**Invisible**

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**Invisible**

by [DebsTheSlytherinSnapeFan](http://archiveofourown.org)

**Summary**

On that faithful Halloween night Nick Potter was hailed 'Boy Who Lived' his twin Harry was ignored in favour of the favoured famous son. Harry is pushed aside, when it comes to it what will happen? will Harry fight for a world that didn't want him or care about him? will Dumbledore, the Potter's and world grovel at his feet praying he will save them? Snarryslash. What happens when the world finds out he was the one to survive that faithful halloween night? oh so many years ago?
Chapter 1

Chapter Summary

Edited by Snow Leopard Pasha Thank you for editing this hon!

Invisible

Lord Voldemort's Attack And Nick Sirius Potter A Hero

Chapter 1

It was a busy day on October 24th, 1981, as it was time for Lily Potter nee Evans and her two children and husband to go into hiding. It was a stressful time for them because they didn't like hiding away from the war; however, James and Lily did it for the sake of their children. The children came first to them—it was just a shame it wouldn't always remain that way. Remus, Peter, Sirius, and Dumbledore all said goodbye to them before the spell was cast and they disappeared from view, sure that Lord Voldemort wouldn't be able to harm their children. A year and almost three months ago, Lily had given birth to twins at Hogwarts.

The first born was named Nick Sirius Potter; Sirius Black was named his godfather. He was born on July 31st at 11.35—twenty five minutes before his twin came into the world.

The second born son was named Harry James Potter, and Sirius Black was also named his godfather. He was born 'as the seventh month dies', his birth time was set at 11.55, an innocent mistake by Poppy Pomfrey because of the interruption of Albus Dumbledore coming into the Hospital Wing.

Peter Pettigrew became their Secret Keeper, and it wasn't surprising Peter was excited. He could not wait to get the news to his Lord, who would be so happy with him, and without further ado he left early, insisting he was going to see his mother. Peter had been a Death Eater for a year, spying for the almighty and powerful Lord Voldemort, his 'Master' the 'Dark Lord'.

It was, unfortunately, a week before he was called.

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Lord Voldemort's Current Hide Out

"My Lord, I am the Secret Keeper for the Potter's," said Peter, his eyes gleaming with evilness and no small amount of smugness. He was sure to be His Lord's favourite now after handing the Potter's to him on a silver platter. He hated the fact that he wasn't even named one of the children's godfathers, hated the fact that his friends pitied him enough to befriend him. His Lord saw his power, saw his usefulness, and for once he was noticed on his own, not as James Potter's almost invisible friend—he was never asked his opinion at Order meetings. He didn't regret his actions at all, and was gladly handing them over.

He even had a plan for whenever the Potter's were killed since there was no doubt Sirius would come after him. As Sirius Black would soon be the only one who knew he was the Secret Keeper, he would ensure Black rotted in Azkaban. Everyone had underestimated him, and that would be
their downfall.

"Excellent! Now tell me why you took so long to tell me! They have been under the Fidelius spell for a week!" snarled Voldemort. He knew because Severus Snape, his other spy at Hogwarts, had told him they were safe, had gone into hiding to annoy him, though Snape didn't realize just who the Secret Keeper was so it was all for naught.

"I'm sorry Master, I'm sorry," said Peter, snivelling at the powerful wizard. Why wasn't His Lord happy? Why was he being so nasty? This wasn't how he imagined his reaction at all.

"Tell me the address," hissed Voldemort, tiring of the snivelling traitor. He was useful, he had to give the rat that much credit, and taking the smelly snivelling boy had been a good decision after all.

"The Potters shall be found at Number 12 Godric's Hollow," stammered Peter quickly. Where was His Lord's praise about how valuable he was and rewarding him for his loyalty? He didn't like when his 'Master' was mad at him. Maybe he should have told him straight away, but he had to get plans into motion, like saying goodbye to his mother—despite everything, he did indeed love his mother. She had always put him first, but for a grown boy it just wasn't enough. Seeing his friends get girls and have families had taken its toll on the ugly boy.

"Good. Stay here and wait for me to return. You shall be rewarded handsomely," said Voldemort. How could Voldemort not be happy? He had just received the Potter's on a silver platter! Being the only real threat to his power, he could not let the brats get older. Putting his cloak on, he was gone before anything or anyone could stop him, leaving Peter Pettigrew glowing at the small measure of praise he had received. He had been wrong; his 'Master' was happy with him, he just didn't want to show it until they were dead. Then he would become his right hand man—Snivellus would be kicked aside. Snape may spy on Dumbledore, but it was Peter who had brought the Potters to him, so he would be the Dark Lord's number one. Everyone would be envious of him, even Lucius Malfoy, as the strutting peacock would be moved down to number four instead of three.

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Godric's Hollow, Halloween, October 31st, 1981

"The Potters shall be found at number 12 Godric's Hollow," said Voldemort, causing the house to materialize out of nowhere. Smirking, he blasted the door open with his wand, and smirked more when he heard the panic in James Potter's voice. He was going to enjoy this like no other attack. Deciding what he wanted to do, he cast Stupefy at James Potter—he wanted him kept alive, since it was only the brats he was after, anyway. He would relish seeing Potter utterly defeated because his silly little boys were dead.

James ducked the spell and spells started going back and forth as Lily went running up the stairs. James' foot unexpectedly got caught in one of his children's toys. Falling to the ground was the last thing he remembered as Voldemort took that opportunity to cast a Stupefy spell again. That time, it hit its mark and James Potter went limp, falling to the floor, defenseless. The supposed best Auror in the division had been brought down by Voldemort, who wasn't even trying his hardest. Voldemort decided to award Peter for his loyalties and let the rat kill him when he was through. Evan's, though—unfortunately—had to remain alive, as he had promised Snape, who was too valuable to alienate. If he wanted the red head, he could have her. Perhaps he had a potion for her, who knew? Either way, he would take them with him, so cast yet another spell, a body bind so James couldn't get away if the stunner didn't hold.
"James!" yelled Lily in anguish, fearing he was dead when she heard a body hit the floor.

Voldemort yelled out the blasting curse, half hoping she was behind the door. The door smashed into tiny pieces, showing him the huddled figure of Lily Potter trying in vain to protect her children. Lily Potter attempting in vain to protect them from the evil in their house.

"Hand over the brats and you will live," said Voldemort. He loved playing mind games with his victims. She didn't need to know she would survive and be given to her ex best friend as a play thing.

"Never! Not my children! Take me instead, please take me, not my sons! Please, have mercy!" screamed Lily in Lord Voldemort's face, in hopes he would leave her children alone. She was using herself as a human shield, not letting Voldemort see her children, and better yet, not letting her children see the evil wizard.

"Stand aside you silly Mudblood!" snarled Voldemort, his patience waning.

"No! Not my babies, please, no, take me! Kill me instead!" she begged.

"Stupefy!" yelled Voldemort. He did, after all, keep his promises to his Death Eaters—it kept them under his control.

Lily fell unconscious, unable to hear or see anything, lost to the world.

"Avada Kedavra!" was yelled and the green light of the killing curse lit up the entire room.

He was too surprised to even think about moving when the curse rebounded upon him. As his body was burnt to ash, his soul was ripped from it, pain unlike anything he had ever experienced coursing through him. Unable to do anything without a corporal body, he fled, screaming in agony.

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Hogwarts School Of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Death Eaters everywhere fell, clutching their forearms in pain. They knew that something had happened to their Lord. Peter, seeing his Dark Mark almost gone, Apparated to Godric's Hollow immediately. He saw James lying there motionless, probably dead, and heard children crying. He fled the scene when he heard a bike roar in the distance, assuming it was Sirius Black's bike already coming. Turning into a rat, he went down to the sewers, wondering how things had gone so wrong. The prophecy had come true; a one year and three month old child had defeated Voldemort. Their spy, of course, clutched his arm in agony too. It was night and Severus Snape had obviously been asleep. As soon as he saw the Mark disappearing, he ran as fast as he could to Albus Dumbledore. He had to tell him what had happened; somehow Voldemort had been hurt or possibly killed. The Dark Mark was now a faint outline, like someone had taken a pencil and drawn it on him. Barging into the office, he was thankful the old fool was still awake, so without further ado, he told him, not even winded by his run from the Dungeons up to Dumbledore's office. He might only be a Potions Master, but he was by no means unfit.

"He's gone Albus! The Mark is not completely gone, though, it's still there just a little bit," said Severus, his eyes wide in shock—he had never expected to survive the war; spying was a sticky business, after all. He was showing his left forearm to Dumbledore, who could only stare in shock, knowing the prophecy as well.

Fearing something had happened to the Potters, he quickly spoke. "I have to go see if they are alright. don't worry, Severus, it's over. Tell Minerva and get everyone to the Great Hall—there is
much to celebrate! They deserve it, even your Slytherins," said Albus, smiling softly.

"Yes, Albus, right away," said Severus coolly, as if he hadn't just been given the information he had wanted for years. He was a tad bit worried about Lily, though, but until something was said, he refused to let it show.

Albus created a Portkey out of one of the many dark detectors on his shelves. He couldn't Apparate, so he had no choice but to Portkey—he had to get there as soon as possible. Unfortunately, it didn't take him right to the house, but down the road. With speed which shouldn't have been possible for a man one hundred and forty years old, he got to Godric's Hollow. The door was blown off its hinges, but he breathed a sigh of relief when he saw that James and Lily were fine. One of the twins was in their arms and they looked greatly relieved.

"Lily! James! Is everything alright?" asked Dumbledore, stepping in while looking powerful and concerned.

"Nick defeated Voldemort," said Lily, still shaking. The relief in her green eyes was unmistakable. She had been so close to losing her children...She felt as though it was all a dream and she would wake up to find that her children were really dead. Seeing Dumbledore there, she realized it had happened, but they had all survived.

"Are you sure?" asked Albus, frowning. Nick had been the first born; if anything, he had expected it to be Harry. He was born last and closer to the 'seventh month dies'. However, he would of course trust Lily's judgement—she had been there and seen the whole thing. Perhaps Nick had been close enough to the 'seventh month dies' condition.

"Yes, Albus," replied Lily adamantly.

"It seems he is the child of the Prophecy then, my dears. The coming years are not going to be very good for the little one," said Albus softly. He tried to stop himself from thinking about training Nick, but it couldn't be helped. Voldemort wasn't gone or the Dark Mark would have been gone completely.

"What about Harry?" asked Albus after a few minutes silence.

"He's sleeping. I finally got him back down, but Nick's too scared to sleep," whispered Lily, looking worried and as though she had failed all at once.

"Do not worry yourself, I'm sure he will be fine. Just Floo me if you cannot get him to sleep. I shall get Severus to brew a potion for him if that is the case, so fear not," said Dumbledore soothingly.

"Would you? Thank you, Albus," sighed Lily, still clutching her shuddering son close. He had finally stopped crying, even though had closed the scar and healed it as much as possible. Harry's too had been healed as much as possible, but she was too proud of her son to get rid of the marks the twins bore. He had, after all, got rid of the Dark Lord at just one year and three months old.

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If only she knew that Nick had gotten his scar when the door had been blown from its hinges by Lord Voldemort.

If only she knew that Harry had been the one to defeat Lord Voldemort, things might have been different for the family.
Or maybe Harry might have lived the life of a prince instead of a pauper with his family.

It seemed it wasn't meant to be as they ignored the crying of their second born son.

If only Dumbledore had enquired more, instead of just accepting that Lily had seen it.

They would, in time, come to regret what they had done, and by then...they would never be able to reverse it.
Sirius Black rode his motor bike to Peter's home, concerned since he had not seen or heard from a particular one of his three best friends as he was supposed to have. He thought perhaps Peter had been taken at first, until he saw that there were no signs of a struggle there. Getting more and more suspicious by the second, he got back on his bike and headed for Godric's Hollow. He knew someone close to them had been betraying them, passing on information for the past year, and had suspected Remus, but now…Why, now he feared the worst, and it was due to the one who held his best friend, his friend's wife, and his godsons' lives in his hands: Peter Pettigrew.

He got within viewing distance of James and Lily's home and paled drastically when he saw the door blown off its hinges and James lying on the floor, dead. With a snarl of rage he turned around—and proceeded to spend the rest of the night tracking down Peter Pettigrew; he wasn't the second best Auror in his division for nothing. It wasn't a problem tracking down a rat and exterminating it.

Finally cornering Peter in Muggle London like the scared coward he was, Sirius got within spell casting distance—when Peter suddenly started crying and screaming at Sirius.

"Why, Sirius, why!? Why did you betray your friends like this, why? I thought you liked us better than that! James was your friend! Why, Sirius?" cried Peter, hiding his malicious smirk behind his hands.

"You know I did not betray them, you did!" snarled Sirius, pulling out his wand.

"You did, Sirius, you killed them!" screamed Peter hysterically.

"Why you…" snarled Sirius, raising his wand.

Unfortunately, Peter had his wand behind his back, and before Sirius could react, a blast surrounded Peter, killing innocent Muggles in the crossfire. Through the red haze, he saw Pettigrew cutting off his finger and disappearing into rat form (after waving at him slyly) and into the sewers.

The only thing Sirius could do then was laugh.

That weak wizard had fooled for him so long. What kind of Auror was he if he could not even find dark wizards? He didn't care for the thirteen or so Muggles who were around him or react when the
Auror's came for him. He just continued to laugh, as if he had gone insane. They put him in a cell at the Ministry of Magic, still under the impression the Potters had died that night.

"What will we do with them?" asked one of the Aurors.

They had captured a good amount of Death Eaters that night, however, none of the Inner Circle were caught. They were better at hiding than the others, and Karkaroff was one of them.

"Send them all to Azkaban," said Crouch. His undersecretary, Mr. Fudge, agreed with him immediately.

"Are you sure, Sir?" asked another Auror who just came in with his partner.

"Yes," said Crouch, looking like he would not be moved.

"When, Sir?" asked the other Auror.

"Tonight. Get it done tonight. I give you permission," said Crouch.

"Yes, Sir," said the Auror, nodding then leaving.

"Leave," barked Crouch at the Auror who had asked if he were sure.

"Yes, Sir," said the Auror, jumping slightly before leaving.

"What can I do for you, Sir? Perhaps some coffee?" asked Fudge.

Fudge was like Peter—power hungry, ass kising, and snivelling to the biggest bully in the playground. They would go to any lengths to be the best in the man's eyes.

"Yes, and some biscuits, too, before I go to the meeting," said Crouch distractedly.

"I will be right back with them," snivelled Fudge.

"Can't wait 'til I take over," was all Fudge muttered as he poured the coffee and put the biscuits on a plate, all via magic of course. He didn't approve of how the man was dealing with the Death Eaters. He personally thought they deserved the Kiss, but they would get it when he ruled all of them. He would become the Minister of Magic—he didn't realize just how soon that would happen.

"Cornelius!" yelled Crouch impatiently.

"Yes, Sir" asked Fudge, coming in with the coffee and biscuits.

"Get me the form so I can sign the Aurors' permission to take the Death Eaters to Azkaban," said the man.

"Right away, Sir," agreed Fudge.

"Be quick! I don't have all night!" said Crouch.

Cornelius Fudge went to the file cabinet where all the papers were, the bold letter A standing out, making Fudge feel stupid, as if he didn't know were they were. Opening it, he found the forms he needed and quickly got them to Mr. Crouch as fast as he could.

"Get me a decent quill," demanded Crouch. The one he currently had was just an ordinary one, and he wanted a big, special one. "And ink, too," added Crouch as an afterthought.
Fudge rolled his eyes when he could not be seen while getting the black ink that had a red swirl to
it. Getting the best quill he could find, he put them on his boss’ desk. Finished collecting the items
Crouch wanted, Fudge slumped into a chair; he was knackered after doing everything the man
asked, just like always. He was usually home by now, but the man had stayed extra long.

"I'm sorry to interrupt you, Sir, but your son, Barty, is here to see you," said a woman who looked
extremely nervous as she came in.

"Tell him he can come up, but only for a minute," said Crouch, getting back to work.

"Yes, Sir," she said, closing her eyes as she left the office and thanking God she still had her job.
The last person who had done that had been fired.

"Your father will see you, Sir, just go right up," she said kindly. It was her boss' son, after all, and
he was nothing like his father at all, since he was nice, kind, and good looking.

"Thank you, Ma'am," said Barty with an award-winning smile as he headed up.

"You're welcome," the woman called after him, blushing beautifully as she walked back behind the
reception area.

"Father, what's going on? Mother is going frantic with worry—you know she's ill and her last wish
is for you to spend some time with her!" growled Barty as he marched into his father's office, his
face contorted in anger.

"I will be home soon," said the Minister of Magic.

"What's happened?" he demanded again.

"Voldemort is gone thanks to the Potters. Their son got rid of him," said Crouch.

"What? Gone for good?" asked Barty, paling drastically and suddenly thankful the Minister of
Magic never paid attention to his son so he didn't realize anything was wrong.

"No, he took measures to stop himself from dying," said the Minister, believing what Dumbledore
told him. He did not even hear the horror in his own son's voice. It was no wonder he had joined
Lord Voldemort, for he never got even a second's attention from his own father.

"Well, let everyone else deal with it, and please go home to mum," said the boy, sounding like an
impossibly young child right then, not like a fully grown adult wizard and a Death Eater to boot. It
was easy for all to see that Barty Crouch Junior really loved his mother.

"No. I'm busy," said the Minister of Magic as if he was denying his errant child a sweet, not saying
'no' to his son, a young man who was begging for his father to see his dying mother.

"She won't last long with worrying about you!" yelled Barty angrily.

"Go home and I will deal with you later," snapped the Minister of Magic.

"I am no longer the twelve-year-old you controlled, Father," growled Barty furiously.

