things and hopefully those boys will be able to get the brats to learn the basics better than I ever did.’
He used his code phrase to access the Malfoy Manor’s Floo and stepped gracefully through the green-tinged transportation flames. A house-elf appeared to guide him to the Master of the house. He walked through the study doors and noted that the blonde had one leg elevated on an ottoman with his foot and ankle exposed to the cooling air of the room.

“Well, what have you gotten yourself into now Lucius?” Severus asked in a quirky tone, which showed his good mood.

He took out his wand to scan the man’s leg and to generally note his level of health. He was glad he didn’t have to fight the man to expose the limb because he was able to pull out a salve that would reduce the swelling in the ankle and administer it. He wrapped a bandage securely to the ankle with magic.

“I hardly did anything,” Lucius said. “This was Draco’s fault.”

“ Hmm,” Severus said. “Use this in the morning and make sure you wrap a bandage securely for your daily routines.” He handed a full jar of the salve. “Elevate your leg whenever you’re sitting down and use a support when you doing any extended walking. You can use the salve at night too, only without the bandage. A cooling charm will help to reduce the swelling if it feels painful or throbs from too much use. Do all of this and you should be fine in the next three to four days, if it still troubles you after that see a Medi-Wizard or Medi-Witch.”

The Potions Master sat down in a chair across from the blonde man and accepted the tea being handed to him by the hostess of the house. “Thank you,” he said and then turned to ask, pointing his teacup in the direction of the bandaged ankle. “How is that Draco’s fault?”

“He’s the one that programmed the Pork-Key to return me home,” the blonde aristocrat said. He took his own cup and then told his wife to leave them. He timed it just right, as Severus was taking a drink when he explained. “He programmed the Port-Key using Goblin magic or at the very least he used their language.”

Severus raised an eyebrow and finished swallowing his drink. He ignored the blonde’s disappointed look when he didn’t spit out his drink. It would take more than that to make the Dumbledore’s spy spit out his drink in shock.

“Surely you don’t believe that,” the dark man said.

“He spelled that parchment using the Goblin tongue,” Lucius said, pointing to the letter he had been summoned with.

“Your son is quite adept at learning various languages,” Severus said. “Are you sure that he didn’t only speak the spell in Gobbledygook? Of course, casting a spell in another language makes the magic untraceable by the Ministry of Magic. You do know that, don’t you?”

“Of course I know that,” Lucius said with a sneer. “Our lord wouldn’t have gotten away with half the things he’d done, if he had used standard Anglo and Latin phrasing, instead of hissing everything in Parseltongue.”

Severus could only nod at that.

The two men speculated on the boys’ abilities and what they had witnessed. They even discussed whether to let the Dark Lord know about the skills that the boys had displayed and came to the same conclusion of saving it for a useful time.

The Potions Master left a short while later leaving one of his oldest school acquaintances to
contemplate on how his son had learned to use the sword with such precision.

**HPHPHP**

Three weeks later, on a non-Hogsmeade Saturday, the students were busy studying for their respective end of year exams. Some were in the Library, others in the Room of Requirement when they booked it and most were in the Great Hall of Hogwarts.

The Hall was used in between meals, as the tables were always filled with water and snacking foods for the ever hungry and growing students. There was also likely to be a Professor or two in there at any given time, so it was just a chance that the Headmaster was present on this day, when a bang reverberated in the room.

Smoke had some of the students coughing and scrambling away before it cleared. Everyone heard a conversation not unlike something that would occur when the Weasley twins had been around, except that these voices were musical and female.

“Something has gone wrong,” one voice said.

“Ya think?” The other replied in a snarky tone.

“Stuff it and let’s just…” The first voice said.

“Yes, clear the smoke to…” The second replied.

“See where we are…” The first continued.

“I hope we didn’t miss it…” The second wished, as the smoke was clearing away now.

“But if something’s wrong,” the first paused to look around and noted that there were multiple wands pointed in her direction from various young and adult Humans. “Oh dear!”

“What,” the second said looking up. “Oh, blast. We’re in the wrong Great Hall,” she complained in a slightly whining tone.

The Headmaster walked up to the two female High Elves along with Severus. Most of the other Professors were keeping the students away from the two strangers, despite the fact that they were equally curious at how those two could appear inside the school through the wards.

The doors to the Great Hall opened and coming through it was Harry Potter, followed by Ron and Draco. They were dressed in casual clothing unlike the rest of the students. They were wearing leather, carrying backpacks, pouches and several rods of wood sticking out of their belts. They had been in the Forbidden Forest gathering ingredients for their sadistic Potions Master, who’d tasked them to get a ‘Just a few things,’ he’d said.

Harry was the first to speak. “Lahki,” he said walking up quickly to the shortest elf of the Elvin Kingdom. “I’m pleased to see you, but how did you get here?”

The two elves held up the watches that the boys had gifted them with.

Harry looked at them closely and sucked in a breath. “Dobby,” his personal elf popped into the room. “Get me two un-en-chanted glass jars with clean sealing lids right now.”

“Yes sir,” Dobby said popping out and then popping back quickly. He had been the one to fetch them as soon as he sensed something odd within the school and knew that the young men had to
come back.

“Put the watches in there quickly,” Harry said to the two women. He used his penknife to carve a quick rune on the seals before putting them on the jars. “There that should neutralize the spells on the objects,” he said lifting up one of the jars up to the light streaming through the high windows.

Ron was given the second jar and he too was doing his own checking. “This isn’t one of mine,” he said. He passed it to Draco who did his own type of analysis. “What do you think?”

“It’s not of my design either,” Draco said. “Let’s go check them in full sunlight outside.”

The boys agreed and before the Professors or the students could say anything the three young men left with the two female High Elves following behind them offering their own comments and opinion. They had to get out of the school just in case the watches activated while they were in there.

The Headmaster was prevented from speaking to the women by the quick movements of Harry Potter and the two that had come into the Hall with him. It was something, which had secretly amused Severus. ‘Serves the old meddler right,’ he thought. ‘I believe that I’m going to see what’s going on. I suspect that one of those women is the boys’ Potions voucher that elevated their training level to Journeymen.’

“Severus, where are you going?” The Headmaster asked, watching his young Professor begin to follow the group.

“I’m going to keep an eye them,” the Potions Master said. “I’m afraid I must admit that I’m curious about who the two ladies are and how they know Potter.” He left as soon as he said that because he didn’t want the Headmaster to prevent him from going.

The Headmaster was left standing in the middle of the Great Hall of Hogwarts. The remaining Professors watched the old man frown in confusion and obvious irritation. Quickly making a decision he followed the group, fully determined to find out whose women were and how they were able to appear inside the school. Just before he left, he told the Professor’s that a meeting would take place soon and that the students should be returned to the common rooms. ‘They’re not supposed to be able to do that,’ he thought, thinking about the two women Apparating into the school. His frown changed to a scowl. ‘I believe that those boys have been given too much leeway, but how to regain control of the Brat-Who-Lived? I’ve done everything to protect him and now it turns out that he has contacts with the High Elves. We could have gained valuable allies in this fight, but instead he’s chosen to befriend them without notifying me. He’s needs to be reigned in and soon.’

The boys were in a field quite a distance from the school, but still within the school grounds when Severus found them. The Headmaster had caught up by then too and they watched as the two jars were suspended in mid-air, held up by what they believed to be Ron’s levitation charm. The two Gryffindor boys were doing some kind of analysis on the contents using their wands.

The two women and the blonde Slytherin watched the dark Professor in Potions approach and an old man that they weren’t sure that they could trust. “Uncle Severus,” Draco said in greeting. “Headmaster Dumbledore, I’d like to present to you Healer Amaya and Guardian Lahki from the Elvin Kingdom.”

Severus bowed to the ladies, which caused them to smile and giggle a little bit. The Headmaster raised an eyebrow in query, but did nothing else to acknowledge them. “Ladies this is my Godfather, Potions Master Severus Snape and The Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and
Wizardry, Albus Dumbledore."

Amaya’s eyes lit up, ignoring the old bearded Human, she chose to bow in turn to the dark-haired man and stated, “The youngest Potions Master on record at the International Potions and Alchemist’s Guild. It is an honour.”

“You’ve heard of me?” He asked, curious about them.

“Of course,” Lahki snorted. “Your godson was forever saying ‘My Godfather’ this and ‘Uncle Sev’ that during his training. He sounded like you were the originator of all things Potion.”

“He’s a potions genius,” Draco said with a slight pout and crossing his arms. It was the perfect image of a petulant youngster protecting someone he cared about.

“We’ve known a few geniuses in our time,” Amaya said with a smile. “He’s hardly the first one.”

“He the one we know,” Harry said joining them once his analysis of the objects was done. “We haven’t met any others yet, other than you, oh great Healer.”

“Pish,” Amaya said with a waving hand and slight smile. “Don’t flatter when you don’t mean it?”