"Go home before I have you arrested," snapped the Minister, getting impatient.

"Fine, I wish I wasn't your son," announced Barty, walking out of the office. He couldn't be
arrested or they would no doubt see the Mark, for even as faded as it was, it was still obvious what
it was.
The Minister of Magic signed the forms before sending them off. A Portkey spell had been added to them, so he knew the Death Eaters would be gone by morning. With a satisfied sigh, he sat back, simply enjoying his coffee. He did not want to go home just to see his wife wasting away before his eyes. She was ill and probably didn't have much longer to go, a couple of weeks if she was lucky. He didn't think he could stand it; his wife had been with him through it all, and had been very supportive.

"Would you like me to get your coat for you, Sir?" asked Fudge.

"No. We will be staying late tonight—I want to make sure the Death Eaters are gone before I leave," said Crouch.

"Yes, Sir," said Fudge with a small frown—the part where Crouch had said 'we' was not lost on him.

Fudge fell asleep in a corner of the room beside the fire. Crouch didn't even realize that his Undersecretary had fallen asleep, far too deep in his own horrible thoughts to realize what he was doing.

"Sir!" yelled an Auror suddenly.

Fudge woke up in an instant, seeing his boss was just turning his head he made it look like he was awake and aware of everything. The Auror in question who had just shouted came in.

"Yes?" asked Crouch, annoyed at being brought out of his thoughts.

"The transfers to Azkaban have already started. Five of them are being shipped off as we speak. We will need to do overtime duty if you want them all gone by morning. There aren't enough Aurors on duty right now. James hasn't come in since he went under Fidelius." said the Auror.

"Fine, you will get paid. Just do it and go home after you're done," said the Minister of Magic.

"Yes, Sir! We'll get it done right away!" agreed the Auror.

"Good. You can go now," Crouch dismissed the man.

Just then, the fire in the fireplace blazed green, the color for someone Flooing or placing a Floo Call, and a man in multi-colored robes stepped out onto the hearthrug, his blue eyes like two sharp crystals as he looked at Crouch with disappointment. He had just been told by Minerva McGonagall—of all people!—that his spy, Severus Snape, had been arrested. If anyone could actually intimidate Crouch Senior, it was Albus Dumbledore.
Chapter 3

Invisible

Chapter 3

Rescued, Informed, and Mistakes

Minister Of Magic's Office, The Ministry Of Magic

The man known as Albus Dumbledore came through the Floo, his face grim with disappointment. He had always given the Minister of Magic advice on what to do. Now, it wasn't because of his ego or because the Minister hadn't done what he had asked which bothered Dumbledore...No, it was the fact that he had imprisoned them all without a trials. Karkaroff had illegally been given Veritaserum and had spilled all the names of the Death Eaters he knew, which was how they had found out about Severus Snape and arrested him at Hogwarts.

They all wanted advice from the great and powerful Albus Dumbledore, since Albus had a great amount of respect from the wizards and witches in the wizarding world. It was well known Albus had been offered the position of Minister of Magic, but he had turned it down.* to become the Headmaster of Hogwarts instead. Along with all the trials of being Headmaster, he still had to deal with wayward Ministers who thought they were above the law. He was furious with the Minister of Magic; how dare he imprison people without trials? Even if they were Death Eaters, there may be a few who could get a second chance at life.

"Bartemius, what have you done?" asked Albus, his anger held in check. The only thing which gave away the fact that he was furious was his eyes—they were ice cold blocks lacking their normal twinkle in them.

"I've done what I should have done a long time ago and had all the Death Eaters shipped off to Azkaban without trials!" glared Minister Crouch, still angry from his son's words or he wouldn't have used that tone with Dumbledore. He was, after all, the head of the appointed body who had named him Minister of Magic in the first place, and he could be as easily removed as he had been appointed.

"Two people whom I know are innocent are down in those holding cells!" snapped Albus.

He knew Sirius Black was innocent and he liked the man, but the man he was most worried about was Severus, the man he loved like a son and who had been arrested just some twenty minutes ago. Albus knew Severus felt guilty about everything he had done and knew the Dementors would tear him apart, would feed on that guilt...and eventually, it would drive Severus mad.

"Who?" scoffed Minister Crouch.

"Severus Snape and Sirius Black," said Albus.

"Snape is a Death Eater and Black sold out the Potters," said Mr. Crouch adamantly, his chest puffed out importantly.

"No, Black did not! It was Peter Pettigrew!" argued Albus, angry and showing it.
"Albus, they are going to Azkaban! They're guilty of the crimes they’ve been accused of!" snapped Minister Crouch right back.

He didn't care whether they were innocent or not, he just wanted to be rid of them for good. The fewer he let out, the less chance he had of getting his job taken from him; he still had no idea that soon he would lose it anyway. The Death Eaters all deserved Azkaban—they were the worst sort of wizards in the world, and he couldn't believe the great and light Albus Dumbledore was defending them. It occurred to him that he may be able to discredit Dumbledore in front of the Wizengamot now, then he shook his head slightly at his thoughts. As if that would ever happen! He would be laughed at, they would coo sickeningly at Dumbledore's display of light and goodness.

"Do not make me drag this up before the Wizengamot," threatened Albus.

He would go to any length to help Severus, even if that meant threatening the Minister. He wouldn't let anyone hurt the man he loved as if he were his own son, and had regretted telling Severus he could spy every day, because no matter how much Albus asked him to stop, he never did. He regretted telling Severus he was disgusted with him, too. He had, of course, over the years heard Severus' side of things, such as how bad the bullying was. It made him realize that, perhaps at the age Severus was, he would have been the same, and shuddered internally at the mistake he had made at that age. A beautiful, auburn haired girl flew into his mind; she was Ariana, and oh how he missed his baby sister. It never helped, never eased, as the years went by—people had it wrong, because time didn't heal all wounds.

"You can drag it up all you like," said Crouch, thinking it was a bluff.

"Fine. Do not say I did not warn you," said Albus, then stalked out, heading for the next nearest office with an active Floo. Bartemius Crouch and Cornelius Fudge watched in trepidation as Albus left, wondering if his words hadn't been a bluff after all. Once he'd found the needed office, Albus activated the Floo and began calling all the Wizengamot members to an immediate, emergency meeting. He had absolutely meant every word he had said to the Minister, and he was going to prove his intentions. Calls made and answered by the Wizengamot members, Albus left the office he'd borrowed and made his way down to Court Room 10. He was determined to help all those who were and who could be innocent.

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Wizengamot Meeting Convening in Court Room 10

It wasn't long before the Wizengamot members came in, tired and sleepy from being called at this time of night, which had happened before all too often during the war. They obviously didn't know of the downfall of You-Know-Who, or they would have been up, drinking and celebrating like everyone else. Though, the Obliviator Headquarters was strangely busy Obliviating Muggles who had seen strange things happen.

"Everyone, thank you for coming. Please take a seat," said Albus gracefully.

Behind him, Crouch and Fudge entered, angry with the man for doing this. Sitting in their seats, they waited for everyone else, Crouch sincerely hoping the rest of the Wizengamot would listen to him and agree with him on this one. Perhaps they would be able to get rid of Albus Dumbledore so he could do things his own way.

"What's going on?" asked one of the Wizengamot members.
"Well, we have some great news and some bad news to tell you," said Albus.

"So, what's the good news?" asked Madam Bones.

"Voldemort is dead," said Albus softly.

Most of them flinched when Albus mentioned the name, but Albus refused to stop calling him by his name just because they were scared. He found it stupid that they were all afraid of the name, always insisting fear of the name would cause fear of the thing itself.

"How did it happen?" asked Madam Bones after the cheering and clapping had died down. They all listened, curious about what Dumbledore was going to say; they thought perhaps it was Dumbledore himself who did it. They were wrong, of course, as proved by his next words.

"Nick Potter defeated him," said Albus soothingly.

"Well, that's the best news I've heard in months, perhaps years," said Madam Bones.

"Agreed," announced another.

"So is that all we're here for?" asked a smooth voice from the middle of the table.

"No. The bad news is that I am here to tell you Minister Crouch has sentenced all the captured Death Eaters to Azkaban without trials," said Albus looking old and weary.

"Good! The quicker the better," stated one of the members.

"Yeah," agreed most of the others.

"That is not right. Some of them may have been under the Imperius Curse, and I personally know of two people who are innocent—one of them has been working for me," said Albus angrily, demanding everyone's attention.

"Who has been working for you?" asked one of the members curiously.

"Severus Snape," said Albus sadly.

"He is a Death Eater," said one of them, disagreeing with Albus.

"No, he is far from it. I asked him to spy, risking his life for the light side, which called for his death because of a mistake he made. Of course, he continued on spying, despite it being a thankless task. I know he is my spy, as I have used Veritaserum on him as well as having been into his head, both with his consent, of course," explained Albus, sucking on a lemon drop he had taken from his robes.

"Well, he should be free to go! Albus would not stick up for Snape unless he was sure!" shouted someone from the back.

"Agreed! What about the other innocent person you know, Albus?" asked another member.

"His name is Sirius Black, who was supposed to have been the Potters' Secret Keeper. Lily and James will be able to tell you all it was Peter Pettigrew, who they had made Secret Keeper in place of Sirius. I went to see them before coming here when I heard what happened to my Potions Master," said Albus pleasantly.

"Very well. All Death Eaters will be given trials, and Severus Snape and Sirius Black are free to
"Some of them are already gone," blurted Fudge.

"Well, then, your Aurors are just going to have to get them back," said Albus pleasantly. "As there are no other urgent matters to discuss, this meeting is now coming to an end. There are people to collect, some celebrating to do, and announcements to make," continued Albus, thinking, 'No sleep for me tonight then.'

"Yes, yes, very well...I will make sure everything goes according to plan.

Moody, take Albus down to collect Black and Snape," said Shacklebolt.

"Aye, Sir," said Moody as they left.

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The Cells, the Dungeons of the Ministry Of Magic

It was well known that Albus Dumbledore got on famously with Alastor 'Mad Eye' Moody. The man was well known for catching the most Death Eaters that night—he could see the Mark on their arms no matter how they tried to disguise it, so he knew who was a Death Eater and who was not.

"Snape, you are free to go," grunted Moody, opening the door magically.

"About bloody time," sneered Severus, getting up. His defenses were up already; as he was treated like a criminal without proof nearly all the time, he snarled and sneered all the time to cover his true feelings. Right now, he was covering up the horror he had felt at ending up in Azkaban after hearing the Aurors going on about it. He had been petrified and had prayed Albus would get there in time, but had almost given up hope until that very moment.

"Severus, I am sorry. I just finally got them all convinced," said Albus softly.

"It's fine," said Severus, shivering slightly. The Dementors had been down in the Dungeons of the Ministry of Magic where the cells were, so he had experienced a little of what would have happened if Dumbledore hadn't gotten him exonerated.

"Alastor, go get Sirius and take him to the Potters'. I want to get Severus back to Hogwarts and get a hot chocolate in him," stated Albus.

"Aye, Albus. I will see you later," agreed Moody as he walked further down the row of cells.

Albus and Severus made their way back up to the central area of the Ministry. There, he was given back his wand and everything they had taken from him—which included potions ingredients and pre-made potions; he was a Potions Master, so went nowhere without potions, ingredients, and empty vials.

"Come on, let's get you back," said Albus quietly. He had personally had enough excitement for one night.

"Thanks, Albus," said Severus emotionlessly.

"It's okay, Severus. Now, let's get to my office," commented Albus as they stepped outside the Ministry building, then he Apparated them both to Hogwarts' main gates so they could walk the
rest of the way to the school.

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Headmaster's Office, Hogwarts School Of Witchcraft and Wizardry

"Tea, coffee, or hot chocolate, Severus?" asked Albus curiously.

"Hot chocolate, please, Albus," said Severus. He was freezing cold due to the Dementors that had been patrolling the cells. Chocolate helped, so it was no wonder he was actually choosing it. He normally preferred black, strong coffee, but he wanted to get rid of the effects the Dementors had on him. He refused to let anyone see him weak in any way, shape, or form.

"What's been happening?" asked Severus. He had been arrested before Albus had gotten back.

"Nick Potter somehow defeated Voldemort, and he has been marked. My guess is that he is the child noted in the prophecy. However, I do not think Voldemort is gone for good," explained Albus.

"A one year old child defeating Voldemort...that's unbelievable," commented Severus. He drank the hot chocolate and let it do its work as he sat back, a sigh leaving his lips. He was grateful Lily had survived, angry James Potter had survived, and bloody excited that the Dark Lord was gone now, even if not for good. So many emotions surged through him he wasn't sure which one to settle for, so decided to push them all down for the moment. He would sort through his raging emotions later, when he was alone in his quarters.

"Yes, but it was predicted…it just happened a lot sooner than I ever imagined," said Albus.

"What about the twin?" asked Severus, curious.

"Oh, Lily saw everything, she was in the room when Voldemort cast the spell," said Albus. It wasn't an unusual thing, since Voldemort liked to watch parents' agony as he and his Death Eaters killed their children, then turn his wand on them to kill them as well. Voldemort liked to play mind games with his victims; it was a well known fact, especially in the Order, so the two wizards had no reason to question it.

Chapter End Notes

Big Thanks To Snow Leopard Pasha for editing this and taking time out of her day to do so! :}
Invisible

Chapter 4

Growing Up and Their Hogwarts Letters

Nick and Harry grew up worlds apart, yet in the same household.

Needless to say, they both had very different lives. Harry had no love from his family, few toys, and a small room. Nick had the love of a family, a big room, and anything he ever wanted. The only real rules Harry had to follow were to stay out of the way and never ask for anything, while Nick apparently had no rules at all. Nick was given private tutoring and play dates with other similar-aged children while Harry had to learn everything without a teacher, and was rarely, if ever, allowed around other children his age. Books became Harry's best friends while they were Nick's nemeses.

If anyone had spent even one minute thinking about and watching Harry, they would have realized he was extraordinary.

A couple of months after the defeat of the Dark Lord, Harry was, as usual, feeding himself. He wrote his name across the dirty high chair tray, something very few other children his age could do. However, no one paid the little boy the slightest bit of attention; his father just waved his wand and the so-called mess disappeared.

Many people were always in and out of Potter Manor. The Weasleys were there a lot of the time, as well as many people from the Ministry, including Madam Bones and her niece, Susan. Everyone knew about Nick Potter, since he was always in the newspapers. They never once thought about the other boy who was a part of that family. Sure, they knew he had a brother; however, they didn't care, as it hadn't been Harry who had defeated You-Know-Who or saved the world.

By the time Harry and Nick were three, Harry had learned to do what few other children at the tender age of three should have had to do: he had learned to look after himself, bathe himself, and look after what toys he had. He could, and did, read the books their parents had gotten Nick, who didn't read them if he could help it. Harry hid them under his bed so nobody could take them away from him.

Harry never brought up the fact that he was the one who defeated Voldemort. He knew that, if he did, they wouldn't believe him; they were too wrapped up in thinking his twin brother was the one who had saved the world. They had celebrated every time Nick's name appeared in books, newspapers, and magazines. So far, it had happened twelve times. All the newspaper and magazine clippings had been kept and hung in Nick's room. James and Lily also duplicated them and put them up in their own room.

Remus and Sirius were there occasionally, but they were mostly away doing work for something called the Order. Since they didn't have families, they volunteered to do most of the work. Everyone knew the Dark Lord was not gone, so Albus had asked them to keep being nice to the werewolves. As a result, Sirius and Remus didn't have any time for him, either. Occasionally Remus would speak with him, but Sirius always only wanted to see Nick. It seemed Sirius had forgotten he even had another godson.
Lily had registered two strong women as Nick's godmothers, Alice Longbottom and Amelia Bones, in addition to his godfather, though Lily had wanted to use Remus. Harry didn't have godmothers, only a godfather.

Harry was always bored; he usually spent all his time in his room, reading what books he had over and over again since he could read perfectly. Thankfully, for the twins' fourth birthday, their parents decided to get Nick his own library, paid for with the money and filled with the books people gave them as gifts for Nick for saving the world. The Potter library was locked up, though, as the children were deemed still too young to read most of those kinds of books.

It seemed Nick took after his dad and didn't want to read stories. Harry, on the other hand, was in heaven with all the books in Nick's library, as most were picture books. He took one at a time, so was constantly going back and fourth while reading all the books he could...Which wasn't hard to do, since his parents never even thought about him, or even gave him the time of day. That, however, pleased Harry; he knew he was different from his family. If they had been around, they would have seen a happy Harry smiling and laughing as he read the books. They were Harry's escape from the world which deemed him unimportant.

The years slowly passed, the hero-worshipping seemed to slow down, people saw Nick as an ordinary boy as well as a hero. He did small bouts of accidental magic, though nothing magnificent, like they imagined he would do. James and Lily didn't see that at all; they continued to spoil their first born son. Alice had her second son with Frank; Lily and James were named godparents to him. They named their new son Marcus Frank Longbottom. He was three years younger than Neville. Most people actually called him Frankie.

Neville and Nick were good friends, but not best friends. Nick loved Quidditch and playing pranks. Neville was a quiet person like his father, who liked to draw or play in the garden with his plants. He would have been the prefect playmate for Harry, if he had only been encouraged to pay the slightest bit of attention to the little boy. It didn't help that Harry usually hid in the library every time people were around...Not that he was ever out of the library; he slept and ate his meals there. Some would think he lived there instead of having his own small room.

Harry and Nick were four when they saw their mother's belly start to swell, then he overheard Nick being told he was going to be a big brother, that his mum was pregnant. Nick had been so happy to hear he was going to have a brother or sister...However, it broke Harry's little heart when he heard and saw it.

No matter how much he was used to it, to being left out, it always seemed to hurt. He had tried very hard to get his mother's attention, but nothing seemed to work.

Finally, he had given up and started trying to keep himself occupied. He had never truly been happy in his life before, but no one seemed to care. He was never really a bubbly boy full of happiness; he was content with his books, but never happy.

When they were almost five, their sister was brought into the world. Her name was Roxy Lillian Potter. She had her mother's fiery red hair and her green eyes, and Lily was over the moon. They would soon realize she also had her mother's temper and book smarts.

Harry and Nick were not quite identical anymore. While Nick's hair became a bird's nest messier than it had a right to be (which seemed to be the Potters' only curse), Harry's hair had grown out smoothly until it reached just past his shoulder blades. Nick still got the most attention as his brother and sister grew up, but Roxy had been told nighttime stories about her brave, heroic brother saving the world. As such, it was no surprise when Roxy preferred spending time with Nick instead of Harry.
The only thing Harry had as something like a friend and confidant was his journal. It was a book that never ran out; paper magically appeared in it when he reached the last page. His book was full...of sad and heart-wrenching entries which would have had anyone crying. Remus had gotten two for the twins' birthday, though not surprisingly, Nick's was unused.

The younger twin's, on the other hand...

Dear journal,

I looked out my window today, and I saw my brother again, with his friends. I wish I had a friend to play with...they all seem very happy...Why am I hated so much? Why am I ignored? No one ever says hello to me, it's like I'm invisible. They're playing a game called tag, and they also have the cat my mother bought for Nick. I always wanted a pet, but I'm not even allowed to pet the cat. Nick punched me in the face for petting it. I was left with a bruise, and no one cared. When Nick is hurt, he's cleaned up and sorted...why do they hate me? I would do anything just to be seen for even a minute! I hate them for not noticing me, and I just wish they would love me...Love me as they love Nick. It's not my fault I'm not as noisy or good at pulling pranks as him. I just don't know how, they never gave me a chance.

Harry

There were, of course, many, many more desperate, lonely entries in the journal as Harry grew older.

It didn't feel like a long time until the letters to Hogwarts were due to come. Minerva McGonagall had come over to see the Potters personally to give them their letters for school. She had always liked the Potters; she favored them, though she would never admit to it.

"Ah, Professor McGonagall, what are you doing here? Come in and I will get some coffee ready," said Lily in surprise when she saw the formidable woman at her door. She hadn't seen any of the teachers since Dumbledore's visit the night Nick defeated Voldemort.

"I would like that. I am here to personally give you your sons' Hogwarts letters," said Minerva, a smile on her face.

"That's great! Nick has been looking forward to it—his father isn't in enough, and he doesn't get to play Quidditch often enough," said Lily, shaking her head in amusement.

"So he takes after his father, does he?" asked Minerva, smiling again.

"Yes, that's right. Hang on a minute," said Lily, waiting for permission to interrupt the conversation

"Sure," agreed Minerva.

"Nick, come down here now! Your Hogwarts letter has arrived!" shouted Lily.

"I have two here," said Minerva in confusion.

"Ah, you have Harry's, too. He will probably get it later," shrugged Lily, brushing it off as Nick ran into the sitting room followed by Roxy.

"Right. Here you go, then," nodded Minerva, handing them over to Lily. She thought Harry was perhaps out and about; she had no idea how wrong she was.
"Okay, Nick, here you go," smiled Lily as she found the one with his name on it and passed it to her older son.

Happily, Nick opened his envelope and began reading the contents within as Lily opened and quickly skimmed Harry's letter.

"Mr. Nick Sirius Potter,

We are pleased to inform you of your acceptance to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. A list of necessary supplies has been provided for your upcoming year. If you accept, please write your name on the back of this paper and return it to us by owl at your earliest convenience.

Professor Albus Dumbledore, Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry Order of Merlin, First Class; Grand Sorcerer; Founder of the Order of the Phoenix; Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot; Supreme Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards

HOGWARTS SCHOOL of WITCHCRAFT and WIZARDRY
UNIFORM

First-year students will require:
1. Three sets of plain work robes (black)
2. One plain pointed hat (black) for day wear
3. One pair of protective gloves (dragon hide or similar)
4. One winter cloak (black, silver fastenings)
Please note that all pupils' clothes should carry name tags!

COURSE BOOKS
All students should have a copy of each of the following:
The Standard Book of Spells (Grade 1) by Miranda Goshawk
A History of Magic by Bathilda Bagshot
Magical Theory by Adalbert Waffling
A Beginners' Guide to Transfiguration by Emeric Switch
One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi by Phyllida Spore
Magical Drafts and Potions by Arsenius Jigger
Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them by Newt Scamander
The Dark Forces: A Guide to Self-Protection by Quentin Trimble

OTHER EQUIPMENT
I wand
1 cauldron (pewter, standard size 2) set
1 set glass or crystal phials
1 telescope set
1 set brass scales
Students may also bring an owl OR a cat OR a toad.

PARENTS ARE REMINDED THAT FIRST YEARS ARE NOT ALLOWED THEIR OWN BROOMSTICKS!

"I can't believe it! My Hogwarts letter is here! Mum, can we go to Diagon Alley? Please mum? Can we go?" asked Nick eagerly, jumping up and down.

"Oh, Nick, was there any doubt you'd be accepted? You have been down since you were born," said James as he came into the room, a proud smile lighting his face. He had so many things he wanted to give Nick before he left for Hogwarts.
"Yes, we can go to Diagon tonight! As a matter of fact, we will eat out to celebrate," smiled Lily.

Minerva finished off her coffee and excused herself after saying, "I hope to see you in my House, Mr. Potter." She then departed, Apparating away once she was past the wards surrounding Potter Manor. They had moved in after the events of Halloween, not feeling safe in Godric's Hollow any longer.

James, Lily, Nick, and Roxy were ready to go when Harry walked down the stairs, an empty plate in his hand; he made his own meals most of the time now. His parents either didn't care or didn't see the deep sadness that lingered in the boy's eyes.

"I will get your stuff since you're the same size as Nick. Just stay here," said Lily as she made a Portkey for everyone. "Oh, and sign the back of your letter so I can owl it with Nick's in the morning—it's on the coffee table in the sitting room. Just leave it on the kitchen table."

"Okay," agreed Harry softly, continuing on his way as though it didn't bother him.

He never called them anything if he could help it. They were his mother and father, but he could not bring himself to think of them as such. To him, they were people who ignored him and hurt him so much.

No one saw the sagging of Harry's shoulders or the lone tear that trickled its way out of one of Harry's weary eyes and down his cheek, landing with a plop on the floor of Potter Manor. His family didn't even want him. It hurt more and more as the years passed, though he didn't know why. He would have thought it would get better, but instead, it got worse...The hollow ache just got bigger until his heart was like a gaping wound.
Invisible

Chapter 5

Getting A Wand

Harry would never admit it, but he wanted his family very badly. However, he could not bring himself to be someone he was not.

His parents had come back later at night with brand new books and school supplies. The only thing missing was a wand for him, as the wand maker had not let James take one; there was only one wand for a wizard. He had insisted he would need to see Harry to give him his wand, so James had finally given up and told Ollivander that he would bring the boy as soon as he could.

Harry was excited about going to Hogwarts; he was finally getting away from his family. Perhaps if he got good enough grades his family would finally notice him. He'd already decided he would get better grades than Nick if it killed him and would be the one being celebrated next year. Smiling, he dug into the books; they were very easy was all Harry could think, and honestly, he had read a similar books when he was eight or something.

"Hey, Harry, get down here, and bring your cloak! We're going to get your wand before I play Quidditch with Nick!" yelled James up at him.

"I'll be down in a minute!" said Harry excitedly; he was going to get his wand. He had already read the first book and was starting his potions one.

Putting his cloak on, he lamented the fact that he got the best—just like his brother and sister—since he wasn't allowed to pick them out. It was all Nick's picks, and he just got the same. He never wore the same things as Nick, unless it was accidental.

Mr. Ollivander's Wand Shop, Diagon Alley

"Ah, Harry Potter, I thought I would have been seeing you the other week, but no matter. You are here now. Let's see what wand is truly yours," smiled Mr. Ollivander.

"Yes, Sir," said Harry, walking up to the counter.

"How about this one? Good for transfiguration, holly and dragon heartstring, eleven and a half inches," said Ollivander, giving the wand to Harry.

Smash!

"Definitely not for you, Mr. Potter," said the shopkeeper, snatching the wand back. "Try this one...twelve inches, holly and unicorn hair," offered Mr. Ollivander, holding out a different wand.

Thud-thud-thud-thud!

"Definitely not that one," said the wand maker, fixing the drawers that had come out. "Okay, how about this one? Ten and a quarter inches, cypress and phoenix feather," said Mr. Ollivander.
"Definitely not," murmured Ollivander, repairing the huge crack Harry had made in his window, even as Harry wondered if he'd be leaving without a wand. "You are a tricky one, Mr. Potter," commented the old wizard. "Ah! Try this one! Eleven and a third inches, beech and unicorn hair." Grasping the wand wearily, Harry suddenly felt the weariness melt away to be replaced by happiness as the wand lit up and green, blue, red, silver, and gold sparks came out of it. Blinking in the light of the colors coming from his wand, he let out a relieved sigh—he wasn't leaving without a wand after all.

"Well, there you go Mr. Potter, your perfect wand," smiled Ollivander giving Harry the box. School started tomorrow, so there was no point in wrapping it up now.

"Great. Come on then, Harry, let's get going," ordered James.

"Bye," said Harry shyly before leaving.

Soon after, they were passing the Owl Emporium on their way to Floo from the Leaky Cauldron. "Can I get an owl?" asked Harry, seeing a beautiful owl in the window.

"I don't have the time. You can borrow Nick's if you need one," said James.

Harry didn't reply, just bowed his head, a lone sigh leaving his lips. He had never been allowed something when he asked. After a moment, he realized he had to run to catch up with James. 'I've thought of him as James for a long time...He doesn't want to be my dad, and I don't want him to be, either,' he thought.

"Right, let's go home. You know the name," said James, putting Floo Powder in Harry's hand.

"Potter Manor!" called Harry. He was gone in a flash of green flames.

By the time James got through, Harry was nowhere to be seen. Raising an eyebrow at his son's disappearance, he shrugged it off. He had a son to go flying with, so he shouted for him.

"Nick, I'm back!" called James mischievously.

"Dad! You took ages! Where were you?" Nick demanded, coming down the stairs.

"It took longer to get his wand, now come on, before it gets dark," said James, heading outside.

"Okay!" agreed Nick eagerly, following him.

Harry Potter's Small Bedroom, Potter Manor

Harry watched them from the window, wondering how twins could be so different. He had really tried, but being on a broom didn't thrill him. He had tried to pull pranks, but found turning someone's hair green held no enjoyment for him. Perhaps it was because he had been the brunt of so many pranks from his family, who knew? He didn't like to be loud, he liked to be quiet and read.

Journal Entry:

I got my wand today! It has three magical properties in it, length, wood and core! Eleven and a third inches, beech and unicorn hair! It's amazing, nice and golden blond; the others all have dark brown ones. I asked for a familiar, but I didn't get one; the others all have owls or something of the
sort. I would really like something to keep me company...I remember the time I asked for a cat, and I should have realized they wouldn't let me have anything. I think I will be the only one going to school without anything for company. It still hurts when James ignores me. I mean, when Nick asked where he had been he replied that 'it took longer to get his wand'...it was as though I wasn't his son. If Nick had asked for something, he would have gotten it right away! I hate them I HATE THEM!

Harry

Harry quietly closed the journal before climbing into bed; they were going to be up early tomorrow. The only way he could relieve all the stress, worry, and hate was through his journal. It had been his salvation over these years, the one thing he was still grateful to Remus Lupin for.

Chapter End Notes

Big Thanks To Snow Leopard Pasha for Editing the chapter :)


Indeed, the next morning saw Nick shouting for help and his mother answering his call as though snakes were on her tail. Breakfast was somewhat rushed, and everyone was thankful all they had to do with Roxy was get her dressed and fed—making sure Nick was packed was quite enough, as he hadn't bothered to do it the night before. No one even noticed they were missing Harry, even though Harry was the only one who had actually gotten ready to go the previous night.

"Come on, let's go!" yelled James a while later.

"Coming!" replied the two children at top volume.

Lily, James, and Roxy were all going to see Nick off on the Hogwarts Express; they were going to miss their son/brother very much.

Harry, very much used to the vast amounts of noise his siblings and father made, had grown used to sleeping through it. He'd have never gotten any sleep at all in that house if he hadn't taught himself how to sleep deeply, and the amount of noise wasn't at all strange to his still-sleeping mind. As such, his sleeping mind took it as 'normal', and 'normal' for him meant he wasn't involved, so he easily slept through the trampling noise as his brother and sister stomped down the stairs. Nick got his mother's help with his trunk and they were gone before they knew it.

"James, I think we're missing something or someone," commented Lily as they got the trolley loaded with Nick's things. The box was filled to the brim with toys and other things, five pairs of trainers, two pairs of school shoes, and lots of clothes. Then, of course, there were his books and school supplies he needed for the year.

"Don't worry, Love, everyone is here," said James soothingly to his wife.

"Can I please go this year!?" screeched Roxy suddenly as they neared the barrier.

"No. Your turn will come, Roxy," said Lily, not wanting her daughter to cry, especially not in public.

"Okay," pouted Roxy, who was now six years old.

"All right, Son, go on through the barrier," said James, smirking proudly at his son and the supposedly blank brick dividing wall in front of them.

"Okay, Dad," agreed Nick, standing up straight and proud before speeding off and disappearing through the barrier.

"Roxy, you're next," said Lily, looking proud. Roxy headed through the barrier eagerly.

When Lily and James appeared through the barrier a few moments later, Roxy suddenly yelled in
something like shock, "Mum, DAD! You forgot HARRY!"

"Oh, no, we forgot Harry," said Lily, looking shocked and a little peeved.

"Don't worry, I'll get him and just take him straight to Hogwarts. I'm not missing Nick's first departure on the Hogwarts Express," answered James.

"Okay," smiled Lily, kissing James and calming down as if she hadn't just left her son at home—alone.

Harry woke up feeling better than he had the night before... until he heard silence in the home. He suddenly became worried; the house was never silent unless they ('they' meaning James, Nick, and Roxy, as Lily was generally fairly quiet, anyway) were all out, which was more often than not. Normally, the silence wouldn't bother him, as he was used to being left behind, but he hadn't forgotten that today was September first, the day he and Nick were to start at Hogwarts. Going down the stairs and looking into the rooms as he went, he quickly found there was no one at home. Desperately thinking his family was hiding and waiting for him to regret falling asleep, he yelled, "MUM? DAD? NICK?"

They had left him alone before, but never like this. He wanted to go to Hogwarts, but what if they weren't letting him go? Berating himself for staying asleep, he got his trunk down the stairs with difficulty, hoping one of his family members would come back for him. He was thinking the whole time, 'How could my family have forgotten me? They left me home alone on the first day of Hogwarts!'

James quickly Apparated home with the intent to yell for his other son, but before he could yell, the man found Harry in the living area, sitting on his trunk. Growling at the trouble Harry had caused—in James' view, he always did one thing or another to annoy him—he shrunk the boy's trunk and asked, "Why didn't you come down?" He shook his head in disappointment. Instead of enjoying watching the scarlet train travel out of sight, as soon as it left the station, he'd had to Apparate back home to find his other son.

"I was asleep," said Harry truthfully.

"And I'm the Minister of Magic," mumbled James disgustedly under his breath, but Harry heard it anyway.

'He doesn't believe me?' thought Harry. His own father had practically accused him of lying! Sagging, he wondered again if his family would ever really love him. He already knew the answer to that, but he didn't like admitting it even to himself sometimes. He was, after all, only eleven years old.

"Let's go," said James. Grabbing his son, he pulled him close and they were Apparating before Harry knew it.

When they arrived at their destination, it turned out to be Hogwarts' front gate. Harry's favorite book was Hogwarts: A History, so he knew where he was right away. "Why are we at Hogwarts? Couldn't I have taken the train with the others?" asked Harry quietly and softly.

"No, you missed it. I can hardly Apparate you onto the train," said James, tapping the gates with his wand so one side opened and allowed the two admittance so they could follow the carriage.
path up to the front doors of the school proper.

James knew the castle's magic would have sent a notice something like a magical doorbell to Albus to alert him to the visitors, so figured at the current pace he had to walk at with Harry, the Headmaster would be at the front doors by the time they had crossed the grounds. It made his life easier, as he'd be able to leave Harry with the old man and get back to Lily and Roxy sooner, rather than waiting around with his troublesome son.

Sure enough, as they got to the front doors, they found them open, so walked in to the large entrance hall. At the foot of the stairs leading to the Great Hall and all other parts of the castle, Albus was waiting, smiling and twinkling at them. "To what do I owe this visit, James?" the old wizard asked, eyes on Harry curiously.

"Hello, Albus. Sorry about this, but he missed the train. Can he stay here until the train comes?" asked James as Harry followed him into the entrance hall.

"Ah! Not a problem. Though, who is 'he'?" asking Albus curiously, wondering if the boy was a Potter relative he hadn't known about before.

"It's Harry Potter," said James with a smile.

"Ah. I must say, he looks nothing like his twin," smiled Albus, his eyes twinkling merrily. Although, he was confused why James was saying 'he' instead of 'his son'—the twins should have been raised together.

"Yes, he seems to have missed the Potter looks," said James, looking somewhat disappointed.

"It does suit him, though," said Albus, looking at the boy's long hair.

"Yes, it does," agreed James, even as he thought, 'Thank Merlin he looks nothing like Nick.'