“It’s the truth,” Harry replied with a grin. “Flattering someone is the basest form of lying when done for underhanded purposes, unless someone flatters with sincerity and that’s the only way that I know how to do it. Besides you ‘are’ one of the renowned potions geniuses too, it’s just that you’ve been around a lot longer than the rest.” He yelped with a laugh when he received a wallop to the back of his head from Amaya’s over protective older sister.

“A compliment like that is not a compliment, ya rascal,” Lahki said. “You don’t comment on a woman’s age no matter her race.”

“My most sincere apologies for having offended you, Healer Amaya,” Harry said, still grinning unrepentantly. The other two young men were used to the by-play of the two women with Boy-Who-Lived. It was all in good fun, but that had to be ruined by the pointed question of the school’s meddling Headmaster.

“A-hem,” Dumbledore noised clearing his throat and drawing the attention away from less serious matters. “As good as it is to see you getting along with non-wizards,” his tone in saying that sobered everyone up real fast. Even Severus had never heard the old man use ‘that’ term before or speak with such disdain. It was almost said in the same way and tone that Lucius Malfoy said the word Muggle. “Perhaps either of the two lovely ladies would be willing to explain how they were able to appear inside of Hogwarts’ Great Hall, when the wards of this school prevent such magical infiltration, hmm?”

The two High Elf women looked at the old man with raised eyebrows of incredulity and then looked to the three young men that were talking softly amongst each other. “Harry,” Lahki said getting the young man’s attention and then she ordered. “Answer that man for I refuse to do it.”

“Yes,” Harry said turning his attention to the two Professors. He lifted the two glass jars in the air using his skill of telekinesis. “The objects inside these jars are Goblin made artefacts that were enchanted by Draco, Ron and Me. They were to be used as watches for the calculation of time in the Elvin Kingdom versus this dimension and specifically to measure the time differences so that the High Elves could come back to visit their students without too much time having passed them by. Also, they were to be used like a Port-Key for arriving at certain places under specific coordinates and conditions.”
“That explains a bit about it, Mr. Potter,” Albus said. “But they should have been prevented from entering the school by the school’s wards.”

“Actually it is because they are Goblin made that they can come through,” Draco said.

Both Professors said, “WHAT!”

The young Slytherin continued to explain. “The Goblins were the ones that created the foundation wards for the school. It’s rare that an artefact made by Goblins is available to Human witches or wizards, but if they are then they can access anyplace that is Goblin warded...unless the wards have been upgraded since the creation of said wards, to prevent Goblin made objects from accessing a location and only Goblins can do those particular upgrades.”

“It’s in the unrevised edition of Hogwarts: A History,” Ron stated. “I don’t mean to say that it states clearly in there how to circumvent the wards of the school, but it does say that the initial wards of the school were erected by the Goblin engineers that were engaged to construct the foundations of the building.”

“What do you mean by ‘unrevised edition’?” Severus asked. “As far as the advertising and the publishing house is concerned under the Magical Publication Law for the United Kingdom, it’s mandated to state that all volumes are the most current up-date-version, especially of that particular book.”

“Actually the version of ‘Hogwarts: A History’ sold in Diagon Ally and in any magical market under the UK’s Ministry of Magic is the ‘Ministry Approved’ version,” Draco said, doing the finger quotes for emphasis. “Any other version cannot be found unless it already exists in a family’s personal library or a copy is obtained from outside sources. It’s not illegal to own them, but don’t try to purchase one through a regular magical book store that’s listed under the UK jurisdiction.”

“Are they available through specialist book stores,” Lahki asked. She was curious about the production of magical books available to the students for a supposedly ‘neutral’ school.

“No they are not,” Draco answered. “It has to do with how items, like those books are produced and or are imported. Once they are ‘in country’ by importation or publication, so-to-speak, any and all books undergo a severe magical census review and any objectionable passages, chapters or what-have-you are magically removed in such a way that no one notices it. Even the stamp, ‘Ministry Approved’ is spelled and located in such a way that you will barely notice that it’s there on the inside front cover, unless you’re fully aware of its existence.”

Severus was horrified by the implication of that information. A quick glance to at the Headmaster and that’s when he noticed that he old man wasn’t as shocked to find out about it, as he was. ‘Obviously the Head of the Wizengamot would know about this,’ he thought. ‘I bet he had something to do with that. A legislation passed or something of that nature, hidden among something else.’

“However, the unrevised edition is how we know that these watches were able to transport our friends here directly into the school without being bounced out by the school’s ward,” Harry said. He handed the two High-Elves the glass jars and asked, “Have these been out of your sight for any length of time?”

“Not that I know of,” Amaya said. “Lahki?”

“I don’t wear it to sleep, so it is possible they could have been tampered then,” her sister said in a thinking tone. “I know that our father’s adviser wanted to analyze them, but you told us that any foreign magic directed at them would destroy them.”
“That’s true,” Ron said. “Any invasive magic to analyze them would result in an explosive force that could conceivably kill someone. Have you had anyone reports on anyone with those levels of injuries?”

“No,” Amaya said. “But then if the person who forced the foreign magic into it was a slave then the owner might never have reported it. However we do keep records of any and all deaths related to our slaves or any new requests for replacement servants.”

“Slaves,” Severus questioned.

“Old war ones,” Lahki said waving that concern away. “We freed them, but since they couldn’t function outside the parameters of their conditioning, we keep them as servants until they pass on. Most were gifts to the old warring generals, kings or queens and as such it would be an insult to return a gift presented as a peace token.” She shrugged, there wasn’t more she could say on the subject, but she frowned at the now useless gift in the glass jar. “What should we do with these?”

“I suggest you find out who tampered with them,” Harry said. “The return coordinates attached to them do not take you home, but to some other place. I’ll write them down for you.”

He pulled out a spiral notebook with a natural fibre paper cover that he had made himself. He was testing it in a magical environment because he had discovered during their time Under Mountain that any muggle made books of this nature broke down a lot faster than any made by magical means. So far it was working just fine and the paper had to be thicker for use with any writing medium.

He tore the paper from the book along a pre-determined edge that helped with keeping the paper in one piece. “Here,” he said. “This might help you know who to look for, if you know where these would have sent you.”

“How will we get back to you,” Amaya said. “I don’t want Human years to pass us by,” Lahki nodded her agreement, as she knew full well that their investigation was going to take some time.

Harry looked at his two companion Potion Journeymen and quirked an eyebrow. Ron looked thoughtful and Draco’s hand just clenched around something on inside pocket of his robe.

“Use yours,” Ron said knowing why Draco didn’t want to submit his watch to give away. He didn’t want to give his away either because they had added additional hands and data to theirs.

Harry nodded his understanding and pulled out a similar watch to the two in the jars. “All right,” he said. “I understand, but this one needs to be linked to yours.”

“That’s fine,” Ron said.

He pulled his out and the three young men huddled together like three points on a star. They held out their matching watches and spelled them to be linked in such a way that the time measured would be visible by an additional hand that Harry was adding to his watch.

“Four quarters,” Draco said.

“Cauldron,” Ron said.

Harry nodded at these and said, “Seasonal elements.”

“Centre cauldron,” Draco said.

“Emergency contact and rescue,” Ron said.
“Deal,” Harry agreed hissing in Parseltongue and adding his power to the spell. He was the one that needed to do the spell casting because the other two didn’t want to let the old man know that their magic had fully settled. They were Synchronous in more ways than one and that too was to be kept a secret for now.

Once done they all turned to the High Elves and knelt in front of them.

Harry was once again chosen as the spokesman and they had already previously agreed to this so it was no surprise to Ron or Draco when he said, “Please accept this as a token of our esteem to you our teachers. Feel free to call upon our skills and magic in times of high need, as the case may be and we will come to you.”

“So mote it be,” the other two said in perfect synchronization.

Amaya took the token and noticed that it was a plain watch with little cauldrons in faded colours, in the centre and at the three, six, nine and twelve locations of the time piece. It wasn’t programmable for transport, but that hardly mattered with the skills that the High Elves had. They could travel wherever they chose to go. It was only a matter of calculating time that was the problem that many High Elves had when they were living in their Kingdom, it was in another dimension after all. This was why the two had been pleased to receive the gifts that they had gotten before the boys finished their time training with the Goblins.

“Thank you,” she said in a lilting voice. “You are quite welcome to visit us after you finish your schooling for the year.”

“Yes,” Lahki said. “We should be able to find the culprit by then and we can plan further training or ingredient hunting, if you like for a part your summer.”

“Their last exam for the year is June 13,” Severus told the ladies. “They should be free to visit you anytime after that.”

“I believe that it will not be possible for Mr. Potter to have that kind of freedom,” Albus said. This caused Harry to frown, but he pushed on looking at the young man and said. “I’ve made arrangements for you to train at an Auror’s camp this summer.”