"It's fine. Why don't you sit down here, Harry, and have some lunch—which is about to be served?" requested the elderly wizard as he led Harry and James into the Great Hall and made him sit at the end of one of the long House tables. Harry didn't know it at the time, but the table he had been made to sit at was the Ravenclaw table. Albus went on talking as he sat carefully at the literal end of the table in a transfigured, comfortable-looking chair. "The professors will be here soon. And it's fine, James, why don't you go do what you have to do?" offered Albus merrily, as always.

"Thanks, Albus," said James as he left.

"So, Harry, are you looking forward to starting at Hogwarts?" asked the Headmaster as the food appeared.

"I'm looking forward to it very much, Sir," said Harry respectfully, surprised that someone was actually paying attention to him and asking him about things. It didn't happen very often. He had read up on Albus Dumbledore; the man was very talented and very powerful. He had done a great deal of good things for the wizarding world, so he had to wonder why such an important man was even talking with him.

"That's good. I will have someone show you around if you like," offered Dumbledore. "At least that way, one of us will know our way around Hogwarts on the first day of school," he finished with a cheerful smile.

"It shouldn't be too hard, Sir. I've read Hogwarts: A History—it's great and it helps you out," said
Harry with a small smile.

"You read that, too, did you? I read it not that long ago," said the Headmaster agreeably.

"Yes, Sir, I did," agreed Harry.

"Ah, lemon tart cakes! I just love them! Would you like one, Harry?" asked the Headmaster, suddenly changing the topic.

"I would love a strawberry tart please," requested Harry almost shyly.

"Oh, you love strawberry better than lemon, do you? I love lemon, especially lemon drops or sherbet lemon—both Muggle candies which are very good, if you don't mind my saying so," prattled Dumbledore.

"Who is that and what are you doing all the way down here?" asked Severus as he joined them at the foot of the House table.

"Ah, Severus! This is Harry, and Harry, this is Professor Snape. He's our—" began the Headmaster, but he didn't get a chance to finish his introduction.

"The Potions Professor, I know, Sir. I read about it," said Harry.

"Are you any good at Potions?" asked Severus bluntly, looking at Harry curiously. As the boy had no resemblance to his family, he had no idea he was talking to a Potter.

"I'm not sure about actually making them, Professor, but I'm very good at theory," replied Harry.

"Filius!" called Albus, as the Professor in question had just gotten there.

"Hello Albus, Severus! And who is this? Is there any lunch for me?" asked the tiny Professor cheerfully, banishing his luggage to his rooms.

"Of course there is, and this is Harry," said Albus.

"I see. It's very nice to meet you, Harry. My name is Professor Filius Flitwick, the Charms Professor," said Flitwick, still as cheerful as you please.

"Nice to meet you, Sir," said Harry shyly. He had never met so many new people this fast before.

"Severus, Poppy wants to talk to you," said the Headmaster, turning to Severus when he saw Severus had finished his lunch, knowing the younger man would leave immediately as soon as he told him. Severus was far to skinny for his liking, so Albus didn't want him to go without finishing his lunch.

Sure enough...

"I will go see her immediately," said Severus, rising.

"Very well," said the Headmaster, eating yet another lemon tart, his eyes twinkling brightly at the young man he thought of as a son. So much had changed in ten years.

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"Bye Mum, Bye Dad! Bye Roxy!" said Nick, waving as the Hogwarts Express left the station.
Nick sat down in an empty compartment, as he knew people would be looking for him, and couldn't wait to be surrounded by people. Everyone would love him.

Smiling as the door opened, he saw it was Ronald Weasley. "Hey Ron!" beamed Nick.

"Hey Nick! I'm so glad I'm off to Hogwarts!" grinned Ron happily.

"You have a dirty smudge on your nose. Did you Floo here?" asked Nick casually.

"Er, no," said Ron, trying to get the 'smudge' Nick was talking about off as he didn't want to be embarrassed any longer. Perhaps he should have let his mum remove the dirty mark, but he had been too excited.

Suddenly, the door opened again, and a blond haired boy stood there with two stupid-looking goons at his sides. "They're saying that Nick Potter is in this compartment. It must be you. Come with me and I will help you find the right sort of people," said the blond boy, looking right at Nick and ignoring Ron entirely.

"Sure. What's your name?" asked Nick, liking the sound of the boy and the way he was dressed.

"Name's Malfoy, Draco Malfoy," said Draco, smirking and putting his hand out.

"As in the Death Eater's kid? I'm sorry, I don't associate myself with Death Eaters," replied Nick, shuddering. His reputation would be dragged through the mud.

"Very well then, you can hang around with riff-raff all day if you like," sneered Draco, looking at Ron in disgust. Didn't the Weasley hovel have a bath? He looked dirty.

"I would rather he than you," said Nick defensively.

"You will regret that, Potter," scowled Draco as he walked out, not bothering to shut the door.

"Sorry about that," apologized Nick, though not very sincerely.

"It's fine," said Ron.

"Have any of you seen a toad?" asked a bushy haired girl as she came into the compartment.

"No, I haven't. I'm sorry I could not be of help," said Nick with a—falsely—polite, charming smile.

"It's okay. Oh, and by the way, you have a dirty face. You could have at least washed," said the girl to Ron as she pointed at her nose before leaving, letting the compartment door slide closed behind her.

"Excuse me," said Ron, leaving the compartment. That was the third person to comment on it, so he was going to the bathroom right away to get rid of it.

He came back in ten minutes, his face red from the scrubbing Nick presumed he had been doing. His face was now clean, as were his hands, so he looked much better. When Ron came to his place, he was always clean, so Nick wondered why he was dirty today.

"So, do you think we'll win the Quidditch cup this year?" asked Nick.

They both knew they would end up in Gryffindor, so without further ado they began talking in more detail about Quidditch. In fact, they spent the entire train ride talking about their favorite teams. Finally, at the Hogsmeade station, they got their school uniforms on, creating a sad
disparity; Nick's clothes were brand new and crisp, making Ron's look about ten times second hand. There were a couple things Ron envied about his best friend: his money and his fame. It didn't stop him being friends with him, though. After all, what better way to get recognized?

"Over 'ere firs' years! Over 'ere!" yelled Hagrid, a lamp in his huge, beefy hands. "C'mon. Don' be shy, now. Tha's it, come on, this way!" Once the man was sure he had all the first years, he lumbered away.

"A' righ', no more 'n' four te a boat, now! Go on," said Hagrid, ushering them onto the boats. Hagrid had one to himself, and Nick got onto one he only let Ron on, since he was not being squashed for anyone. Plus, he deserved the extra room—he was Nick Potter, after all.

They all gasped when they got their first look at the ancient castle, and even Nick couldn't help but gasp. The place was truly amazing, as his parents had described it to be in his bedtime stories.

They got off the boats shivering, since by then, night had settled in and it was getting chilly. Not long after, they had left the boathouse and climbed the stairs to a large door. Hagrid raised his big, beefy hand and banged on the door, where a Professor ushered them in and Hagrid said, "'Ere 're th' firs' years, P'refesser."

"Thank you, Hagrid," said McGonagall to him, then faced the first years. "Follow me," ordered the woman. Her hair was in a tight bun and she had a no-nonsense voice and matching look around her.

She led them to the entrance hall and stopped them again just before the entrance to the Great Hall's main doors. It was there where Harry quietly joined the back of the group, coming from a small antechamber he'd been led to shortly before the boats had pulled up at the boat house, as the Headmaster had told him to do. He didn't want to make an entrance or he would just be accused of being jealous of his brother again, so he followed the directions and no one even noticed him.

"Welcome to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. My name is Professor McGonagall. The beginning of the year feast is about to begin, but before you can help yourself to the delicious food, you will need to be Sorted into your Houses. The Houses are Hufflepuff, Gryffindor, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin. It will be your home for the next seven years, and it will become almost like your family. Good behavior will gain you points with your House, while rule-breaking will cause you to lose points. I will return shortly, so make yourselves presentable," said McGonagall. She entered the Great Hall for about five minutes, then came back out and announced, "They're ready for you now. Move along, the Sorting will start momentary."

A silence came over the Hall as the first years were lead up to the front of the Hall, where there sat an old, ratty hat on a stool.

Everyone watched as the hat twitched, then began to sing. Harry looked at it as if it had grown legs and could now walk. A hat which sung—that would give him a laugh when he needed one. He always needed a good laugh with the life he had been dealt. Then again, hadn't the singing Sorting Hat been mentioned in Hogwarts: A History?

"Oh, you may not think I'm pretty, But don't judge on what you see I'll eat myself if you can find A smarter hat than me. "You can keep your bowlers black, your top hats sleek and tall,
"There's nothing hidden in your head
The Sorting Hat can't see,
so try me on and I will tell you
where you ought to be.

"You might belong in Gryffindor,
Where dwell the brave at heart,
their daring, nerve, and chivalry
Set Gryffindors apart;

"You might belong in Hufflepuff,
Where they are just and loyal,
those patient Hufflepuff's are true
and unafraid of toil;

"Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw,
if you've a ready mind,
where those of wit and learning
will always find their kind;

"Or perhaps in Slytherin
You'll make your real friends,
those cunning folk use any means
to achieve their ends.

"So put me on! Do not be afraid!
Moreover, do not get in a flap!
You're in safe hands (though I have none)
for I'm a Thinking Cap!"*

Applause broke out, whether for the song itself or just that it had ended was not known.

"When I call your name, sit down on the stool and place the Hat on your head. It will then Sort you into what House suits you best," Professor McGonagall instructed. She then looked at the scroll she held, and began calling names off it. The first name shocked the Hall, as it was completely out of order.

"Potter, Nick!"

Whispers broke out as he marched up to the stool and sat down as if it was a crime that he even had to be Sorted at all. Every Potter had gone into Gryffindor since—forever.

"THE Nick Potter?"

"He's here? Wicked!"

"Nick Potter, as in, the Boy-Who-Lived? Cool!"

"Hmm," a small, masculine voice spoke in his mind. "Where to put you? You have a big head; you will do anything for what you want…Slytherin would be good for you… after all you are cunning and manipulative…"
"Not Slytherin! Please not Slytherin! Put me in Gryffindor, please! My parents would kill me and
the public would crucify me if I end up in Slytherin!" pleaded Nick looking sick and panicked.
Thankfully it couldn't be seen under the Hat or the professors and students would have wondered
what was going on.

"Hmm, very well then….Better be GRYFFINDOR!"

The cheering was louder than ever as Nick Potter got off the chair and smugly went to the
Gryffindor table, his head held high in superiority. He had proven once again that he could get
whatever he wanted. He had even talked the Hat out of putting him somewhere he refused to think
about. He wasn't Slytherin—how dare the Hat think such a thing?

"Abbott, Hannah!"

HUFFLEPUFF!

"Bones, Susan!"

HUFFLEPUFF!

Harry watched as the students marched, crept, or ran up to the dilapidated hat and were placed in a
House. He wondered what house he would be put in, but he figured it would probably be Slytherin.

"Granger, Hermione!"

GRYFFINDOR!

"Malfoy, Draco!"

SLYTHERIN!

"Patil, Padma!"

RAVENCLAW!

"Patil, Parvati!"

GRYFFINDOR!

Then came Perks, Sally-Anne, and finally, "Potter, Harry!"

Harry calmly walked over to the Hat, hearing the gasps all around the Hall. Not many people knew
about him, after all. He was mentioned once in all the books and it was one sentence.

"The twin of the Boy-Who-Lived?"

"I never knew he had a twin!"

"He has never been mentioned before, has he?"

"Well, well, well, what do we have here? Such ambition, cunning when you need to be, you love
your books and your thirst for knowledge yes…so much easier to place than your brother!"
whispered the Hat, almost grinning widely at Harry Potter's mind.

"RAVENCLAW!" yelled the Hat soon after.
Professor Snape's jaw had dropped, unable to believe the child he had been speaking to earlier on was the child of James Potter. Looking between the twins, he noticed they looked nothing alike outside their height, eye, and hair color. He could tell by looking at Nick Potter that he was indeed a Potter. Looking at the other, he saw hardly any resemblance to the Potters in the boy at all, or even to Lily, which was strange. He wasn't sure what to think of this Potter. He looked nothing like them and wasn't in Gryffindor.

In the immediate future, he decided to think more on it later on that night, when he could actually think.

There were a few announcements after the Sorting (don't go to the third floor corridor or the Forbidden Forest, and outlawed joke products), then Dumbledore motioned and food appeared on all the tables.

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Gryffindor table

Ron was sitting next to Nick, as usual; they were best friends, after all. "So your brother's in Ravenclaw? Strange. I guess it's just like the Patil twins," said Ron, drinking a big swig of pumpkin juice.

"Yes, we've never gotten on. I think he's jealous of me being famous and all. He'll never amount to anything like I will one day, since I'm the hero of the people," said Nick proudly. James and Lily had spoiled Nick rotten—he'd gotten everything he ever wanted, but he was polite and well mannered, well spoken. To everyone, he was the perfect son, and he used that to his advantage at every opportunity.

"Yes, probably just a jealous prat," said Ron, nodding and agreeing with him immediately.

"I'll be writing home about him, that's for sure. Everyone in our family has been in Gryffindor for as long as the Potter line has been going," frowned Nick, sounding disappointed.

"I know, my whole family has been in Gryffindor for ages, too," agreed Ron in understanding.

Nick smiled. Perhaps Ron understood him more than he'd thought, the boy mused, nodding his head. He had been best friends with Ron, and sure, he was great to hang around with—loved Quidditch as much as him—but he hadn't known Ron understood him like that before.

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Ravenclaw table

The first years were already talking to one another, getting to know each other. Harry wasn't sure what he was supposed to do or say, as he'd never had a friend before. He sat eating his dinner quietly, and when someone asked him a question, he answered it. Mostly, they wanted to know about his brother.

"What's your brother's favorite color?"

"What's your brother's favorite subject?"
"What's your brother like?"

"Why aren't you in Gryffindor with your brother?"

"What happened that Halloween night? How did your brother destroy You-Know-Who?"

Those were just some of the many questions shouted at him; Harry was getting annoyed with them all. The worst part was that he didn't know the answers to any of the questions, and he knew he wouldn't have told them, anyway. He felt like bursting into tears; no one really cared about him, it was only about his brother. Even his own Housemates weren't looking at him twice! Sighing, he sat there morosely eating his dinner.

The night for Harry seemed to last forever, but to everyone else, the time went fast, and before they knew it, Dumbledore had stood up. He gave them a warm, friendly good night, telling everyone to have a good sleep—before adding one more thing.

"Now, before bed, the School Song!" cried Headmaster Dumbledore.

The Slytherin students as well as the staff remained silent as the rest of the school made fools of themselves by singing the School Song. Hoggie hoggie hog wash. Nick Potter sang it along with everyone else; Severus, however, saw that Harry Potter stayed silent through the entire thing. The song ended to a slow funeral march, compliments of twin redheads over at the Gryffindor table, who people knew as Fred and George Weasley, the resident pranksters. Harry was glad it was over; he just wanted to go to bed and sleep to get away from all the trying questions.

They were led up towards Ravenclaw tower alongside the Gryffindors, where they parted ways at the moving staircases. Harry didn't so much as gape when the stairs moved. When they got to the fourth floor, the Gryffindors and Ravenclaws changed directions to go to their towers. The Ravenclaw Prefect explained the Ravenclaw opening mechanism—answering a question correctly, always a different question—let them into the common room, and gave a huge, long, lecturing welcome. Harry didn't even bother listening to them, as his eyes were on the books, since he couldn't wait to read them, that was for sure.

At the end of the speech, a different Prefect stepped forward and said, "The House-Elves should have brought all your trunks and things up to the first year dorms by now, so just go from room to room on the hall marked 'first year'—the girls are through the door to the right and the boys are to the left. We Ravenclaws are lucky, since there's only two to a room, and proper space for a wardrobe, dresser, desk, and a large bookshelf for each of the room's occupants, so you have plenty of room to unpack. Off you go, now."

So, the girls and the boys separated and entered their dorms, searching through each room to find their trunks. When Harry finally found his, he was surprised—and secretly pleased—to see that it was in a room half the size of the others he'd seen, but there was only one bed and one of each of the corresponding articles of furniture. He stepped inside and closed the door, locking it before turning to admire the room.

At Potter Manor, much of the home was in red and gold. No, he didn't hate those colors, but nor did he like them. The blue and mild yellow of the Ravenclaw dorm was much easier for him to live with, and it helped to calm him as he went to his trunk, opened it, and began pulling things out to place on shelves and in drawers. It may have been a smaller room than his own at the Manor, but it already felt more like home.

Before he was finished, he heard a knock on the door and tentatively unlocked and opened it to see another first year boy standing there. The boy said without preamble, "I'm looking for my trunk. Mind if I check here?"
"There's only one bed in this room, though, so it can't be here," Harry told him, pushing the door open enough for the other boy to see there was indeed no other bed in the small room.

First, the boy seemed a bit put out. His expression then turned suspicious, and finally, it became anger as he almost growled, "Why do YOU get a single room? You're a Potter—this is the first time one of yours has been in Ravenclaw! My family have all been in Ravenclaw for generations, so if anyone should have a single room, it should be me! Get out, I'm getting my trunk and moving it in here, Potter." The way the boy spat out the last word made it sound like venom.

It frustrated Harry, and more, it made him angry. Eyes narrow and voice deliberately soft and calm, he stated, "I didn't choose this room. If you have a problem with it, take it up with the House-Elves. In the mean time, I'm going to bed. Good night." He then slammed the door shut and locked it again before the other boy had a chance to react.

Without realizing it, he also put up a silencing spell (it faded by morning, though), so as he finished unpacking and climbed into bed, he didn't hear the boy outside yelling and screaming profanities. He didn't know the other boy got sent to their Head of House for a good talking-to, points loss, and a detention, and he didn't know about the strange divide he'd caused in Ravenclaw by refusing to be bullied by an arrogant Pureblood. Some of them respected him for it, and others hated him for it, but all of them really weren't sure what to make of him, so by the next morning, nothing would have changed for him.

He didn't know until morning that his name was now scrolled on a small plaque which had appeared outside the door during the night (every door had a plaque with the room's occupants' names on them), but there was one benefit to it he really appreciated. At least he wouldn't have to put up with his House members asking questions about his brother all year.

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Soon, everyone was waking up for their first day at school. Yawning, Harry woke up without prompting, heading to the first years' bathing room to get a shower before the morning rush. He dressed quickly in his school robes and got out all his new books, which he had read several times already. He used some spells on his bag to make it feather light and a bottomless pit, then moved all his class books into the bag, along with lots of parchment, quills, and ink.

As he left his room, he made sure it could only open to his magic since he didn't want anyone raiding his personal things. Who knew what they would do? On the mild end of the scale, they might steal his belongings and make him do things for them, like answer their questions regarding his brother or write their essays for them. He then started on his way to the Great Hall.

He took twenty minutes to get there—he had gotten lost three times before finally getting it correct. The Great Hall was already full of people, and no one even so much as looked up when Harry walked in; it didn't bother Harry at all. He was used to that kind of treatment. Slipping in beside a boy he didn't know, one different from the one last night, he blinked when Filius Flitwick handed him his timetable with a cheerful, proud grin. Immediately, he began looking it over.

Harry had seen the family owl delivering a letter to his brother; he wasn't surprised, but saddened, when nothing came for him. He had not really expected anything, but was hurt that they wouldn't (or couldn't bring themselves to) even congratulate him, or even tell him how disappointed they were. Harry really hated being ignored—in some ways, being shouted at was much better, since at least it meant they knew he existed.

He was able to sit and eat breakfast longer than some of the others, who were only just getting their timetables and had to go find their dorms again to get their books. Harry already had all the books he would need for the year in his bag.
'I have most of my classes with Slytherin. It's better than Gryffindor, I suppose. The less I have to do with my brother, the better,' thought Harry as he continued reading (and memorizing) his timetable.

Putting it in the front of his bag so he would always be able to see it, he then began wondering what Transfiguration, his first class of the day, was going to be like. He also wondered what McGonagall would be like, though he felt it would be an easy class, as he had learned Transfiguration ages ago.

'I best head up now, it might take me a while to get there,' thought Harry, nodding his head as he got up, grabbed a bit of toast, smeared it with jam, and walked from the Great Hall.

Making his way to class, he was surprised to find the Transfiguration classroom pretty easily. On the desk at the front sat a stern-looking gray and black tabby cat with spectacle markings around its eyes. Since he was nearly the first one there, he went to the very back of the room and took his book out as he waited for the class to start. He had to stop himself from laughing when his brother and Ron stumbled into the room several minutes late and looking a mess.

"Thank Merlin she's not here," said Ron, sitting down. There were only two seats left, and they were right at the very front.

Suddenly, the gray and black tabby cat on the desk moved forward, blurred, and became the stern Professor McGonagall. "Perhaps I should transfigure one of you into a pocket watch so at least one of you may be on time," said Professor McGonagall, sounding both annoyed and a little amused at scaring them as she returned back to normal from her cat animagus form.

"Sorry, Professor McGonagall. It was Ron's fault," replied the Boy-Who-Lived, giving the woman a charming smile.

"Very well. Sit down, Mr. Potter," ordered McGonagall, and Nick promptly sat beside Ron. "Mr. Thomas, I want you to hand out what is in that box," said the Professor, pointing at Dean Thomas, then to the box she meant with her wand.

"Yes, Ma'am," said the boy, sliding from his chair.

"Now, I want to welcome you all to Transfiguration. My name is Professor McGonagall, in case anyone has forgotten, and I want you to work very hard in this classroom. I won't accept anything less," said Professor McGonagall with her lips drawn and the bun in her hair making her look more intimidating with her green witches' robes.

Once everyone had a match, Thomas sat down and the Professor took a step forward, commanding the students' attention with a sense emanating from her which told everyone she would have no nonsense in her class. "I want everyone to take out their books and read the first chapter. I will award any House five points if they can transfigure their match into a needle today. As rare as it is for someone to be able to do so, the points will be well-earned—very few have been able to do it in all my time working here," said Professor McGonagall. The class began working right away.

It was about ten minutes before the witch said anything else. "Well done, Nick! Just a little more and it will be entirely transfigured! If you're able, I will award you an extra five points," offered Professor McGonagall, smiling slightly.

Of course Nick was good at Transfiguration...They both were, actually, but Nick got all the help he needed while Harry had to do it himself. The reason she didn't expect anyone to get it was because...
parents didn't teach their children Transfiguration ahead of time. Not many people liked Transfiguration, but James Potter was great at it, and his sons had taken after him. Most Purebloods were too busy learning Latin and dining lessons, Pureblood etiquette lessons, and Dark Arts to learn anything like Transfiguration.

Harry, himself, had done it almost immediately, but no one noticed either him or the blue sapphires which dropped into the replica of the Ravenclaw hourglass on the class wall that was a smaller duplicate of the one in the Great Hall—every classroom had the smaller duplicates on one wall. Not even his partner noticed; as he was trying to get it himself, his total concentration was on the match. Had McGonagall looked at the other side of the room, she would have seen that both Harry and a Muggleborn had gotten it before Nick. The girl was the same one from the train, who had bushy hair and larger than normal front teeth. She seemed disappointed when the teacher did not look at her, while Harry was just used to not being noticed.

Harry looked away from the girl in disgust, thinking, 'Teacher's pet.' He hated people like that; his brother was like that, too, expecting praise for everything he did. It was pathetic and annoying. He couldn't help but think, 'She has a lot to learn. No one will praise her, not when Nick Potter is around, that's for sure.' He shook his head at the thought.

"Very well done, Mr. Potter!" smiled Professor McGonagall suddenly. "An extra five points to Gryffindor!"

The bell rang soon after, and everyone packed up and began leaving with McGonagall thinking only one person had gotten their match transfigured. Once the students were gone, the woman quickly gathered all the test matchsticks, then frowned as she realized that three people had gotten their match to turn into a needle. She didn't have any idea who the other two were, but she was suddenly looking forward to this year.

Three promising students, all in one class...She would need to figure out who they were. She'd have to check the list for point allocation soon...

She didn't realize she had spent the whole class trying to help Nick get his match right until that moment, then dismissed the realization as irrelevant. She knew he would need all the help he could get; she knew of the prophecy, since Albus and James kept very little from her.

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The first years headed to Defense Against the Dark Arts next, only for it to be a class Harry just wanted to laugh off as a joke. He just hoped the professor was playing with them the first day; if he wasn't, he was a complete, stuttering fool. Harry had gone to the back of the classroom, annoyed within moments, and began reading a book while an enchanted quill wrote down everything his teacher said. It was a good thing he could charm the quill to wait until the stuttering man had finished talking before it wrote it down, otherwise the notes would have looked like a wad of parchment full of squiggly lines and letters. He just glanced over them on his way to Charms, learning more from the parchment than from the man's stuttering mouth.

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Charms was great, as the small Professor and Harry's Head of House was very knowledgeable and happy. He pretty much paid attention to everyone, too, so Harry decided he liked Professor Flitwick. They had to read first again; however, the Charms book was much larger than the Transfiguration book, but the spells were easier overall. Harry spent the class reading his book and pretending to try to work the spell, but Nick cast the spell correctly right away. Lily had taught Nick how to do it; Harry knew how to do it, too, but didn't want any attention to be drawn to him in
a class where the teacher was actually paying attention to the other students, so chose not to work the spell properly.

He wasn't going to be beaten up or get sent letters telling him how much of an attention seeker he was. He briefly recalled one time when he had been little and had tried out one of the family brooms. It had been fun while it had lasted as he had been flying really well, doing tricks Nick had yet to do. James had just called him an 'attention seeker', and his brother had hit him in the face that time.

With a small shudder, Harry just reconfirmed with himself that he didn't want to draw any attention to himself in any class he shared with Nick.

Finally, the class ended and Harry took a quick look around for Nick. The other boy was already gone, along with nearly all the Gryffindors, so Harry called, "Professor!"

"What would you like, Mr. Potter?" asked Professor Flitwick cheerfully, joining him by his desk.

"Can you check my spell for me before I go, please?" asked the eleven-year-old. At the small wizard's nod and 'go ahead' motion, Harry cast the spell perfectly.

"Oh, good job! You've got it! Five points to Ravenclaw!" announced Flitwick happily. "Off you go, now!" added the Professor, shooing the pleased boy out of the room.

Next came Potions, which was with the Hufflepuffs that time. Thank goodness it wasn't another class with his brother. Sliding into a seat in the Potions classroom, he started reading his book while waiting for everyone else to come in. They didn't seem to want to come into the classroom, and none sat near him. He wondered what the Hell was going on; he was right at the back and he knew they were avoiding the front, but they also seemed to be avoiding him. Shrugging his shoulders, he hid behind his book. It wasn't all bad, as he had extra room for all his things, him having the entire bench to himself. He found he liked that just fine, so didn't feel put out that none of them wanted to sit next to him.

Just then, the door banged open to reveal Potions Master and Professor Severus Snape. "You are here to learn the subtle science and exact art of potion-making. As there is little foolish wand-waving here, many of you will hardly believe this is magic. I don't expect you will really understand the beauty of the softly simmering cauldron with its shimmering fumes, the delicate power of liquids that creep through human veins, bewitching the mind, ensnaring the senses...I can teach you how to bottle fame, brew glory, even stopper death—if you aren't as big a bunch of dunderheads as I usually have to teach." The whole speech had been stated in a nearly whispering voice, but the last bit about dunderheads had been snapped out like a thunderclap. **

After a pause, the man in black robes stated, "On the blackboard are the instructions to a fairly simple potion, the Cure for Boils. Write down those instructions, as you will be brewing it shortly. Currently, be prepared to take notes."

He didn't torment the Hufflepuffs or the Ravenclaws as much as he tormented the Gryffindors in his Slytherin/Gryffindor classes. The Ravenclaw/Hufflepuff classes were the best at following instructions and the most peaceful classes, probably because there was no House prejudice to be had. No, the fighting between Houses was between Gryffindor and Slytherin.

Severus knew that Voldemort hadn't just recruited Slytherins, but people from every House. He also was under no illusions, like everyone else—he knew Voldemort was coming back; it was part of the reason why he acted the way he did, as he knew that when Voldemort came back, he would
have to be harder, stronger. Well, some people knew Voldemort would be back, such as Dumbledore, McGonagall, the Potters, and some other Order members...Not nearly enough.

The Potions Master was grateful he didn't have to act in this class, because it wasn't the class where he would be heavily watched...It wasn't the class Nick Potter, the Boy-Who-Lived, was in.

He was startled when he read the register and realized Harry Potter was in his class. Looking for the boy as he called his name for role-call, he found him in the corner of the room, ready to take notes after having written down the potion's instructions. Severus kept an eye on the boy all through the note-taking after roll-call, and right into the brewing after that. The younger Potter twin was brewing his potion with a patience he had only known himself to show for the subject, but was still not sure what to think of the boy.

Even if he thought the boy was all right, he could hardly be caught being nice to the twin of the Boy-Who-Lived. Mind you, he could just tell Voldemort he was corrupting the boy, as that would work—having members of Light families betray their family and friends was one of the Dark Lord's favorite games, in fact. Severus shook his head to clear it. He hated thinking about Voldemort coming back because it just put him in a really bad mood. Sighing, he decided not to think about the boy anymore.

Looking away from Harry Potter, he barked at the students who were about to add the wrong ingredient to their potion.

Harry had seen his Potions Professor looking at him. He was confused, as no one had ever stared at him for so long it began making him uncomfortable. He shuddered slightly, thinking on what would have happened if he had been picked up and hailed the hero. He didn't think he could have put up with it, and didn't know how his brother put up with it.

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At dinner, Nick was the talk of the day. Looking over, he saw that his brother was red and looked ready to explode. Frowning, he wondered what the Hell had happened, so began listening to the Ravenclaws talk until he found out what had happened.

"...Professor Snape was down right nasty to him..."

"...Asked him potions questions he didn't know..."

"...I knew them, though, and so did a Muggleborn girl with bushy hair..."

'That girl is getting on my nerves. I just hope she keeps her nose out of my business. Thank Merlin I don't have her in many of my classes,' thought Harry, shaking his head. Oh, how he felt like strangling the Muggleborn girl. Although, in her favor, Harry found it amusing how his brother couldn't answer the questions when she could. Hadn't he read his books?

He soon found out what questions it was which Nick couldn't answer.

"...Didn't know what he would get if he added powdered root of asphodel to an infusion of wormwood. Stupid..."

'Asphodel and wormwood? Isn't that the Draught of Living Death? I'm going to check that,' thought Harry.

"...Didn't know where to find a bezoar..."
'That's stupid! It's on the second page of One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi, it tells you it's found in the stomach of a goat. It's the second ingredient you learn about. I know he has the book,' thought Harry, wondering what was going on. His brother wasn't that daft, was he?

"...The last one was easier. It was a trick question about the difference between monkshood and wolfsbane..."

'What?' blinked Harry. Oh, Nick was so stupid! 'The questions went from hard to easy. No wonder the Ravenclaws think he's stupid and why Snape was pissed! It's the same bloody plant...!' thought Harry.

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Before anyone knew it, it was the day before flying lessons with someone named Madam Hooch. Harry was looking forward to it, but right now, he was walking along the Quidditch pitch and no one was around.

Nick was good at flying, but nothing like Harry. Undeniably, Harry was the better flier, so much so that even Nick had to admit it. The only problem was that the older twin was a jealous prat. He had been brought up believing he had to be (and WAS) good at everything, so why would he think otherwise? Despite how good Harry was, though, he wasn't a flying fanatic, just a natural—which meant James couldn't have bonded with him over his flying, even if the man had wanted to.

Wanting a taste of flying again, he went to the broom shed and took out a broom. No one was there to tell him he was being an attention seeker, so he could fly for a few minutes; he was going to pretend to be crap at it during class, after all. It had been a long time since he had been on one. His row with his father and brother had made him never want to go on one again, not where someone in the family would see. He wasn't an attention seeker and he never would be.

Climbing onto the broom, he started flying, not knowing it was against the rules. After all, the letter had only said no first year is allowed their own broom at school, not that they weren't allowed to fly outside of their supervised classes. He started doing twists and turns, relishing the freedom it brought him. He didn't like Quidditch (it was too competitive for his tastes), but flying was alright. He didn't see anything exciting about it or worth gossiping over. What he did like was the freedom he felt while flying for a few minutes, though he still preferred a good book.

"POTTER!" yelled McGonagall suddenly, squinting as she tried to see him better, since she didn't have her glasses on.

Swearing silently, he took off for a hidden corner, thinking that, maybe if he disappeared, the woman wouldn't know and think it was someone else. Then he realized, who was he kidding? She had yelled 'Potter'. Banishing the broom back to the shed, he ran to the Library and buried his nose in a book, hoping he would somehow avoid trouble.

He had spent the rest of the day in the Library, and now it was dinnertime. He was just turning a corner when he heard his brother's and Ron's voices. Halting in mid-step, he listened to their conversation.

"No, she just told me I've been made the youngest seeker in a century," said Nick, smirking.

"But we were with you! You didn't go flying, so what the Hell happened?" asked Ron, sounding confused.

"I went by myself a while ago," answered Nick, lying quickly to cover up the suspicion.
Harry's jaw dropped at that.

So McGonagall had thought he was Nick, and now the credit for his skill was going to his brother again. Slumping against the wall, he stopped the tears from falling down his face with an act of will. Crying made no difference. Nobody cared, ever. It was best not to cry over anything, he had learned that the hard way. He still had to wonder why everything he did always got turned into some accomplishment for his brother...First Voldemort, then many other bouts of accidental magic, and now this.

No longer feeling hungry, he went back up to his dorm, not wanting to hear any of the celebrations about how Nick Potter was on the Quidditch team. The last thing he wanted was for everyone to praise his brother for being the best while thinking Harry was stupid and worth nothing. His room was better than the Great Hall, even when he had no homework to distract him—he'd already finished it. He spent the night locked in his room trying to stop himself from succumbing to the emotional agony of that day's new revelation.

Before everyone knew it, Halloween was upon them. Harry was dreading it, listening and watching all the happy people talking about and preparing for Halloween. He had never really celebrated it, and knew he could get away with not being there—after all, they didn't care about him. He hid in his room until he heard the footsteps of his Housemates thud into nothingness. It didn't take long for Harry to get bored, so he searched in his trunk for a book, promptly realizing he had read everything. Getting out his library card, which allowed him to check books out of the Library, he headed to his favorite place in the whole school.

He was so intent on getting to the Library he didn't hear the thudding or smell the stench until it was close. Shocked, he fell when the very corridor shook with each step the thing took. Wondering what the Hell a giant or troll was doing in the school, he backed away, eyes searching for it—and finding a fully-grown mountain troll.

"Conjunctiva!" yelled Harry, wide-eyed and knowing this beast could, and would, kill him. He was even more shocked when he actively realized there was a troll in the school. Harry only realized he shouldn't have done that when it began stomping around and bashing its club on the walls.

If anything, the troll had become worse, but thankfully, the walls were getting the worst of it so far.

Thinking of another spell he could use, he finally decided on one. Pointing his wand, he yelled a spell he had learned from an upper year potions book he had found. It had been among the used potions books in the classroom cupboard when he had forgotten his own one period. He had taken it and the book he was using for his first year. He knew it was a sixth year potions book, but he loved Potions enough to take it, especially when he saw all the notes about the potions themselves and the ingredient preparation written in the columns. Seeing what the book contained, he never gave it back. Potions would be so easy with the scribbling in the margins to support him. Nobody would miss it, after all—it was just a used book stuffed in a drawer for when others had forgotten their books.