“We’ll discuss this later Headmaster,” Harry said with a scowl in the man’s direction. He turned to his Potions Voucher and said with a respectful bow, “If you are in need, send your healing magic into the centre of the watch. The centre cauldron will light up and an alarm will sound here. It will also provide us with a focus to find you in your Kingdom. Just be sure to let them know that we’ll show up no matter what.”

“We will also do our best to replace the damaged gifts,” Ron said with a bow too and Draco copied the two Gryffindors by bowing respectfully too. “It wasn’t right for whomever to take your watches and give you something inferior in return.”

“Thank you,” Lahki said. “We’ll leave for now. Can we signal you the same way to let you know that we are coming?”

Harry nodded and said, “Yes, but only by activating this hand and making sure that it is between these two points.” He pointed out halfway point that he’d added. “After two years those points will disappear, as they are markers for our summer time. This additional hand will show the year, month, day and time that it currently is here in this plane or dimension.”

“Wonderful,” Amaya said. “We’ll make sure that appropriate Writs of passage are ready for you, if
we do not see you before your last day of school this year.”

Lahki and her sister stepped away from the Wizards to ensure that they weren’t caught in the travel vortex and winds that they activated in order to return to their home Kingdom. They had the glass jars tied securely to their waists in such a way that if the devices activated in any way while they were in transit, the jars would be released from the person it was tied to without taking the person with them.

“See you soon,” Lahki said with a wave.

Amaya smiled and said, “You can bring your Professor in Potions with you too. We’ll contact you with the particulars soon.”

The vortex of wind and light circled the High Elves and shot up into the sky, taking them away from the school grounds.

The students and the Professors were left in the field a little winded from the backlash by the different form of travel that they had just witnessed. “Well,” Harry said looking at the other two young men. “Shall we continue our harvesting in the forest? I think that I can still approach a couple of the unicorns, but I believe that I’ll use a mediator for that just in case, so maybe the two of you can be looking for something else when I do that.”

“All right Harry,” Ron said.

He knew full well that his good friend was still ‘innocent’ enough to get a unicorn to approach him, but they would only do so, if he wasn’t surrounded by anyone who was ‘experienced’. That left him and Draco out due to the changed nature of their relationship. They had other things in the forest to get that were located far enough away from the known unicorn herd.

Draco and Ron headed into the forest quickly, while Harry wished his Professors a good day.

Although Dumbledore was trying to get Harry’s attention regarding his summer plans, the Boy-Who-Lived put him off by saying, “This is neither the time nor the place for such a discussion Headmaster and we have to gather potions ingredients for our bear of a Potions Professor,” he gave Severus a hidden wink and continued saying. “You know before he docks us more points for not bringing him everything on the monster list he gave us last night.”

“Mr. Potter,” Dumbledore said. “You will be in my office as soon as you finish gathering the ingredients that Severus has asked for. You can let the other two deliver the items and we ‘will’ discuss your summer training.”

Harry shrugged in the irritating way that teenagers had when they didn’t like what they were hearing. He took off down the Forbidden Forests path and said, “Yeah, yeah whatever. See ya then.”

Professor Snape was hard pressed not to laugh at the blustering Headmaster. He lifted an eyebrow at the boy’s attitude and noted the direction that the Gryffindor was heading in. He turned to walk back to the school and barely caught the question from his employer.

“What do you have the boys gathering in the Forest,” Albus asked.

“A few things to test their Journeyman status,” Severus told him honestly. “I’m already registered as their Master in Potions with the International Potions and Alchemists Guild for the remainder of this year and for their next school year. They need to do the gathering for the classes that they will be instructing next month and at the beginning of their seventh year here. If you’ll excuse me, I have a few detentions to oversee in my Potions class.”
“Very well Severus,” Albus said. “I will summon you to attend the meeting that I will be having with our young Mr. Potter.” The Potions Master quirked an eyebrow to ask why and the Headmaster continued on, “I would like to know his progress in those ‘Remedial’ classes, plus I’ll need you to teach him battle potions for part of his summer training.”

“I don’t believe that young Mr. Potter will accept the plans you’re making on his behalf, Albus,” Severus told the old man. “I’m afraid that if he gets stubborn your plans will fail, but I will join you once the boys return from the forest.”

“I will let you know when they are back inside the school,” the Headmaster said walking in another direction and leaving his youngest Professor and Spy behind.

‘I wonder what he’s planning,’ Severus thought making his way down to the dungeons and the waiting youngsters that tested his patience by fouling up in his Potions class. ‘I don’t think it will work out the way you want old man.’

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(...Damn meddling, interfering old coot...) Harry hissed in Parseltongue. He took a deep breath and choked on the smell of something foul located nearby. His blinked away the tears that were running out of his eyes and then he grinned.

‘Perfect,’ he thought.

“Dobby,” he called for his house-elf. The house-elf popped up and immediately started crying from the powerful scent he smelled. He looked to his young Master, while pinching his nose and hoping that the young man would tell him what he wanted and quickly. “Do I have any of that that ‘Foul Out’ potion, wash-soap and body cleaner left?”

The house-elf popped away quickly and came back in a full rubber yellow rain suit, galoshes, gloves and gas mask. His voice was high, squeaky and muffled, saying, “Yes Master Harry. You be havin’ all that and bubbles too, but you be needin’ to make more before next time.”

“Thank you Dobby,” Harry said. “That will be all.” He looked in the direction of the smell, but he had a few other things to gather. He hissed out loud, (...I’m looking for an intermediary to communicate with some of the creatures of the forest...)

(...I’m Standish...) A small snake appeared near his right ankle. (...I will help you for mice...)

(...Deal...) Harry said. (...Negotiations first...)

(...Agreed...) The snake said slithering up to his arm and curling around the Gryffindor’s wrist. (...Where to? ...)

(...Unicorn herd...) Harry said. (...I’m hoping that they will allow me to comb a few loose hairs out of their tails and manes. I can also pick their hooves, but I’d want some willingly given blood for that because you just never know what they might have stepped in...)

(...Okay...) The little snake hissed in laughter, having smelled the rot nearby. He pointed the direction that Harry was to take in order to meet up with a herd that needed some help with grooming the tangles out of their fine hair. They might possibly be willing to give a blood donation for a cleaning to their hooves.
Hours later the boys were walking back to the school. One Slytherin and one Gryffindor were walking back at a fair distance from the other Gryffindor Potions Journeyman. It didn’t matter about the rare potions ingredients that the Boy-Who-Lived had stumbled across, but it also didn’t explain why he hadn’t protected himself from the most of rot coming from the corpse he had found.

The local herd or grouping of magical creatures in the area didn’t care what happened to their dead. These creatures were semi-sentient and were petitioned just as the others with the little grass snake named Standish helping out with negotiations.

The smell came from a tree of some kind known as Tangle Wood. It had snagged a huge creature in its tentacle like vines and had tried to devour it. Unfortunately the expression about an ‘appetite bigger than the stomach’ was also true and the plant died before it could finish devouring its meal.

The creature was not common, but it was definitely an unexpected and fortuitous find here in the Forbidden Forest. Harry received permission from the local flora, namely the other Tangle Woods to remove their dead and to haul the rotting carcass away. In doing this, it would allow them to have a young shoot grow in the place of the old dead tree.

The carcass was a magical creature with the unlovely name of ‘Stench Horn’. It had the same vague shape as a Rhinoceros, but the horns on its snout emitted a foul stench much like a muggle skunk would in the regular world. They had three horns which contained the musk sacks. The musk itself was a very corrosive substance that stank worse than the initial spray.

The Tangle Tree’s roots, vines, tree bark, teeth and even the eyes, which were on the ends of several vines, were the easiest to harvest for potions ingredients. Harry had managed to levitate the attached pair into a clearing that they knew to be relatively safe and then he began to render the animal’s carcass quickly, efficiently just like they had learned.

Harry had the other two take care of the Tangle Tree, while he took care of the Stench Horn by himself. It was only when he was handling a few of the last bits that one of the horns, which had been torn from the body, fell off the carcass. This was probably from the time it messed with the Tangle Wood. It had lost the last of its putrid fluids all over his clothes and shoes. Unfortunately once a Stench Horn is dead their musk scent worsens, especially once it is no longer contained within the skin and bone, but on the plus side it was no longer corrosive. So he didn’t have to fear the loss of his clothing.

Harry had just smelled the perfect opportunity to piss off the Headmaster. He sent a silent prayer of forgiveness to the Phoenix that would be sharing the office, but he couldn’t help himself. He needed to be petty and rebellious regarding the Headmaster’s demands. It wasn’t the old man’s place to dictate where he resided anymore than it was his business regarding when and where he chose to train for combat.

“Harry,” Ron said with an exasperated sound. “Why didn’t you protect yourself with some ‘Foul-Out Spray’?”

“I have a meeting with the Headmaster,” Harry said casting a weak bubble charm of smell protection around him as he approached the school. It was deliberately weak in order to evaporate slowly while he talked with the old man. “He told me that he needed to see me directly after we finished gathering our ingredients. He said that he’d summon Severus, but maybe the two of you could run along ahead and sort of warn him.”

“Well we did get a find with the Tangle Wood and the Stench Horn,” Draco said. “If you’re going straight to your meeting…”
“That’s the plan,” Harry said. “Can you guys take this with you? It’s my share of the ingredients that Professor Snape wanted us to gather. I think I’ll just keep this other bag with me for demonstration purposes. See you later.” He held out a large satchel that contained the accumulated ingredients that he had gathered, of course he didn’t tell them just how successful he had been with the Unicorn Herd. He had kept those ingredients with him too.

Ron took the bag and nodded his head. He and Draco took off to the dungeons quickly, hoping that they would be able to warn their Potions Master about their find and about Harry’s plans. However being in proximity of the Stench Horn even when it was being rendered was enough to let the Potions Master know something was up.

The two walked into the room that Snape was using for detention. The man was really good at his job.

“Where on Earth did the two of you find a Stench Horn?” He asked nearly excited by the prospect of new ingredients. He noted their shocked expressions. “I’m glad that the two of you didn’t use the Foul-Out Spray, as that would have ruined the precious ingredients, so where is it?”

“Oh,” Ron said looking at Draco shocked that he had forgotten about the fact that the spray would ruin any ingredients obtained from the beast.

“It’s with Potter,” Draco said, equally glad that he had forgotten about the spray. He just prayed to Merlin and any other past Witches or Wizards that they still had the proper stuff to clean up with.

“Where is Mr. Potter?” Severus asked.

“He has a meeting with the Headmaster,” Ron said.

“He’s the one that that found and rendered the Stench Horn,” Draco said. His silver-blue eyes were sparking with mischief even though his face was perfectly bland and he adopted a bored stance.

“Alone,” Severus asked for clarification, because if that was the case…

‘Of course that’s the case,’ he thought, receiving confirming nods from the other two. “Very well, we’ll put your packs in the secure cupboard in my office. You two need to clean your tools and yourselves before we review everything that you’ve gathered from the forest and how you gathered them.”

“Yes sir,” they said and followed him.

The five students in detention were near gagging at the smell that wafted from the older students.

“Thank God we didn’t have to do that,” a small third year Ravenclaw student said.

“Yeah, let’s just get this done,” a fourth Slytherin agreed. “I don’t want to be punished by getting a request for an essay about Stench Horns.”

The other three agreed and were subdued when their Professor breezed back into the room and announced that both Mr. Weasley and Mr. Malfoy would oversee the remainder of their detention. A Gryffindor and a Slytherin... that was a deadly combination no matter what they were doing.

“I have a meeting that I’ve just been called to,” he said to the students. “These two will ensure that this classroom remains standing in one piece when I return. You should all be finished by then.” He strode out of the room with his robes billowing dramatically behind him.
Ron took one side of the room and Draco took the other. They were fully capable of watching over them and the students did everything they could to stop the older boys from even approaching them. It wasn’t that they were afraid of the boys, but that they were too smelly.

“It doesn’t matter how we smell,” Ron said. “You should concentrate on cutting up those ingredients with precision. You muck it up and I’ll make sure that you get those ingredients to use for your next potion.”

“The way you cut your ingredients matters,” Draco said. “We’re dealing with the magical properties of magical ingredients and they are affected by how an ingredient is processed, even by just the basic angle its cut. Now you should all be about finished with your tasks and if not then we’ll have to see about getting a couple of ingredient cutting sessions added to your classes just for you and all of your class mates too.”

That statement had those students turn back to concentrate on their detention tasks, they were year appropriate, but it was still a messy process. It took them all about another fifteen minutes finish.

“Pack the ingredients properly,” Ron said, pointing to the waiting and sanitized glass jars and containers on the counter.

“Clean up your work stations thoroughly,” Draco said. “You can only leave after that.”

The five detentionees scrambled out of the room once their task was done. That only left the older boys, but they too left to take care of their equipment, to shower, wash their leathers and change clothing. They left their Potions Master a note to summon their personal elves to fetch them, as they didn’t know how long the Headmaster’s meeting was going to be.

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Meanwhile Harry strode up to the Headmaster’s office after giving the guardian statue his new password. The statue wrinkled its pointed beak as though knowing that the Gryffindor smelled bad, even though it was made of stone and there was a bubble charm protecting the odour leakage... for now.

Harry shrugged and raced up the turning stairs not caring for the slow ride up. He knocked on the door, but instead of waiting for the old man to let him in he breezed in and walked straight up to Fawkes in order to whisper something in the Phoenix’s ear. (...*You might want to hide in Severus’ quarters later on...*) He hissed in Parseltongue knowing that the bird would understand him. (...*He still has that Puzzle Tree from when he took care of my Sooties and you might not appreciate the odour of these rooms later on...*)

Fawkes looked at the young man as though to say ‘*What are you talking about?* ’, but two words was all it took. (...*Stench Horn...*)

The Phoenix shuddered and his feathers fluttered at the horrific thought of that. He flashed out and appeared in the safe arms of the Puzzle Tree that had remained as a ‘Welcome’ roosting stand for visiting Owls. One of Severus’ house-elves noted that the bird was there and provided the fiery fugitive with appropriate food and water.

The Headmaster looked on that whole situation with an air of indulgence, but was surprised when his Phoenix left the room. When the young Gryffindor turned to look at him, he noted that there was a look about the young man that didn’t sit well with him. However the look was quickly dismissed as a flight of fancy.
“Harry, my boy,” Albus began. “Would you care for some tea?”

“No thank you,” Harry replied. He looked around the room quickly for the perfect spot to release the unusable horn of the carcass he had just rendered. He never once settled on a particular spot because he didn’t want the old man to suspect that he would be the one responsible, but then again he didn’t really care.

He placed his bag on the floor near the chair he planned to use and with a smooth, unpractised air he tripped over the bag and spilled its contents. Luckily he knew how to keep everything properly persevered and with his mind he pushed on rolling glass that contained the horn, into the mouse hole he had found. It was lost amongst the others rolling in the same direction, but he quickly called back everything to his pack, except for that one.

His telekinesis ability ensure that the glass container rolled up the inside wall a bit. A sticking charm and lid loosening spell later also ensured that the rotting horn would slowly seep out of the glass container and eventually render the Headmaster’s office unusable until the container is found. The Gryffindor made sure that the glass would eventually fall to the ground without breaking in order for it to be found... eventually... perhaps sometime during the summer...

“I’m sorry about that,” Harry said sheepishly. “You’ll have to excuse me for a moment. The doctor’s were forever despairing that I may never have a growth spurt and look what happens when I’m at school.” He held out his arms to show the missing inch and half from the length of his robes. “They did warn me that I might become clumsy because of it, however I’m quite glad that it’s happening now.” He tucked his bag behind his feet and sat down in the chair situated in front of the old man.

There was a knock at the door and Professor Snape walked in, not knowing what to expect.

“Ah, there you are Severus,” Dumbledore said. “Good, now we can see how far along young Harry is in his remedial ‘potions’ studies.” He pointed the wand at Harry and said, “Are you ready?”

“Stupid question Headmaster,” Harry said. “You don’t warn someone that you’re going Legilimize before you do it.” He sighed, made a full show of trying to organize his thoughts and then nodded his readiness, which wasn’t really necessary.

“You’re quite right, but you’re still learning the skill, so I figured you needed to be notified about it,” the Headmaster said. He pointed his wand and just like every other time in the Boy-Who-Lived’s mind he was taken to the dark room to muddle his way through. The only difference this time was that Harry was deliberately letting him see a few very inconsequential images of his past, but nothing to tell the old man anything about his family or relations in the Muggle world.

Harry looked at his Potions Professor and said, “This shouldn’t take too long.”

Severus just hmphed good naturedly, not facing any of the old Headmasters or Headmistresses on the back wall. It wouldn’t do to show them how much he had changed with his current association with the Boy-Who-Lived and his two compatriots in Potions.

The portraits on the wall weren’t too appreciative of that because it meant that technically they didn’t have anything to report to the current Headmaster. All they could see was the two individuals scowling at each other, not knowing that it was a game of finding out who would break away first before the Headmaster returned to the present.

Albus Dumbledore was surprised to find himself in a darkened room of Harry’s mind, but was able to view a few memories that the young man had ‘allowed’ to slip through. They were slightly troubling in the fact that all the memories were linked to the boy’s education. It was as though there
was no reference in the young man’s mind related to his family or the people he had been living with.