"Levicorpus," yelled the boy, putting as much magic into it as he could.

The troll was upside down within seconds; however, Harry couldn't keep the spell going because the troll was too heavy. With a thud, the troll fell on its head. He saw the crunch and just stared as the troll's neck snapped in half. It was torn and hanging open, green troll blood leaking everywhere. Gagging at the sight, he quickly ran from the scene. If he was found there, Nick
would write home, and he really didn't want a Howler from home calling him an attention seeker for trying to save his own life. Especially not in front of everyone, which was when Howlers had a tendency to arrive.

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Albus Dumbledore locked the entrances to the common rooms, knowing whoever was out had killed the troll. He wanted to know who had the strength of magic to kill a fully-grown mountain troll.

"Everyone not in their common rooms come down to the Great Hall immediately," announced the Headmaster, his voice angry as it channeled through the school to be heard by everyone not in their common rooms.

Harry and others who had not been in their common rooms came in one-by-one guiltily. The first to arrive was a teary-eyed Hermione Granger, followed by Ronald Weasley and Nick Potter. Last but not least was Harry Potter.

"Were any of you near the troll at all?" asked the Headmaster, his eyes not twinkling. For a moment, no one said anything.

"We were, Sir," said Ron and Nick worriedly. They had seen the troll and had bolted when the beast had given a huge grunt.

"And what were you doing down there?" asked Dumbledore, his voice cold and hard.

Nick had to get himself out of trouble! He just needed to! He had never been in trouble before and didn't want to be now, so he told the Headmaster everything (or an edited version of everything which made him look good), his voice apologetic and head lowered, gaze on the floor.

"I'm sorry, Headmaster. You see, Ron had been unkind to a Muggleborn girl named Hermione and a girl called Parvati and caused them to be upset. I overheard someone say that they were crying in the bathrooms, but we kind of got lost on our way there and met a troll. I did what I had to do to stop it," said Nick.

"Bit far from where you were meant to be, was it not?" asked Severus, sneering.

"Yes, Sir. We got lost," said Ron, his face, which was now bright red, matching his flaming red hair.

"Very well, twenty points for facing the troll, but detention with McGonagall for disobeying my orders," said the Headmaster, his eyes twinkling again.

"Thanks, Sir!" said Nick and Ron, sharing wide-eyed looks.

"What spell did you use?" asked Severus, eyebrow raised.

"Levitation spell, Sir," said Nick, recalling their last charms class and thinking back on how lucky it had been that there just happened to be an old, magically reinforced, thick, wooden door which looked like it had once belonged on the entrance to the Great Hall sitting in the corridor near them. He had been able to use it to block the troll off so it couldn't chase them by bracing it against two of the statues down the hall.

"Is your potions book new?" asked Severus, stalking forward towards his prey.
"Sir?" asked Nick, raising his head in confusion.

"Is your potions book new?" repeated Snape, talking slowly and deliberately.

"Yes, Sir. My mother bought it," said Nick, even more confused.

"Very well," smirked Severus. So Potter hadn't killed the troll, the brat was lying after all. Or, by the way he was acting, he and the Headmaster were talking about two different events.

He knew the effects of his own spell; it had a very unique signature, even if it was similar to the Wingardium Leviosa signature. Dumbledore didn't realize that, but he had as soon as he had examined the troll. Therefore, it was definitely not Nick Potter, so either he had taken credit for someone else's work or had met the troll and somehow had avoided fighting it using the levitation spell. Interesting. He was curious to know who had his book to even be aware of those spells. He would need to check his Slytherins; only his Slytherins would act like the actual defeater of the troll had—doing something, then running away and not telling anyone what they had accomplished.

If only he had looked at Harry in the moments after he'd asked Nick about his potions book, he may have realized who had his book.

Harry, on the other hand, knew that the book belonged to Severus Snape as soon as he had asked. After all, the spell had been in the book and the spell did not exist anywhere else. So the Potions Master was the Half-Blood Prince...he couldn't help smirking a bit, finding that information interesting, very interesting indeed. Snape's mother had been a Prince, then. No wonder he was good at potions—the Princes had been known for their potions. He had read books and books full of potions the Princes had created or improved.

As good as all that was, Harry was torn between wanting to be recognized for what he'd done and wanting to be left to his own devices like it had never happened...like he hadn't just killed a living creature. It made him angry that Nick was getting the credit for what he had done again, but he was terrified of anyone finding out and what would happen to him if anyone did, so he just stayed quiet.

Nothing was said after that night. Severus, however, was getting frantic trying to find his old potions book, as none of his Slytherins had it. He couldn't believe he had left it somewhere where someone could have gotten their hands on it. It was dangerous; there were spells in there which could kill someone within seconds without the counter-curse, and he knew the counters weren't written in that book. If he didn't find either the book or the student with it, they might try them. It would be his fault if someone else died because of those spells, even indirectly.

Harry couldn't help but think bitterly, 'The first Quidditch match of the season is next. Can life get any worse? Why doesn't anyone ever SEE ME? I was riding that broom! How could she have mistaken me for my brother? We don't have the same length of hair, just for starters.' With a sigh, he sat back and ate his breakfast.

Looking over at the Gryffindor table, he watched as the Head of Slytherin went over to his brother and said something. He wasn't sure what it was, but Snape seemed to hate his brother, and he was glad the man didn't hate him like he did Nick. He seemed to take points from him and humiliate him every chance he got. He was just glad someone didn't blindly love his brother.

Sighing, he wondered what people would think of his brother's skills at Quidditch. Were Lily and James coming to watch or not? He wondered briefly if they'd come to watch Harry fly, but
immediately dismissed the idea—Harry wasn't Nick, after all.

Just as he thought about the Potters coming to watch Nick play, the doors to the Great Hall opened, and with a sinking feeling in his stomach he realized it was James and Lily with Roxy. He swallowed hard as he watched his brother get pats on his back from their father (and a new broom to fly on), pats he should have gotten, and cuddles from his sister and mother, cuddles that should have been his. He exploded in anger, making every single goblet in the Great Hall erupt, causing pumpkin juice and other drinks to spray everywhere.

The Headmaster just waved his wand and the goblets were repaired, their previous drinks pouring into them once more. Everyone shrugged their shoulders and dismissed it while Harry was sitting panting at the Ravenclaw table; it had been a long time since he had released that amount of magic. No one had seen, thankfully. Harry had been thinking since the whole seeker incident, and couldn't help but think that it was much better not being seen. His parents coming to congratulate Nick and lavish him with attention had brought the bitter hate back. Fame or not, his parents should have been the ones proud of him—it had been him, after all!

"Harry, get over here," ordered James as they got up to leave the Hall.

"What?" asked Harry once he was standing with them.

"You're coming with us to watch your brother play, and we're sitting up in the teacher's box," said James, taking his son's shoulder. Nick was already gone, presumably to get changed; the others all made their way to the Quidditch pitch.

Severus felt hate started bubbling up when he saw the Potter family, and watching Harry with his family caused the hate to transfer to him. It suddenly hit him that Harry was a Potter whether he was in Ravenclaw or looked like one or not. Snarling, he too headed to the pitch, hoping his Slytherins beat the Gryffindors; he had a bet on with McGonagall, so they had better win.

Severus had congratulated the Potter boy, but had been surprised at how nervous the boy had been. Said Potter boy was nervous because he knew he wasn't that good at Quidditch. He knew it had been his brother, but the thought of fame held him back from telling the truth.

The result of Nick's lie saw Harry sitting in the teacher's box with his family, sitting the furthest he could away from them without being too obvious about it, but looking very unhappy and resigned.

Just then, the Gryffindor that was commentating on the match started speaking through the enchanted microphone. "Welcome to the first Quidditch match of the season...Slytherin verses GRYFFINDOR!" yelled Lee Jordan, a black wizard who was friends with the Weasley twins.

"First out, the Gryffindors! Beaters Fred and George Weasley, Chasers Katie Bell, Alicia Spinnet, Angela Johnson, Team Captain and Keeper Oliver Wood...and the brand new Seeker...None other than our very own Boy-Who-Lived, NICK POTTER!"

"Next up, the Slytherins! Team Captain and Chaser Marcus Flint, Chasers Adrian Pucey and Victor Mitcham, Keeper Miles Bletchley, Beaters Damian Burke and Tobias Daley, and Seeker Terrence Higgs!" announced Lee Jordan, lacking the proper enthusiasm.

"I want a nice, clean game," Hooch said, her cat-like eyes taking in every player and demanding they listen to her.
Madam Hooch, the referee, blew the commanding whistle; the war drums had been struck. The battle had begun. The long, wooden box was kicked open, releasing the Bludgers and Snitch, and off they went. With another whistle blow, the Quaffle was thrown up.

Lee's voice broke through the swarm of cheers radiating from the stands. "And Flint grabs the Quaffle first; he dodges Bell, ducks a Bludger courtesy of Fred Weasley, or was that George? Flint shoots, Wood moves to save it. Come on Wood! NO! Wood has to jump away to avoid the Bludger shot by Burke. Flint scores 10 - 0 Slytherin."

"Angelina Johnson has the Quaffle, passes to Bell, who throws it to—intercepted by the Slytherin Chaser Mitcham, who passes to Flint. He scores 20 – 0 Slytherin." Three quarters of the stand masses booed loudly, stomping their feet roughly in protest. The green and silver-attired crowd yelled their support.

"No sign of the Snitch so far. Nick Potter, Gryffindor's new Seeker, is riding the brand new, state-of-the-art Nimbus 2000, the best broom on the market today—"

The advertisement for the new broom was cut off shortly by a reprimand of, "Mr Jordan, comment on the match, NOT the broom." McGonagall's voice snapped harshly.

Lee Jordan, third year Gryffindor, murmured a nonplus, "Sorry, Professor," while dancing away from McGonagall's reach. The play-by-play commenting began again. "And the snakes steel the Quaffle again. The Weasley twins hit a Bludger each at the Slytherin chaser Pucey. They miss. He scores. 30 - 0 Slytherins."

Twenty minutes passed. The green army had clearly taken a commanding lead. The score had advanced to 120 - 40 Slytherin. "Johnson has the Quaffle, let's hope she can keep it together to begin a comeback. Go Johnson! Show those snakes! Keeper Bletchley is hit with a Bludger in the stomach. Nice aim Fred or George. Bell scores. 120 - 50 Slytherin. Bletchley is still in game, shaking off the effects of the hit." Jordan continued as several warnings from McGonagall filled the stadium.

"Is that the Snitch?" Lee asked excitedly, cutting off the Transfiguration Professor. The stands silenced, looking intently at the Seekers. "Potter dives, heading fast to the ground. The Slytherin Seeker dives down, Higgs overtakes Potter. Higgs pulls up and Potter darts back up missing the ground by mere inches, the Snitch has disappeared once again."

A half hour passed, Slytherin still dominant. The Slytherin Beaters had stepped up their attack. Burke and Daley were blasting the Bludgers at the Gryffindors, double teaming the Chasers. The Weasley twins were too busy protecting their fellow team mates from bodily harm to break up Slytherin advances. The score soared to 250 - 60 Slytherin. The mighty lions were loosing spirit; their pride had taken a major bruising.

Higgs was making slow circular passes, looking for the Snitch. Occasionally, he would dart down into a sharp dive to break up a Gryffindor play. Everyone watched in horror as Nick Potter's broom gave a violent jerk. Or mostly everyone; the Slytherins and Harry couldn't give two sods.

Then another.

The broom would not respond to Nick's commands. It was as if it had a mind of its own. And it wanted its rider off NOW.

"Potter seems to have lost control of his broom. I guess the Gryffindors were wrong to use a first year. Shows why there's a rule against it!" Jordan stated for those few who hadn't already noticed.
The stands had noticed. A silence fell over the field. Confusion and murmurs grew as time passed. Flint signaled his Beaters to take out Wood.

Two Bludgers hit the Gryffindor Captain and Keeper, knocking him unconscious and off his broom.

No one was paying attention, eyes fixated on the Boy-Who-Lived who was dangling off his Nimbus 2000 broom. Flint seized the Quaffle; they couldn't miss such a brilliant opportunity to ensure they won this match, even if Nick Potter caught the Snitch.

260 - 60 Slytherin.

Nick's broom bucked to the right. The raven haired boy held on looking petrified.

270 - 60 Slytherin.

The Boy-Who-Lived looked at the teachers his eyes begging for his parents to do something. Every time his friends and admirers tried to help, he would be jerked further up.

290 - 60 Slytherin. Flint was enjoying tossing the Quaffle through the three rings with no resistance.

Suddenly, Higgs spotted the Snitch. Diving after it, he paid no mind to the boy who was barely clinging to his broom.

300 - 60 Slytherin.

Higgs was flying blindingly fast after the Snitch. Right. Left. Right. Down. Up. Down. Left. He diligently followed the little golden ball.

310 - 60 Slytherin.

Suddenly, the broom stopped bucking and Nick Potter was able to get control of his broom back so he could follow Higgs and the Snitch. No one realized the broom stopped bucking because James got between Quirrell and Nick while trying to figure out a way to help his son.

320 - 60 Slytherin.

Higgs was nearly there, the gold ball was twitching within a few inches of his reach.

330 - 60 Slytherin.

The Seeker clutched his fingers around the winged menace. Higgs smirked, the Slytherins had won. Harry felt like jumping for joy, but he kept his cheers to himself, knowing the trouble he would be in; for once, it had been proven Nick wasn't the best.

A crowd had already gathered, waiting for the heroes in green and silver.

The army dressed in red and gold trudged off the battlefield, battered and worn. They had lost.

"I thought you said he was good?" asked Severus, sneering.

"He was, Severus! Perhaps it's just nerves," insisted McGonagall.
"Couldn't it have been the other Potter?" asked Severus suddenly, causing Harry to stiffen and pray McGonagall didn't listen. He didn't care about Quidditch anymore, and the Gryffindors lost either way.

"Harry doesn't fly, he's never been on a broom in his life," said James, sneering at Severus. He was, of course, lying through his teeth.

"Strange that, he was when we did flying practice," said Madam Hooch.

"There is a first time for everything. Excuse me, I want to see if my son is all right," said James, running to catch up with his wife, Roxy, and Nick, leaving Harry behind.

"Well, you owe me 20 galleons, Minerva," said Severus, smirking. As he made his way from the stands, he noticed a miserable-looking Harry disappearing towards Ravenclaw tower and vaguely wondered what that was all about.

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Christmas was upon them all before they knew it, and it was time for everyone who was staying to sign up. Harry signed up to stay, but his brother was going home to Potter Manor. Harry would rather stay, and they wouldn't miss him anyway, plus he wanted to learn more magic. What better way than to stay over Christmas and read all the time? He wondered briefly if he would get any presents, but he knew his parents had forgotten last year, and had only vaguely compensated him with some of the gifts Nick and Roxy had gotten and didn't want. He would have been stupid not to see his brother's and sister's names on the name tags.

In the meantime, he got his first detention from Snape; Severus was getting more and more suspicious about the boy, but he couldn't put his finger on what it was. The detention would have given him a better idea of what it was, however he hadn't been able to monitor that detention. Dumbledore had called him up to his office to talk about his precious Boy-Who-Lived and the various plots Albus had in motion; it was getting on his nerves. His last nerve, at that.

So, Harry had been forced to serve detention with Nick, Ron, and Draco Malfoy. Harry walked away from them, even though he had been told to go with Malfoy. Only problem was, Malfoy was just a coward who hid behind a tree just inside the Forbidden Forest.

He wasn't far from his brother, but out of nowhere, an agonizing pain hit his forehead. It was worse than a migraine or any headache he had ever had, causing him to fall to his knees. However, the pain started receding slightly moments later, and he looked up, gasping as he saw a black shadow approaching his brother. He knew it was Voldemort.

Of course, his brother wasn't grasping his forehead or suffering pain; he wasn't the real Boy-Who-Lived, so there was no connection. Nick had no idea that the black thing was Voldemort, so Harry thought he should do something to help, but seconds later, he could hear hooves. A centaur appeared to rescue his brother, so he backed away, but stayed close enough to hear what Nick and the centaur were saying.

"What was that?" Harry heard his brother ask.

"Do you know the properties of Unicorn Blood?" asked the centaur.

"No," answered his brother. Harry snorted—he knew that one, and was thinking it as the centaur said it.

"It is a monstrous thing, to slay a unicorn. Only one who has nothing to lose, and everything to
gain, would commit such a crime. The blood of a unicorn will keep you alive, even if you are an inch from death, but at a terrible price. To have slain something so pure to save yourself, you will have but a half-life, a cursed life, from the moment the blood touches your lips," explained the centaur quietly and seriously.

Harry could not help but frown and think, 'Who would choose such a life?' even though he knew the answer—Voldemort.

"So?" was all his brother asked. Harry had to snort softly in derision. Was Nick really that stupid, when he KNEW, just as Harry did, that Voldemort would be back?

"There is only one person who would do this, to survive long enough to enter Hogwarts," said the centaur.

"So?" asked Nick again, looking annoyed.

Harry, however, grasped what the centaur was trying to tell his brother. Voldemort! There must be something in the school which would give him his body and life back. What could it be? There was nothing which could do that was there? There was only one thing he could think of, the Philosopher's Stone, but even then, it belonged to Nicolas Flamel. Why would it be in Hogwarts?

Slowly, the pieces began to make sense...The break-in at Gringotts, then the Stone being taken to Hogwarts. Flamel obviously didn't think the Stone was safe, but Voldemort should not have been able to get into Hogwarts. The castle was said to be the safest place on the planet. However, he didn't know that, by the end of the year, he would be changing his mind.