Dumbledore paused to reflect on that and realized that he knew that he had placed the boy with a family of some kind, but could not remember their location. It was troubling because he was certain that special wards had been erected around the place, but their presence was no longer felt. He eventually pulled out of the boy’s mind with a plan to contemplate on that issue, but as soon as he was out, he forgot about the question of where the boy had been living for the past sixteen years.

“Well,” he said pulling both out of their staring contest. “It seems like you still have a ways to go, but from now on I will not warn you, when I’m about to test you.”

“Technically, sir, you’re not permitted by law to conduct any such test,” Harry said. “I have read up on the issue and know that it is illegal for anyone not authorized by the Council of Mind Wizards to do that spell.”

“Who will press charges,” Dumbledore asked leaning forward, clasping his hands in front of him and eyes twinkling.

Harry grinned and said, “I will.”

“Your witnesses,” the Headmaster asked as the twinkling gleam in his eyes changed and was not the usual portrayal of his amusement. This look was more calculating.

“You,” Harry said twiddling his fingers to activate the bubble release on the one potion ingredient that he had deemed a lost cause back when he was rendering the creature.

Albus’ eyebrows rose up and then he had to ask, “How would I be forced to tell the truth?”

“You attack my mind without provocation and you’ll end up a mindless boob sitting in a room with our ex-Professor of Defence Against the Dark Arts, Lockhart,” Harry replied with a grin that was just as unfriendly as Dumbledore’s wicked twinkle. “That will be proof enough that my mind has defences despite you having found a few piddling memories.” He stood up and was about to grab his bag to leave when the old man told him to sit back down.

Harry looked at him confused and asked, “Why?”

“We still haven’t discussed the reason why you’re here right now,” the Headmaster said. For the time being he elected not to test the boy’s defences of his mind, but he was going to be adamant that the boy get training with the Aurors he had selected for the summer. “We need to discuss your summer training, so sit down.”

“I’m not going to follow your training plans this summer,” Harry said. “I have already made vacation plans for the first time in my life and I will be out of the Country. Therefore your plans will have to be put aside until such a time as I feel I would need to be trained in the skills you believe I need to know.”

“Now you listen to me boy,” the Headmaster said, standing up to seemingly stoop over his desk, but it was a calculated move to make the young man cower. “I’m your magical guardian and I have the power to see to it that you never graduate from Hogwarts.”

Harry sneered at the attempt to make him cower under that particular phrase that used to be a trigger for such a cowering reaction. He picked up his pack, shouldered it and stood up straight. In doing so it showed the Headmaster that he was not someone to be pushed around.
“You sir, are nothing of consequence in my life.” Harry took a breath and continued. “You’re only the Headmaster of this school and nothing else in relation to me, therefore your threat holds no water. I’m a Potions Journeyman, confirmed and vouched for by a Master in Potions. This is complete and true with a full Writ from the International Potions and Alchemists Guild, which means that I do not ‘need’ to graduate from Hogwarts in order to have a productive life. Expulsion from this school will not have the result you seem to think it will. Reflect on that before you take any other action. Also, I believe that you should know that I have had full access to all of my accounts and holdings since the beginning of this summer. Your use of No. 12 Grimmauld Place for your clandestine Order of the Phoenix meetings will only continue, if you don’t piss me off by trying in any shape or form or make weak attempts to ‘guide’ my education or training, among other things. Are we clear?”

Harry’s eyes were hard chips of the darkest jade. His expression was that of a man firm in his being and rights, not that a young boy that needed to be guided step-by-step.

Severus Snape was surprised at his reaction to what he was witnessing. The Gryffindor had basically told the Headmaster that he had the power to render him ineffectual in the world. Regarding the war effort, he could limit the man’s access to the one resource, a secure meeting place for the Order, he needed and it was much needed after the last location was betrayed by Peter Pettigrew. The old location was basically rendered non-magical by Voldemort and his Death Eaters. He watched the young man stride towards the door and pull against the magic that had locked it, after the Potions Master had stepped into the room.

Harry looked at the old man, who thought he had won, until the Boy-Who-Lived put his hand on the door and hissed out using German words in Parseltongue, (...Geformtes Metall, Schmiedfertigkeit, annulieren...) (...i...)

The two Professors and all portraits in the room stared at the glow that emerged from under the young man’s hand. They all heard a creaking sound, followed by a dripping hiss and then a crash of wood thunking down the stairs and into the room, as the planks of the door fell away because they no longer had any metallic support whatsoever.

Harry looked at the mess he created and shrugged. At least now he was able to leave the room and he really needed to go because the smell was becoming slightly unbearable now. It was that and the fact that he felt gungy. He hadn’t been able to go wash up after his work in the forest gathering potions ingredients. He looked back and waved nonchalantly to the Professors, leaving them to wonder how he had dismantled the Headmaster’s door.

Professor Snape turned to look at the Headmaster and asked quite casually, “Did you need me for anything further?”

The Headmaster sighed at the loss of control that he believed that Harry had displayed. ‘I’m going to have Madam Pomfrey give him a physical and mental examination,’ he thought. ‘Maybe there’s a potion that will render the boy more compliant to my direction.’ He paused in his thoughts, as something that Harry had told him finally filtered into his conscious thoughts.

“Severus could you look into young Mr. Potter’s claim about his Journeyman status with the guild he mentioned,” he asked. “I do believe that the young man is exaggerating his accomplishments and I wouldn’t want the Guild to come and investigate the boy’s false claims.”

“I’ve already done so Headmaster,” Severus said, using the Headmaster’s title to draw his attention to the fact that this was a serious matter. “Mister Malfoy and Mister Weasley had insisted that I verify their sons' confirmation about their Journeyman level in Potions too. I investigated all three. That is why I’ve removed Mr. Potter and Mr. Malfoy from Hogwarts’ potions curriculum. They’re going to be in charge of the younger students, specifically year one through three for potions, along with Mr.
Weasley, who had not taken any potions classes this year. They’re technically my responsibility, now, until the end of the year. I’ll also have them working for me during their seventh year, provided their other studies will not interfere with the classes that they’re going to teach.”

“I would like to see a copy of that information attached to all the boys’ files,” the Headmaster said. “I don’t believe that I approved of such alterations to their schedules.”

“You didn’t need to approve of them,” the Potions Master said. “There is the school charter and precedent for such matters. The Deputy Headmistress was the one to approve their altered schedules, as she is the one in charge of making the school’s schedules. Copies have been in the boys’ files since the end of the holiday break in March.”

“Very well,” the Headmaster sighed shallowly, as there was a weird smell beginning to permeate his office. He didn’t want to take in a deep breath for fear that he’d pass out from the odour. “You’re dismissed. We will be discussing young Harry’s issue at the next Order meeting.”

The Potions Master just nodded, refusing to open his mouth. He left the room and then paused at the broken door. “Did you want me to notify Mr. Filch that you need a replacement door?”

“No, no, Severus,” Albus said. “There’s no need for you to do that. I believe that I will go down myself, as it seems that I’m might need something from him to aid in clearing the air in here.” He paused to look under his desk, in case something of Harry’s potions ingredients was still around, but he didn’t even spot a glint of glass. “I’ll see you at the next meeting.”

Severus left quickly before he was asked to seek out the item that was causing the stench in the Headmaster’s office. Down the stairs and at the closing of the stone sentinel he grinned darkly and sincerely hoped that the old man wouldn’t be able to find the stinking thing until the end of the school year.

HPHPHP

TBC...

(...i...) Geformtes Metall, Schmiedfertigkeit, annulieren - “Molded metal, forgers craft, undo” - literal translation using my favourite translating site - www dot world lingo dot com (remove the spaces and replace the word dot accordingly to test.)
It took nearly the entirety of Harry’s six year before the Headmaster had been able to find out from the Goblins at the Gringotts Bank that he was no longer permitted to access any account belonging to Harry Potter, one Boy-Who-Lived. He had been irked to find that out too late. The letter had been polite, much too polite, but it was also very clear that the boy was considered an adult in their eyes and any person or persons claiming to be the boy’s magical guardian were going to be fined for such a false declaration.

The old man crumpled up the letter and tossed it into the fire in order to get rid of it. The still roaring fire in the office dealt with the unfortunate news by turning the information to ash. It might have been stifling to have such a fire at this time of year, but it was the only thing that successfully kept that awful odour down. The caretaker’s help hadn’t worked, so now there was a roaring fire with scented boughs of wood and scented candles lighting the gloomy spots of the room.

Fawkes had refused to return until the smell had been completely taken care of, but in the meantime he was quite enjoying the attentions he received in Severus’ and Harry’s rooms whenever he roosted in the Puzzle Trees. The house-elves adored, petted and fed him the best of foods, specially made for phoenixes. The fire bird was reluctant to leave such pleasant company, but did so every time the old man called him for Order business.

“Do any of you have suggestions with how to deal with Mr. Potter’s reluctance to follow our plans for his training this summer,” Albus asked his own ‘inner-circle’ of confidents.

“Perhaps you should let him be,” Arthur said. “As a Journeyman in any field, he’d be far more advanced than the training you were planning for him. The Auror standard for Potions is far below that of a full Journeyman.”

“He does have a point Albus,” Kingsley Shacklebolt said. “It appears that Mr. Potter’s self-education has raised his scholastic levels to exceed what we had planned for him. He’s already taken the Ministry’s N.E.W.T.s exams in Potions and Defence Against the Dark Arts. He passed both with double Os.”

“How could he have taken those Ministry exams in Advance,” Albus asked, wondering if Minister Fudge was behind this mess.

“There are always Ministry tests set up around this time of year and the list is provided to whomever requesting it,” Shacklebolt told him. “Hogwarts’ Ministry exams are scheduled to take place at the school because of the Board of Governors’ requirements and are set to take place around all the others set up by the Ministry. This is also because the Hogwarts’ final year’s exams are requested to happen on-site at the school, instead of having the students choose their own scheduling date between now and the actual end of the Hogwarts’ year.”

“Do you mean to say that anyone wishing to be tested by the Ministry can show up on the dates set up by the Ministry whenever they want?” Arthur asked, curious because he suspected that his twins had been doing just that. “Since when was this allowed?”
“Yes and it’s been that way for over seventy years now,” the senior Auror said. “Anyone interested only has to send a notice of intention to attend and actually show up at the Ministry’s testing site, on the proper date, in order to take the standard exams. They are the legal Ministry administered exams, so they take place at the Ministry. I suspect that not many people know about this. I, myself, was surprised when the information showed up in one of the Ministry’s smaller departmental newsletters.”

“How would young Mr. Potter be able to attend such an exam,” Albus wondered out loud.

“Some are scheduled on a Saturday,” Severus told everyone seated around the table. “If Mr. Potter was given permission to go elsewhere during a Hogsmeade week-end, then he effectively could have taken his N.E.W.T.s at that time.”

“He’d have to have been accompanied by someone from the Order,” Albus said, trying to recall a time when the young man had been given permission to leave the security of Hogwarts or its associated town.

“He was,” Severus replied, causing many to look at him in shock. “I didn’t know his true plans for going to the Ministry of Magic, but I escorted him there and back three weeks ago. While he was there, I was looking into the potions ingredient orders that I had placed with a few of the apothecaries in Diagon Alley. You gave us leave to go to the Ministry of Magic and it’s even in Mr. Potter’s file the day we left, where we went and the time we returned to the school.”

Albus was confused, but vowed to look at the boy’s school file in order to reassure himself that his Potions Master was telling the truth. “I believe that will be all for now,” the old man said. “I will need to investigate this matter.”

“I guess that means his summer training is not needed,” Tonks observed. She was Kingsley’s Auror partner, who refused to be known as anything other than just Tonks.

“Why wouldn’t he need the training,” Albus said.

“Double Os means he’s already further ahead than our most basic recruit,” Shacklebolt told him. “Most Witches or Wizards that come to the Auror branch don’t even have an adequate O.W.L. or N.E.W.T.s grade in Defence. They learn as they are trained and then take the Ministry exams. The Auror core of the Ministry has never received candidates with Journeyman, let alone Master levels in Defence.”

“I see,” the Headmaster said. “That will change our plans, as I thought he’d need the training, but if he’s too far advanced, perhaps I’ll wait until he has returned for his seventh year in order to take his training further.” He nodded to himself, not needing further input from his precious Order, and dismissed the others. “I suppose that Mr. Potter’s training regimen will have to wait until we have more skilled instructors.”

This statement caused a few around the table to bristle at being thought incompetent, but the old man had been slipping up in this manner for a while now. The Order of the Phoenix in general was still fine, but now his ‘inner-circle’ noticed and recognized that there was something going on with the Headmaster that they had never noticed before. However it was too late to bring the man to task for being overly interested in the Boy-Who-Lived’s training or lack thereof.

HPHPHP

Harry was carefully packing his belongings for the end of his school year. He was separating out the things he needed versus the things that he wanted to bring. He had opened his travel tent to air it out
and stock it with base essentials. He was filling some of the dresser drawers with packing material and storing some of his rarer potions ingredients. He didn’t tell his compatriots about these and it didn’t really matter for now.

They had come together and gotten tested in their N.E.W.T.s in Potions, while Harry did an additional N.E.W.T. exam in Defence, when the other boys were in Muggle London loading up on everything they needed for their net-books. They had made plans for taking vacations within vacations.

Ron had received a contract of employment with the Hatles Law Firm for one of his summer months, July. The letter accompanying the contract indicated that they had several candidates ever since they made internship queries in the local papers, so they had more applicants than they ever thought possible. The redhead had accepted their offer anyway because he wanted to learn more about the kind Law that they practiced. It still had an appeal for him and his mate was pushing him to do it.

“If you don’t you might find yourself regretting this missed chance,” Draco said. “I’m going to follow through and work in ‘Apo the Carry’s’ store here in Hogsmeade. That way I’m close to the Forbidden Forest and will be able to collect ingredients at their different growth stages.”

“What about our plans to visit the Elven dimension,” Ron asked.

“I received a note via one of our magical jars,” Harry said. “The watches exploded within them and then they vanished from the jars. The jar was fine and had no issues in transporting their note. They’re doing well and have found the culprit. They still want us to visit, but I get the feeling that their time is slower and less time may have passed for them. We’ve been invited there for two weeks at the beginning of August, along with Henrik, his son Sinius and Severus, for a harvesting of potions ingredients and a general hunt. They were also interested in receiving a demonstration of Ron’s alter-gift of dousing for minerals and gems.”

Ron snorted and fully realized that the goblins had to have been bragging about their students or about the gifts that they had received. The other two had thoughts along the same lines. He then asked, “What are you going to do Harry?”

“I think that I’ll go back to Spain and then maybe visit a few of the other properties that I inherited and that I haven’t seen yet,” Harry said. “I’ll harvest as I go from country to country, but I’ll be writing you guys frequently.”

“What about the Dark Lord,” Draco asked.

“I don’t believe that he has plans to do more than what he usually does,” Harry said. “There’s not much that I can do about it right now, but I think that the Headmaster knows something about Tom that he still hasn’t mentioned. I have a bad feeling that he’s going to drop that bomb on me at the end of the school year.”

“He seems to always do that doesn’t he,” Ron observed.

“True,” Harry said. “I really hate it when he does that, but with this coming summer I will have a greater chance at studying and learning a few new tricks.”

“How are you going to travel from country to country,” Draco asked.

“I’m thinking of an old Western covered wagon,” Harry said. “I was thinking of going through as a tinker of some kind, you know, maybe someone that can repair pots and pans on the fly. Make custom wands at low prices because I’m only a Journeyman in the making of them, but am allowed
to sell what I make as long as I have a legal disclaimer stating that my products are under par or something to that effect. I’d have a few samples of various things to sell and trade. Plus I figure that someone travelling in that manner might have an easier time than someone that goes into a place and just pays their way through.”

“You’ll make a lot of contacts that way,” Ron said with a nod. “That’s a smart way to do it. You might even be able to see rarer magical sights by doing it that way.”

“That’s my thinking too,” Harry said. “Of course I believe that I will have company for most of that time, as Severus has said that he’d be interested in the gathering of ingredients that I plan to seek and harvest. However, before I travel I will map out my intended locations and stops. That way the two of you will be able to tell me anything you know of these places and you can ask me to pick up anything you like.”

“All right then Potter,” Draco said. “Do you think that your goblin friends could ward my place in Hogsmeade?”

“Your place,” Ron asked.

“Our place,” Draco corrected with a grin. “You’re still planning to live with me?”

“You got it,” Ron said smiling back at the blond. “I will have to let my folks know about it though, but you’re coming with me to tell them about us.”

“I wish the both of you luck,” Harry said.

“Oh, you’re not getting that easily,” Ron said.

“What do you mean?” Harry asked.

“You’re coming too, to back us up,” Draco said. “You need to be there to vouch for me.”

“Nothing I say will do anything to influence your parents,” Harry said. “They’re your parents after all Ron, you know them better than I do. You’re going to have to be ones to convince them. Besides I believe that your parents are not going to chuck you out for loving a Malfoy, especially this one.”

“Oi,” Draco said, in a tone very much like that of his mate. It was clear that Ron had influenced the blonde when he had vocalized his objection. He then continued with, “What do you mean, especially this one? I’m the only one that counts.”

“Sure you are,” Harry said with a grin, yanking the blonde’s chain with gentle teasing. He had to be careful sometimes because the Slytherin was still sensitive to his father’s upbringing and being faced with the unwelcome comparison of being no good just because his father isn’t good.

“I am,” Draco said haughtily, sticking his nose in the air just like he used to do when younger. The two Gryffindors knew that he was fine when he did this because the Slytherin was still sensitive to his father’s upbringing and being faced with the unwelcome comparison of being no good just because his father isn’t good.