"Hello, there, Firenze," Hagrid's voice suddenly boomed from nearby.

"Here is Hagrid. This is where I leave you, Nick Potter. Good luck. You will need it," said Firenze the centaur but he was looking into the trees where Harry was standing, and Harry had the eerie sensation Firenze knew he was there. Finally, as Hagrid was approaching Nick, the centaur left.

"Goodbye," said Nick, joining Hagrid, the monster in the cloak already forgotten.

Harry stood there, unable to believe what he had just heard; he wondered how thick his brother was. Perhaps he would put the rest of the clues together later, but right now, he had to get back to the others. He didn't want to stay in the Forbidden Forest any longer, and the last thing he needed was for Voldemort to find out that it was really him who was the Boy-Who-Lived. He would, when Harry was screaming in pain, clutching his bloody scar while Nick didn't even react!

"Where's yer brother?" asked Hagrid.

"I don't know, I wasn't with him. Ron ended up wandering off, and I don't know where the others went," said Nick.

"Well, come on, then. Le's get lookin' for 'em," replied Hagrid, holding up a huge lantern.

-Meanwhile for Harry-

As he was heading towards the trail, he saw a unicorn and stopped to stare.

It was bleeding silvery-blue blood which glinted in the moonlight, and quite heavily, at that. He knew some healing spells and hoped they would work on the injured creature laying nearby, even as he hoped the unicorn would stay there so he could approach it TO heal it. Thankfully, the
creature stayed still as he approached and crouched by the wound. Sure enough, the spells did work, but only a little. Harry began biting his lip, not wanting to see such a beautiful animal die.

Just then, he remembered the potion he had made while experimenting with the HBP's book. He dug quickly in his bag and pulled out a healing potion. It was a fairly basic healing potion, but was still difficult to make normally...but with the HBP's potions book, he was able to brew it—and not just AT quality, BETTER THAN standard quality.

Pouring the potion on the gaping wound in the unicorn's hide, he watched intently as the wound closed. Sighing thankfully, he actively looked at the unicorn for the first time and found himself in awe of the beautiful, pearly-white mane and its long, slender legs. Slowly but not threateningly, he started petting the unicorn softly, and as did, he couldn't help but think, 'They're so white that it makes snow seem a greyish color.'

He was surprised the unicorn didn't move, as it was well known that unicorns only liked women's touch, and mostly pure women's touch. However, for whatever reason, the unicorn didn't move and let him pet her.

Quickly putting everything away, he was awed when a golden hoof came up and cut her skin shallowly on the opposite foreleg. Harry was awed, because very,very few had ever been given unicorn blood freely, and none of them in the last few hundred years. Shaking slightly, he gathered only one large-sized potions vial—about a cup— of it. After all, the unicorn had lost a lot of blood. He tucked the potion bottle safely away, knowing he would carry it always.

"Goodbye," was all Harry said, before running until he got back to Hagrid and Nick, led somewhat by Hagrid's voice; he could never mistake that loud voice for anyone else.

"I'm here, is detention over? By the way, the hurt unicorn is over there," said Harry, pointing in its direction.

"Oh dear," said Hagrid, lumbering over towards the hurt unicorn with the two boys following.

They got there to see it getting up on unsteady feet and trotting back into the forest, dipping its head slightly. Harry knew it was at him, but both Hagrid and Nick thought it was directed at Nick Potter, the Boy-Who-Lived. He was, after all, golden and pure, and the unicorn was able to sense that, or so they assumed. Harry seethed, but didn't say anything.

Finding Draco and Ron arguing at the edge of the Forest, they went back to school. Detention was finally over. They all went to their beds, glad to be out of the Forbidden Forest and away from the strange creatures there. Although, Harry just wanted to hide in the shadows; he hated people looking at him so much, especially the way Dumbledore looked at him in disappointment and the way Snape looked at him searchingly.

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Harry knew immediately what was happening when he saw Dumbledore leaving, and the look Quirrell was giving the Headmaster's retreating back. Frowning, he followed Quirrell, knowing the Professor had Voldemort attached to him somehow. After feeling his scar constantly aching in the DADA class, it was hard not to.

Harry followed until he knew Quirrell was in a place no one would look for him, stunning him, binding him, and leaving him for dead. He then took off, unaware that his stupid brother and friends were going into a maze, not because of Voldemort, but because of Dumbledore's manipulations. He wanted to test Nick Potter; he wanted to know if he would be able to take on Voldemort when the time came.
They got through the devil's snare after getting past the dog, and through Flitwick's charmed flying keys, past the troll that was already dead to the world, then past the chess set, where Ron ended up unconscious and injured. Of course, Hermione stayed to help Ron while Nick took off on what he thought would be a heroic adventure.

He got to the last obstacle and found himself, before he knew it, in front of a mirror. Not just any mirror, but the Mirror of Erised. Nothing heroic happened; he just stood there until Dumbledore came. However, Dumbledore was sorely disappointed at not being able to save his savior from anything—nor had Nick been able to access the Stone hidden within the Mirror.

Dumbledore sighed before taking him back up to the school, past Snape and McGonagall, the latter of whom looked relieved. However, Dumbledore was far from relieved; he had known Quirrell had been hosting Voldemort, and had expected Nick to fight him. Now, the Defense Professor seemed to have disappeared, and Nick had done nothing, not even retrieved the Stone from the Mirror.

"Where is Quirrell?" asked Dumbledore in mild irritation.

"We don't know. We haven't seen him since you left," said McGonagall.

"I did tell you I suspected him," said Snape, scowling fiercely. He then headed for his personal quarters. None of his Slytherins were missing, so it had nothing to do with him, and right then, the less he had to do with the Headmaster or McGonagall, the better and happier he was...Especially when the Headmaster was meddling—no good ever came out of it.

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The Leaving Feast

"Another year gone! Now, as I understand it, the House Cup needs awarding. In fourth place, Gryffindor, with three hundred and fifty points! In third place, Hufflepuff, with four hundred and ten points! Second place goes to Ravenclaw, with four hundred and ninety points! And finally, the first place winners, Slytherin House, with an outstanding five hundred points!" announced the Headmaster, and everyone in the Hall clapped for the Houses as they were named.

The Slytherins were cheering like mad, and Harry was clapping as well, happy that at least Gryffindor—and Nick—hadn't won. Also, he was proud of himself, as he had earned most of Ravenclaw's points. Well, at least he thought he had.

Sighing softly, he could hardly believe the year was already over. Now he had a whole summer of being ignored to look forward to, but hey, he did have some books he could read. Madam Pince had let him take them out; she knew his love for reading, and while they would be slightly overdue, it didn't matter that much to her as long as they were with someone who would appreciate them.

"However, some last minute House points need awarding!" shouted Dumbledore, silencing the room. "To Miss Hermione Granger, for the cool use of intellect when others around her were unable, fifty points!"

At the words, the Gryffindors became excited and cheered, while the rest of the Hall sat in stunned silence, trying to understand what was going on.

"I award Mister Ronald Weasley fifty points for the best played game of chess Hogwarts has seen in many long years!"

The Gryffindors cheered louder as Percy shouted, "That's my brother!" and proudly puffed out his
chest as though he could take credit for what Ron did.

"And finally, to Mister Nick Potter, for pure nerve and outstanding courage, I award...sixty points!"

"We're ten points ahead of Slytherin now!" Hermione squealed, and the cheering from the Gryffindors went wild, causing the others in the Hall to wince slightly. The noise was deafening enough to send the owls flying all the way from the owlery.

When it finally died down, Dumbledore said, "Yes, yes, well done, Gryffindor, well done. It seems a change of decoration is in order." He completely ignored the looks of betrayal from everyone but the Gryffindors and McGonagall as the banners were changed to Gryffindor's.

Harry sat there, his mouth gaping, unable to believe the Headmaster had just done that. Looking at the Slytherins' and his Housemates' reactions, he smiled almost sadly, knowing how hard they had worked to get their points. While Ravenclaw wouldn't have won, anyway, for the Slytherins to be stripped of the chance of winning the Cup in seconds just before getting it was bound to suck. Also, it meant Ravenclaw was bumped down to third place, negating even an honorable mention, which was just as bad.

That night was subdued for the Slytherins, as well as the Ravenclaws and Hufflepuffs. They thought what Dumbledore had done was wrong, literally cheating a hard-won House Cup away from its true winner. They didn't even need to look at the Slytherin table to see that, but a look at said table showed clearly the results of being cast aside in favor of the Boy-Who-Lived. They were all loyal to their friends and Housemates, but the expressions on the Slytherins' faces made them wince in sympathy. No masks could hide their hurt and anger over what Dumbledore had done. Severus Snape however, was fuming mad, and if looks could kill Dumbledore—he surely would have been dead by now.

However, for the Gryffindors, it was a different matter entirely. They didn't care how many people had been hurt, only about winning, and continued on cheering and eating the feast, enjoying their last night at Hogwarts.

-Next day-

"Come on! Get on the train, it's leavin'!" yelled Hagrid as the whistle started howling.

Harry just wished he could stay at Hogwarts forever. He could live in the Library for all he cared, it was better than going back to a family that hated him, a place where he was completely invisible. Sighing softly, he got on the train, still hurt deeply every time he saw other students with familiars—he knew he would never be able to experience that bond.

Chapter End Notes

* The sorting song was taken directly from the first Harry Potter book—I claim no hold over it!

** I don't think this needs saying but the paragraph was taken from the first Harry Potter book :) I just love it and always like adding it—it belongs to J.K Rowling.
Chapter 7

The Summer Then Back At Hogwarts - Year Two

“Nick’s exam results will be coming soon James, it’s so exiting, I bet he did the best in his class” said Lily beaming with pride. She thought so much of her son; she just didn’t realize just how blinded she was.

“Of course he did, I’m going to train him, he needs to know more about Quidditch, more practice the better he will be” said James beaming with pride.

Harry walked in, he rolled his eyes again, and his parents were talking about Nick again. It’s just a shame no one really cared or looked at him. As soon as they see it’s not Nick he is looked down at then not spoken too.

Harry started making a sandwich, it was just after dinner time but Harry had not eaten much.

“What are you doing? We just had dinner” said Lily; she didn’t want her children getting fat.

“I didn’t have much dinner, I’m hungry” said Harry softly.

“Well go hungry, go to your room, the next time you better ask” said Lily angrily.

“MUM I’M HUNGRY! I’VE JUST FINISHED ALL THE HOMEWORK” yelled Nick coming into the kitchen.

“Here” said Lily giving Nick Harry’s sandwich.

Harry’s jaw dropped, how could she do that? He had eaten most of the food at the table! Now he was getting his sandwich. Scowling he walked away, feeling in a worse mood than ever. He was already counting the days until he went back to Hogwarts. He had read the Prince’s book again, he dared not try any of the spells, after what the spell had done to the troll, and he shuddered to what it could do to a human being.

He wondered what his parents would think of his grades, he hoped he had done better than his brother. He wanted his parents love, he wanted them to be proud of him and stop ignoring him. He had a feeling that this was never going to happen, but he just had to feel hope. Hope that one day he would be seen, heard and spoken too, by his family. He dreamed many dreams of them being proud of him, only to wake up to reality.

He went up to his room and he put all his first year books on his shelf, along with all the other books he had collected over the years. His journal though stayed in his trunk along with his school clothes, he didn’t want them nosing in it. He had spelled it so only he could read it or anyone he wanted to read it. He didn’t know if the spells would hold so he wasn’t taking any chances.

“His results are here!” shrieked Lily; a few days later as they sat down for breakfast.

“Open them!” exclaimed James.
“In first place there is” said Lily excitedly, but when she saw who it was her face fell.

“What is it love?” asked James.

“Hermione Granger, she is first place,” said Lily looking like she had just had the wind knocked out of her.

“Ah well, who has second place?” asked James, perhaps his son had come second.

“Harry” said Lily looking confused, how had her other son done so well.

“Third?” asked James, his son better be on the at least top three.

“Draco Malfoy” said Lily looking sad.

“His marks are probably set. Lucius Malfoy has the money to do it!” said James angrily.

“Yeah,” said Lily not cheering up the slightest.

“So how good did Nick do?” asked James.

“Let me see” said Lily, reading the list, it was from who was best in class to the least.

“He is half way down, number twenty nine,” said Lily looking hurt.

“I don’t understand why, he is a good wizard, why all that way down?” said James.

“Ronald Weasley is right next to him, that’s what it is Ron Weasley is distracting him,” said Lily.

“Yes, Nick you will stop playing around with Ron Weasley, and if you are not further up next year you will be taken to a different school or home schooled” said James seriously.


“Fine but if you are still this low next year you are out of Hogwarts” said Lily; she knew her son could do better than this.

“Ok mum I will do better I promise, I was so distracted with the whole Voldemort thing” said Nick sadly.

“Of course that’s what it was, oh Nick we are so sorry, we wont ask you to leave Hogwarts again, next year you will be the best won’t you” said Lily hugging her son.

“Of course mother” said Nick smiling at her.

“I’m going to bed, goodnight” said Harry. He ran to his room, opened his journal and began writing furiously. Tears didn’t fall; he hadn’t cried in a long time, life was so unfair.

Journal Entry

Our Results Just came back, instead of opening the actual results they wanted to see how good he was compared to everyone. I came second, Nick came twenty ninth. He used the excuse about Voldemort and the stupid stone; they didn’t even bother about my results. I didn’t even get a well done they didn’t even acknowledge me.

I feel so sick and alone I really don’t know what to do anymore. I don’t know how much longer I
can remain in this house. I just want to die sometimes would they even notice? Not until they smelt my rotten corpse they wouldn’t. I hate NICK! I HATE MY PARENTS I HATE THEM SO MUCH!

I hate that I get hurt every time they do it, why do I keep deluding myself? I always know what’s going to happen yet I just let it. I have to stop caring but how? How do I stop wanting my parents approval? I wished I was adopted, I wish I had a different family. Any family would be better than this one I hate my life.

Harry

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Harry had floo’ed to Hogsmeade one day, unable to stand being in the Manor anymore. Last night he had seen Nick and Roxy getting kisses and cuddles before bed and it made him realize how unloved he was. They hadn’t done that to him for years. He spent his day wandering around, until he got to a newly opened corner shop. It sold newspapers, sweets and everything you might need from toilet roll, to owl seed.

“Excuse me are you looking for someone to deliver newspapers ma’am?” asked Harry politely.

“Yes we are, dear” said the woman nicely.

“How much?” asked Harry curiously.

“Fifty Galleons dear,” she said. It was a lot of money but then again it was a load of newspapers. To be delivered all around Hogsmeade the place wasn’t as small as it looked.

“You are looking for two people for two jobs?” asked Harry.

“Yes we are” she said.

“Where?” asked Harry softly.

“Diagon Alley and Hogsmeade” she said thinking she might just have found someone to deliver the newspapers.

“I would love both jobs please, day and night” said Harry.

“Are you sure dear? I mean it’s a lot to do for a child your age? Speaking of which what age are you?” she asked.

“Thirteen ma’am” lied Harry covertly.

“Hm…very well, the jobs are yours, if you want to start today then you are most welcome also what is your name?” she said.

“I would like that, but I will need a map until I get familiar with the areas my name is Harry,” said Harry; he didn’t know his way around Diagon Alley or Hogsmeade properly just the shops not houses.

“Very well, you will be paid at the end of every week; you will be getting a hand full every week that’s for sure. Two hundred galleons, its fifty for delivering the morning paper all week, and it’s another fifty for the evening paper as well. On the weekend there is another paper but you get one
hundred for delivering them, because there are more of them” she said.

“I’ll take it, can I get the papers?” asked Harry hyper.

“Sure, they are already done and over there, I’ve been using owls but they were not happy.” she said smiling.

“Well they can be happy now I will deliver them” said Harry.

“Good, of you go then” she said handing the papers over.

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“So how did it go? Find everything all right?” she asked watching the flushed child coming in three hours later.

“Yes, found every door, it’s not as hard as I thought” said Harry softly.

“So you want the job then?” she said.

“Of course” said Harry.

“Then be here at five to deliver the evening papers” said the woman.

“I will be goodnight” said Harry.

“Goodbye” said the woman.

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This was what Harry did the rest of the summer, delivering newspapers, awake before everyone else and back before everyone else also. He had lots of his own money, this was his freedom, and once he had enough he was leaving. He knew enough about Muggles to live among them. They would never think to look in the Muggle world for him; he was finally satisfied and better yet free.

He was still going to Hogwarts; he just would not go home after school. He was not spending another day with the Potter’s, they didn’t want him and he doubted they would realize he was missing anyways. They would just be glad he was gone; he would lie to them telling them he was staying at a friend’s house.

Eileen the woman who runs the newsagents was grateful for Harry; he not only delivered the papers. But helped her re-stock the shelves, Eileen was getting too old to keep up with everything. It hadn’t been as easy as she first thought. She thought it would be an easy way to get an income. Harry was such a nice little boy, and he had done wonders to Eileen’s life. Making it so much easier even if it was something as simple as stocking the shelves. She didn’t have much magic unfortunately with all the inbreeding going on in pureblood families. It was the main reason she had gone away to the Muggle world in the first place. Now though she had come back to her rightful world. Her son couldn’t have been happier about that! He just hated coming to see her in the Muggle world. So closed off from the world she so belonged in.

Harry was soon sitting behind the counter for her for a few hours, while she had a rest and put her feet up. No one recognized him; no one played him second to Nick Potter his brother. Harry was finally happy, and that’s all that mattered to him.