“I am,” Draco said haughtily, sticking his nose in the air just like he used to do when younger. The two Gryffindors knew that he was fine when he did this because there was also a small grin at the corner of the blonde’s mouth. This was a sure sign that he wasn’t offended or hurt by a particular comment.

Harry had to be careful on these occasions because Ron sometimes had a tendency to kiss his mate for extended periods of time. He had asked one time why he did it and the redhead explained that it was positive re-enforcement of his love for the blonde in all his uppity up-tight mannerisms. This time it was just a reassuring peck on the mouth, but the love between the two young men was clearly visible.
So the Boy-Who-Lived had one piece of advice for the two of them for when they planned to take dinner with Ron’s family. “Be yourselves,” he said. “Act like you would around me in a casual manner because that will re-enforce the fact that this is not a new or recent infatuation. Your father already suspects something about our March holiday, so just be yourselves. Please?”

“I don’t know how much of my ‘socially acceptable’ behaviour will come through,” Draco said. “As I understand things, anytime in-laws meet, we’ll learn more of each other, however we were not officially bonded, that could be something that your mother and father will not approve.”

“Doesn’t matter,” Ron said. “We can formally bond whenever we want to. I will certainly be seeking their approval, but whether they give it to me or not won’t matter. We’ve been magically bound for so long that it will be impossible to separate and I would never want to. I’ll remind on our anniversary date from here on to forever.”

“From here on to forever,” Draco gave him an emotional sniff and a hug to hide his softer side.

Harry had moved into his bedroom to sort through his clothes, when it looked like the blonde needed a private moment to compose himself. He was smiling at the thought of the two of them and he watched with a fond grin, as Winky made a pile of ‘not even for a dust-rag’.

“Youse be sitten’ and makin’ list of new clothes for summer and some for school,” she said in her determined voice of do it or else. The Gryffindor never once regretted the bonds he had with his house-elves and he liked that they were pushy about some things. “Youse be makin’ sure that youse prepare a list for standard school thins’ so that Winky be getting them ready. You no be rushin’ once you be getting your list for seventh year.”

“I understand Winky,” Harry said, pulling out a notebook that contained a few lists of things that he had written down. It was a list of things that he had run out of during some of the months and he’d had to rely on his house-elves to get them for him while he was in class. Although some of the things, like ink couldn’t be purchased for the full year because it tended to dry out too soon in the bottles and sometimes the ink couldn’t be reconstituted with just adding water.

“Be sure to be listing what you and students need for youse first teaching class,” Winky said.

“That’s a separate list that I will give to Professor Snape to review,” Harry said. “I have a list of a few books that the students will need as first years. He’ll need to approve them first before I submit a syllabus to him, although I think that he might like our combined ideas.”

Winky only nodded and then said, “You be makin’ a list for Winky wants.” He nodded, turned to a fresh page and wrote ‘Winky’s Wants’ at the top. “New threads, wool, silks for weavin’. New cloth bolts for sewing, lotsa colours. Weave machines, small and big, like Winky had in compound.”

“Ah,” Harry paused and asked. “You’ve used up everything?”

“Winky be workin’ on hobby and cleaning Master’s rooms,” she said. “Winky be needing to be busy at night when Harry travel. Dobby be gardening, Winky cleaning house, but be needin’ more to do.”

“I understand,” Harry said, making notes on the page. They’d all had a healthy and full routine when they were in the compound. However, it was clear that the house-elves needed to keep a similar kind of routine now that they were about to leave the school. “We’ll make a schedule of things that should be done and for the summer time. We’ll add time for hobbies and leisure too.”

He’d had to make sure that all the house-elves knew the difference between those two. Hobby time was a time when some kind of hobby was like work, but fun to do and therefore that satisfied all the
house-elves because they were still working, in sense. Leisure time was do nothing, but what pleased you time. However he had to break it down to reading, learning something completely knew and unrelated to duties or hobbies and finally napping time. They didn’t care about television and quite frankly he was kind of please to know that. It was still difficult to get them to relax, but if it’s scheduled then they’ll do it.

Harry finished part of his list and returned to his sitting room to note that the other two six years were no longer there. They had left behind a small note stating that they’d meet up late in the Room of Requirement to go over a few of their plans for next year’s syllabus that Professor Snape had charged them with producing for the classes that they were going to take over. He grinned and took out another notebook where he was keeping track of interesting things to occupy the young minds of the students.

He had a few ideas that he was planning to bring forward and he hoped that the Potions Master of the school would be open to the idea of altering the first year syllabus to incorporate something new.

**HPHPHP**

The Room of Requirement had seen quite a lot of use during Harry’s sixth year of Hogwarts. It had been subjected to intense use by many students who suddenly realized its usefulness only one could never make the room work as intended.

Hermione was irked beyond belief when her precious ‘Top of Class’ position in all classes, but Transfiguration, Arithmancy and Runes was replaced by Harry, Ron and Draco. In fact those three were completely removed from Potions the word ‘Exempted’ next to their names with the lists of the exam schedule. That came out on the common room announcement boards and the grand announcements boards next to the Great Hall’s entrance.

Ron and Harry had done everything to avoid answering the girl as to why they were suddenly exempted from ever taking Potions at Hogwarts, when Draco, in full Slytherin mode told her. The students were loitering in the Great Hall waiting for the final exam schedule to be posted when he walked up to where they were standing, as she was nagging the two sixth years about the ‘Exempted’ notice next to their names.

“How is it possible for you, Ron, to be exempted, when you weren’t even in Potions this year,” Hermione nagged in a tone that was rising in volume. “And you, Harry, how could you be exempted when you missed all of the classes for the past month?”

“Weasley, Potter,” he nodded and looked to see that he too had been ‘Exempted’ from taking the Ministry Potions exams. “Excellent, they recognize genius when they see it.”

“You’re not a genius in Potions, Malfoy,” Hermione hissed out. “So don’t stand there acting superior and smug about it.” There was a good sized crowd of mixed houses gathering and it might have turned ugly, but they were in the Great Hall, so the Professors were keeping a close watch on the proceedings.

“Sure he is,” Ron defended the blonde. The Slytherin looked at him sharply. The redhead looked back at him and stated, “What? It’s true! You are a genius in Potions, why would I lie about something like that?” He turned to the irate girl and said, “It doesn’t matter why we’re exempted. Why care about that all of a sudden?”

“It’s not all of a sudden,” she groused. “I’ve been worried about you two.”

“Really,” Harry said crossing his arms defensively. “So you only now choose to voice your concern
when it would have been too late to... what... help us out? Are you daft? Why would we accept your help when you sabotaged us for the past four years of school? We wouldn’t have trusted you to help us.”

Hermione’s face turned beet red and she said, “How dare you accuse me...”

Harry stopped her rant by holding up his hand. He never knew why that move always seemed to work with her, but it did. “This is neither the time nor the place to discuss this. We’re exempted and that’s that. You don’t need to be concerned about our study habits because quite frankly it’s not your business.”

He looked at the board and grinned slyly at the word ‘Exempted’ and then left the Great Hall. Ron and Draco nearly mimicked him and left the Hall too before anyone else could comment or try to butt into their business. They didn’t care how it looked, as a Slytherin and Gryffindor pair famous for fighting left without even a glance at the other and without any derogatory comments to provoke fighting.

Whispers, mutters and murmurs rose in volume as the students in the Great Hall commented, gossiped, spoke and chatted about the Gryffindor Trio that seemed to have shifted down to one.

Hermione glared at anyone that approached her and she escaped scrutiny by trying to find out how those three became competent enough to be exempted from the Potions portion of their scholastic syllabus. Her only clue had been the Room of Requirement and that’s why she was there getting more and more frustrated at its refusal to open up and display room from which the boys had used for learning potions.

Unfortunately for the poor girl the magic of the school could not show a room that didn’t exist in normal Earth time. Therefore the school’s magic was signalling to all Heads of House that something needed to be done.

Professor Snape was the first to arrive in that corridor and had chosen to hide until the Headmaster and the girl’s Head of House appeared to calm the girl down. He still hadn’t brought up the girl’s underhanded methods of ‘aiding’ her fellow Gryffindors, but the opportunity was given to him by the comments that the Boy-Who-Lived voiced in the Great Hall.

Many of the students left behind, especially the Gryffindors were wondering what the girl had done, when they recalled the time she had been splashed in the face with her own red corrective ink. They had already come forward on the matter and spoken about it with their Head of House and with the Potions Master of Hogwarts.

In this meantime the magic of the school was building up to a point, where it would have to do something to stop the girl from making further demands to reveal the room and location of the boys’ training.

“Miss Granger,” Professor McGonagall stepped forward with the Headmaster who was quickly followed by Madam Pomfrey the Medi-Witch of the school. “You will cease this unladylike display and calm down.”

“I want the Room to show where the boys learned so much in so little time,” Hermione said loudly with her short frizzed hair sticking up all around due to the magic in the air. “They need me. Let me in,” she shouted at the blank wall that refused to reveal a door.

“They are not in there Miss Granger,” Professor Dumbledore told the girl. “There’s no one in the Room of Requirement at this time.”
“Then why won’t it open up,” she asked. “I’m only asking for a room.”

“What room are you asking for,” Professor McGonagall asked.

“I want the same room that the boys trained in,” she stated.

“That’s not possible for the Room of Requirement to fulfill,” Professor Snape stated.

“Why ever not,” she replied. “They were always studying in here.”

“Yes,” he responded. “But never for the same subject or year.”

Hermione blinked a few times in rapid succession and then asked, “What?”

“They were here, but never studied the same subject twice nor were the levels of study the same,” Professor McGonagall explained. “The Room was always changed to their needs and therefore it was never just one room during their study sessions. You can’t know the ‘requirements’ they had because each time they were in here they chose a different room.”

The Headmaster nodded and said, “You see, child, the Room cannot produce all of those variations at the same time and that’s why you can’t get a door.”

Hermione frowned, looked down to the floor and said, “Oh, I see. I don’t suppose I could get a copy of their schedule, Professor McGonagall.”

“I’m afraid not,” the Head of Gryffindor said. “There’s only three weeks left of school and most of that will be spent in exams and various tests. It’s too late for you to help the boys, if that was your intention.”

“I doubt it,” Professor Snape said. “However, I believe that this discussion will have to take place after all exams are concluded and we have the time to review the information.”

“Sir, would you mind telling me why Harry and Ron have been exempted from your classes,” Hermione asked looking at the man, wondering if he’d tell her the truth.

“Theyir levels in Potions are currently listed with the International Potions and Alchemists Guild,” the Head of Slytherin said. “However if you really want to know...?” The girl nodded, so he told her. “They have full Journeyman status in Potions and have already taken the UK Ministry of Magic’s N.E.W.T.s level exams.” He paused dramatically, looking at her wide-eyed and disbelieving expression on the Gryffindor’s face. He drove the knife home, by saying, “They all passed with double Os, including Mr. Malfoy, and with the highest scores on record. They even beat my old score, which had beaten the previous highest score on Ministry record.”

“That’s not possible,” Hermione said. “That’s not true, it’s not possible. They can’t have passed at those levels. There’s no way, that’s just not possible.”

She kept repeating herself and driving herself up in a fit of hysterics, but that is exactly what the Potions Master had planned. He wanted the girl to incriminate herself, so he withheld the Medi-Witch’s need to dose the girl with a calming potion. After a minute of the girl getting more hysterical, he nodded to her Head of House to pose the pointed question as planned.

“Why do you believe that they’d never pass the N.E.W.T.s level exam,” Professor McGonagall asked.

“They’d fail because they always boiled un-mashed black-eyed daisy roots and always mix up fennel
seed and feed weed pods in every brewing process,” she said with candour. “I always made sure
that’s the process they used and always changed their essays to reflect...” She stopped looked at the
Potions Master and her Head of House with wide eyes. She gulped and then stammered, “I...I...
mean that...”

“It no longer matters Miss Granger,” Professor Snape said. “I’ve received statements and evidence
that you were miss-informing your fellow students. If it were up to me, I’d see you expelled for such
actions.”

“Ah,” Professor Dumbledore said, interrupting the anger that the Potions Master felt. “It is not up to
you Severus.” He turned to give Professor McGonagall a serious non-twinkling look.

The Head of Gryffindor House found her position in this matter distasteful and yet she had to prevent
the girl from doing further damage. “Hermione Granger,” she began calling forth some of her access
to the school’s magic. “You are forthwith stripped of your Prefect status,” she said taking the magic
pin off of the girl’s robes. “You are charged with giving out false information to your fellow students
and did so with an authority not handed to you by this school, therefore you’re suspended from this
school upon completion of your final exam and for the first month of your seventh year. You are
prohibited from offering any form of assistance to ‘any’ student attending this school while you
attend your seventh year here.”

The school’s magic whirled around the shocked girl and sank into her. The outcome of such magical
working always affected the offender in various ways, but she won’t know exactly what until the
beginning of her next year at Hogwarts.

“Severus,” Minerva said, as he allowed the Medi-Witch to take charge of the hysterically shocked
girl. “Do you think you could administer her exam before the other students?”

“Only if she believes herself prepared to take it,” the Potions Master said.

Hermione developed a gleam in her eye. She brushed off the Madam Pomfrey’s assistance to calm
her down. “I can take any exam that you give me, Professor Snape,” she said with venom. “You tell
me when and where and I’ll be there.”

Severus quirked an eyebrow up and he looked to the Headmaster who nodded. He looked quickly to
the girl’s Head of House who nodded her own agreement that there was a need to get the girl out of
the school quickly before she did further damage. “Very well,” he said turning back to the girl.
“Tomorrow morning, immediately after breakfast, at 7:30 am, you will be in classroom, delta-five,
next to the main potions classroom. You will begin with the written exam at the desk in the room and
only once the written portion is complete will you attempt one of the potions listed on the board
based on the ingredients available to you at that time. Understood?”

She blanched a bit thinking that she’d have a day or two to study, but that was no longer the case.
She stubbornly raised her chin and said, “Of course. I’ll be there. Now, if you’ll excuse me I have a
few things to brush up on.”

She walked away from her disappointed Head of House, the disappointed Headmaster and the
somewhat vindictive, slightly happy, Head of Slytherin. You can’t fault the man for enjoying the
downfall of someone that consistently insisted that their answers were correct.

Minerva turned to the Potions Master and said, “Do you have the statements and proof?”

“I do,” he said honestly. “Copies have been sent to both of your offices this morning for the girl’s
scholastic and personal files.”
“Thank you,” she said with a sad sigh. “I’m going to need them in order to Owl the girl’s parents regarding this matter.”

“Will you be all right, my dear,” the Headmaster asked. She nodded and so he patted her hand in commiseration at the distasteful outcome of the event and then he walked away from the Room of Requirements’ corridor. He had a few pressing matters to take care of.

“Do you need a drink,” Severus asked the two ladies still present.

“Please,” Minerva said. Poppy nodded her agreement because this was the first that she had seen a Prefect lose their badge.

The man offered the ladies both arms and guided them to the currently empty staff room. He called forth one of his house-elves to fetch the better brew of Scotch that he kept on hand for such an occasion. One quick shot was swallowed for effect before the glasses were refilled for slow sipping. It allowed for the body to be shocked into relaxing and let the conversation in the flow in a slow contemplative manner.

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The magics of the school were very specific and flowed mostly along the same lines as those of someone in the medical profession. ‘Do no harm’, being the biggest condition. Still that didn’t stop the girl from trashing up her dorm room and destroying many of the things that didn’t belong to her.

The house-elves cleaned up her mess and mentioned it to the Head of Gryffindor House, but the woman only took action the following day after the girl had finished her final exam for the year. She met the girl coming out of the room, reeking of cut up potions ingredients.

“How much farther,” Professor McGonagall said getting the girl’s attention. “You have fifteen minutes wash up and to meet me at the entrance of the school. You needn't bother packing as the house-elves have already done so for you and your luggage is waiting for you.”

Hermione had no choice. She walked quickly to the nearest loo in order to clean up as best she could before using the facilities. She’d need to do that now, as she was not certain how long she’d have to wait for the train to pick her up at Hogsmeade.

While washing up she was horrified to realize that she couldn’t take out any books from the library for the summer, but she knew that she could write the Madam Pince for them. So it was with her head held up that she met her Head of House and was escorted, much to her shame directly to her parents house via Port-Key.

Professor McGonagall has sent an express Owl to her parents and they were both home waiting for their daughter to return.

Hermione gulped and sat down in one chair as her Head of House handed a scroll to her parents. Before leaving the quaint muggle home she said, “You’ve been suspended an additional two weeks from the beginning of the next year and you’ll have to pray to Merlin that someone will be willing to lend you accurate notes in order to catch up to the other seventh year students. See you in October.”

The haughty know-it-all girl then looked at her parents and there was a look of such disappointment in their eyes that she knew her summer would not be filled with trips to exotic locals this year.

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The end of the boys’ sixth year was made more pleasant by the fact that they had solid summer
plans. They were also pleased to be rid of Hermione and that the Headmaster’s plans for Harry had fallen through the cracks.

They weren’t certain about what would happen during the summer upon their visit to the Elven world, but they were all looking forward to it, even Severus Snape, who had elected to travel with Harry for most of the summer.

Ron and Draco had their own thoughts on that matter, but kept it to themselves. They knew that that situation would resolve itself in due course. They were looking forward to hearing about that whenever it chanced to happen.

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THE END

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