As predicated his family didn’t even realize he was going anywhere.
The school was starting back up once again. Harry still didn’t have any familiar. However, he was saving up any money he could get. He didn’t get pocket money from his family even if Nick did. His money had been put into his vault, and he now owned his very own one no one could get into. The key was safely around his neck at all times not wanting anything to happen to it. Not that anyone would be able to get into his vault anyway.

He was also very unhappy about the selection of books he had. They had been to his disgust; Gilderoy Lockhart books. The books were somewhat unbelievable; no man could ever do everything that man was saying he could do. He was a fraud, well that’s what Harry thought anyways, but nobody cared what he thought.

“Get a move on! We are going now if we want to catch the Hogwarts Express!” yelled James up the stairs.

Harry dragged his trunk down, which was very heavy, his parents had not even levitated his trunk for him. Sighing softly, why was it always him ignored? He had done nothing to deserve it. He didn’t want to be left behind this year and miss another year on the train.

These days Harry had given up hope, hope of being loved, or his parents approving of him. Even given up hope that his teachers would see him, not just look at him once before admiring his brother. No one ever really spoke to him, not for him anyway only for his brother.

“Hold the Portkey, we are busy and cannot take you to the Hogwarts Express, so you will need to go yourself” said James, as they Portkey’d away.

“Dad please come!” whined Nick.

“I can’t I’m very busy now go, before you miss the train” said James hugging his son goodbye.

Harry sighed softly, before going towards the barrier; once he was through he climbed onto the train dragging his trunk. He was bumped into and much to his agitation mistaken for his brother again!

“Hey Nic…sorry” said someone realizing it was not Nicolas but Harry.

“Its fine” said Harry softly, shaking his head he took his trunk and got himself onto the train and sat down in an empty apartment. It wasn’t fine but it was best just to keep that to himself.

“Can I sit here?” asked a chubby boy.

“Yeah sure” said Harry.

“You don’t have to sit in there! Come along with us Nick will be sitting with us soon” said Seamus, one of the people who shared a dorm with Nick and Ronald Weasley as well as the chubby boy Neville Longbottom.

“Ok thanks. Bye I guess” said Neville shutting the door and joining Seamus.

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“It can’t go! Nick’s not here!” said Seamus outside Harry’s door.

“Well his brother is here so he just might be still looking for us” said Dean.
“Yeah, come on then let’s sit down” said Seamus shrugging.

Harry heard the door slamming closed just next door.

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“We are nearly at Hogwarts lets get our uniform on” said Seamus.

“Yeah, I wonder where Nick is” said Dean.

“Dunno, just hope he is alright” said Seamus.

“He will be he is the hero of the wizarding world after all” said Neville.

“Yeah,” said Dean and Seamus agreeing immediately.

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They were entering Hogwarts before they knew it; Harry was not bothered about his brother. He sat eating a big meal at the Ravenclaw table, enjoying being back at Hogwarts. He knew it would be another boring year, he knew everything in the second year books. Well, he knew everything in the fifth year books never mind second year.

“Welcome, welcome to another year of Hogwarts” said the Headmaster his arms spread wide to welcome each and every one of them.

The sorting lasted what felt like ages, many noticed Nick and Ronald Weasley were not there. Harry watched everything, just like every Ravenclaw. Sighing softly, he licked his lips when the food arrived.

“I have new teachers we need to introduce to you…first the Defence Against the Dark Art’s teacher Gilderoy Lockhart” said Dumbledore.

A wild applause spread through the great hall.

“And introduce you to the new Potions teacher and new head of Slytherin house Professor Reese” said Dumbledore.

Another wild applause broke though the hall louder than ever.

“Professor Snape has decided he would rather work on his potions, we wish him the best of luck in his work now lets eat” said Dumbledore as they all sat down. Excited chatter broke though, the Slytherins were sitting there stunned, and they had a new head of house? Professor Snape had left? Or had he been hurt.

Albus Dumbledore had tried to get Severus to come back, but Severus wanted to concentrate on his potions. He had spoken the truth; he was close to a breakthrough on the Wolfsbane Potion. Plus Severus really couldn’t stand Nick Potter for some reason. With no way to convince him, even trying to convince him Voldemort would be back didn’t work. Severus was always good at making up stories no doubt he would spin a good yarn to Voldemort when he was back.

Later that night two hundred points had been added to the Gryffindor glass. He heard through the Patil twin that they got points for productive thinking. They had ridden an enchanted car to school; needless to say no house was happy other than Gryffindor. Starting the year two hundred points ahead of everyone it was going to be hard to catch up. They might never win now, it just wasn’t
fair at all Patil had said.

Silently Harry agreed.

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That year Harry was privileged with the blame when Mrs. Norris was found petrified and hanging by her tail in the corridor, a message written in blood on the wall behind the cat. Because he had been going to the library instead of the feast, he had after all felt a little sick.

“That’s not fair sir…I was only on my way to the Library!” protested Harry.

“How very well off you go” said Dumbledore.

Despite Dumbledore letting him off with it, the students didn’t and he was glared at all year. He had been attacked quite a few times too, and another thing? Oh yeah Professor Reese hated him. His new Potions teacher took every turn she could to make him feel two inches tall. Kept giving him a P for pass instead of the EE he should be getting. He knew he wasn’t doing anything wrong; it was like Reese had the alternate attitude from Snape.

“Wrong colour Potter, failed” said Reese clearing his potion before anything could be said or done.

The more Harry continued to stay silent the more Reese got furious at him. He hated the fact he couldn’t get a rise out of the boy. So his game continued, finding whatever excuse he could to target him. Reese was just a jealous man because Harry was able to produce a better potion than even him. He was the Potions Master yet a boy was almost capable of creating a potion that out did his. He couldn’t stand for it, so the vicious circle continued and Harry…why Harry stayed silent. He knew complaining wouldn’t help him any.

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The Quidditch match went off without a hitch, no real messes with the Gryffindor’s down. The Slytherin’s won the match no problem at all, Draco Malfoy had been made seeker of the Slytherin team. Not only had he joined but he had got everyone Nimbus 2001’s.

Despite all the training James had given Nick he was still nowhere near good enough. Draco Malfoy had been preening like a peacock since then, everyone loved him for taking out Nick Potter. The Gryffindor’s on the other hand were loosing their patience with the Boy Who Lived. In fact Harry had overheard them stating that they were thinking about kicking him off the team. Harry couldn’t wait for that day but he doubted McGonagall would allow that to happen.

Harry had seen the sign up sheet for those who wanted to play Quidditch at the door of Ravenclaw Tower. He had been tempted, boy, that was putting it mildly. In the end he had decided against it, not wanting to get a howler. He would have loved to have bet Nick and wiped the smug smile from James and Lily’s faces. Yes he rarely called them by their proper titles anymore. They weren’t Mother and Father to him, and they certainly weren’t Mum and Dad. He never wrote home, and they never wrote to him that was just fine. It seemed the question he had asked his journal had finally been answered. He had stopped caring about what they thought, and it had been a long time coming.

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Lockhart and Flitwick duelled first at the Duelling Club, with Flitwick firing one ‘Expelliarmus’ curse that not only knocked the wand from the fakes hand, but knocked him to the other side of the class as well. Harry had been the only one laughing at it; it had been the most hilarious sight in his
twelve years of life. That one was joining the vision of the sorting hat spouting arms and legs and running. For thoughts he needed to make himself happy, on a bad day which by the way was more and more often.

Flitwick had warned Lockhart not to pair Harry and Nick but the warning only made Lockhart want to see them duel all the more. Harry and Nick began to curse each other, and with a smirk Nick fired once more and a large snake appeared in the middle of the duelling table, sliding towards Harry.

Flitwick turned to glare at Lockhart who blushed. The snake forgot about Harry and dived for a gasping, terrified Justin Finch-Fletchley. Harry shouted for the snake to stop and it did, yet everyone turned to stare at Harry in fear. Slowly the snake came far enough away from Justin for Flitwick to vanish safely. Everyone left the room mumbling about Harry being dark now. Even his brother was moving away looking at him in fear as well, like Voldemort was standing behind him.

Rolling his eyes in confusion wondering what made everyone look at him like that. With a growl of annoyance Harry settled himself for the months of rumours and accusations that were sure to come. He was not wrong of course, Harry knew better than to think anyone would suspect anyone else. He was probably the only apart from Granger that didn’t have any friends in the entire school.

Listening to the rumours he realized he had spoken Parselmouth, snake language. It sounded English to him; he wondered how long it would take for his parents to find out. He hadn’t needed to wait long for that, five hours after he spoke it James’ owl was pecking at Ravenclaw Tower.

Harry

Nick has just told us you can speak snake language I want you to know I’m extremely disappointed in you. Every year there is always something, most recent ones getting sorted into Ravenclaw! No Potter has ever been sorted anywhere other than Gryffindor bar you. I supposed I should just be grateful that it wasn’t Slytherin which by given your newly discovered talent I’m surprised your not. Then showing up your brother by getting better grades when you know very well what your brother was going through trying to fight Voldemort.

Now you can speak Parseltongue, when you come home for the summer you are to go straight to your room. You still stay in there; I will get Lily to send the food up to your room we do not want to see you. Poor Roxy is utterly mortified as are your mother and I! Do you know what this could do to Nick’s reputation? If this backlashes on us you will be out on your backside.

Dad

Harry couldn’t of course believe the nerve of James to actually sign it dad. He wasn’t a father, he was just a man in his life who continued to mock and reprimand him no matter what he did. Nothing was good enough for the likes of James or Lily Potter. Just they wait until it was revealed he was the boy who lived. They would regret the day they had decided to ignore him for his brother he would ensure that.

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People turned up at the medical ward petrified, a boy named Colin Creevy had been petrified. Nick had gotten everyone’s attention and sympathy by saying he had been talking to him not five minutes before he was petrified. Harry had just snorted and kept walking, he was an outcast in his own school and he hated it. He had received two broken bones since, five cutting curses, and goodness knows how many bumps and bruises since he had spoken to that snake. They all looked at him like was about to kill them all, like he was Lord Voldemort back from the dead.
Despite the petrifaction Quidditch continued, Ravenclaw beat Hufflepuff and Gryffindor but failed to beat Slytherin for the Quidditch cup. So the cup belonged to the Slytherins again this year.

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HER SKELETON WILL LIE IN THE CHAMBER FOREVER

“Oh my! What has happened?” asked Minerva was the first thing Harry heard from the corner he had been about to turn.

“Lockhart check my Gryffindor’s, Flitwick, Sprout, Reese check everyone is accounted for. Come back here immediately afterwards” said McGonagall looking pale and shaken. It was happening again, the chamber was truly open she could feel it. When she had been at school a student had died, what most people didn’t realize was that Myrtle had been her classmate when she attended school. Not her house mate, Myrtle had been a Muggle born sorted into Slytherin. She, Minerva McGonagall, was a Gryffindor just like her parents before her.

Harry watched everything wide eyed, it took five minutes before everyone returned.

“All Gryffindor’s accounted for!” beamed Lockhart happy to have finished his task.

“All of my Hufflepuff’s are accounted for” said Sprout looking greatly relieved.

“The Slytherin’s are all present and accounted for” said Reese.

“Are you sure all my Gryffindor’s are in the tower?” asked McGonagall.

“Yes all fifty nine” said Lockhart.

McGonagall paled drastically “There isn’t fifty nine; my Gryffindor head count is sixty”

Lockhart’s eyes widened in horror.

“Professor, Professor, Professor” shouted Filch running with his cat in his arms as usual.

“Yes?” asked Sprout seeing as McGonagall wasn’t going to speak.

“A few of the portraits telling me that Ronald Weasley says his sisters missing. Percy is trying to get out of Gryffindor Common room to find her” said Filch.

“What does this mean?” asked Sprout gravely.

“That Hogwarts will shut down…” said Minerva sadly.

Harry didn’t know why he was playing the hero, but he was he was the only one able to do it. So he went to the Girls bathroom, a place he had seen Ginny entering not an hour ago. He looked around but found nothing, he was about to leave when something green glinted out of the corner of his eyes. Turning around he noticed the picture of a snake on the sink.

“Open” hissed Harry. Once again wondering why he was saving the school. He would rather be at Hogwarts than home with his parents all next year. The library alone was enough reason for him wanting to save the school. It’s where he spent the majority of his time. Madam Pince really liked him and he was actually glad for that. At least someone around here actually bloody did.

Once he got there, he noticed something was wrong he found out quick enough. The spectre he noticed was Tom Riddle, AKA Lord Voldemort. For some reason Tom kept calling him Nick
Potter. Asking why he had survived when the almighty Lord Voldemort hadn’t. In the end he had been forced to fight the gigantic snake, thankful for Fawkes help. The sorting hat he thought he could have done without, until the diadem of Ravenclaw came out. Putting it on he felt immediately more confident and smarter. That done he began firing spells in the Basilisk’s wide open trap - the only weak spot they had. After about twelve blasting curses, it finally stopped moving.

He levitated the diary and slammed it through the basilisk tooth; Tom Riddle vanished screaming in agony. Harry didn’t realize he had destroyed Tom Riddle’s only Horcrux. The spirit out there somewhere was the only part of the evil wizard left. He took off the Diadem and slid it back into the hat, knowing it was too much temptation to keep it.

He got a lift back up to Hogwarts by Fawkes; unfortunately it couldn’t be denied what he did. As Fawkes had a connection with Dumbledore, and he already knew what had occurred. Having exhausted his magic Harry soon slipped into oblivion.

Harry woke up that time in the hospital wing yet again, this time he hadn’t been attacked thankfully.

“Ah Harry, it’s good to see you finally awake!” beamed Dumbledore sitting beside Harry’s bed.

“Yes sir” said Harry stiffly.

“Aren’t you curious about why Fawkes answered your call?” asked Dumbledore proudly.

“Not really” said Harry, he didn’t like Dumbledore. He was finally being noticed but it was a little too late for that.

“Only those with utmost faith in me would have been able to call Fawkes to that chamber. I am proud of you Harry; you are much a hero as your brother is. I will be writing home to your parents to let them know how you saved the school they will be very proud of you too I’m sure” said Dumbledore kindly.

Harry suppressed the urge to laugh by nodding curtly and acting a little weak.

“Get some rest Harry! Tonight is the leaving feast you have been out of it for days!” said Dumbledore looking concerned before turning and leaving.

For the first time his brother, Nick hadn’t been able to take credit for his accomplishments. It felt good; he couldn’t suppress the smirk any longer.

Dumbledore came back in a few minutes later, held out a 2 inch fang and Harry took the memento with a grin, sliding it into his pocket he left the ward for the common room. “The Venom has been removed, it’s just a tooth now and in no danger at all” the Basilisk he had given to Severus to do as he pleased. However, Severus had suggested he give Harry the tooth as a memento.

As soon as Dumbledore left again, Harry was checked over by Poppy. She gave him some healthy filling foods to eat. He had been out of it for a week after all and he needed something substantial but healthy to eat.

“You can go now if you feel up to it, any tiredness you come and see me alright Harry?” said Poppy concerned.

Harry swallowed sharply, he had always wanted his mother to do that why did it have to be the school nurse. He nodded grimly before leaving; it took him a while to get to the Ravenclaw Tower. He managed in the end; going into his room he spelled a hole in the tooth. Shrunk it and pushed it
through a piece of string, and tied it around his neck.

It was not long before he was on the train due to go back home, sighing softly once again alone he stayed in his compartment. "I would also like to award Harry Potter 150 house points for defending the school against a basilisk. I am also giving him an award for the services to the school," said Dumbledore his eyes twinkling over at the Ravenclaw table. Harry looked stunned; this was the last thing he had expected. He had not expected Dumbledore to tell everyone but he had, suddenly he didn’t hate the man so much, he thought to himself ‘Perhaps my brother isn’t so favoured after all’ sighing softly, he silently wished his money would keep building up quicker. The quicker he was away from the Potter’s the better life he would have.

"Well done Harry" said Luna Lovegood her blue eyes twinkling brightly. she had an air of mystery around her, and she didn't care about the students or what they thought of her. Harry secretly admired that about her, he had noticed her by herself much like he was going to classes. Maybe next year he might get to know her properly. That is if she wanted to know someone like him, he wasn’t Nick Potter after all.

He hated his family so much; especially his mother and father, why did they need to favour his brother all the time! What was wrong with showing him a bit of love? They didn’t need to all out neglect him, or ignore him all the time.

Lockhart had decided it was too much drama teaching children at Hogwarts, he insisted on concentrating on his new book. So he wasn’t going to have to put up with Lockhart this year again and he was ever so glad for that.

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“How are your potions going?” asked Dumbledore curiously. Since Severus had left Dumbledore had made sure they met up at least once or twice a month at the least.

“Good, I think I’ve perfected the Wolfsbane Potion” said Severus his eyes twinkling he had changed a lot since he left. Sure he wasn’t the handsomest fellow but he was a handsome depending on what look you went for ‘cute’ ‘pretty’ ‘handsome’.

“Wow, I guess you were underachieved at my school!” said Dumbledore sadly pride clear in his voice also.

Severus would have beamed hearing pride in the Headmaster’s voice. The Headmaster was like a father to him, had been since he made a foolish mistake at the age of seventeen. He had gone to the Headmaster and begged him to make sure Lily lived. Told him he would go quietly to Azkaban since then he had been spying. At the time he had been vicious with him, saying he was disgusted with Severus for not caring about James Potter’s death. Only because he had said make sure Lily and her children are safe instead of the Potter family. Thankfully he had corrected Dumbledore on that regard and despite the horrible start they did get along well now.

The Headmaster about half a year later had begged him to stop, when he had come back beaten and cursed more times than not. Then again he hadn’t been bringing back any really valuable information.

“How are the students?” asked Severus, mostly referring to his Slytherin’s of course. He might not be the head of Slytherin but his Slytherins meant the world to him he always asked after them.

“Good, good they are well away with themselves. I think they understand why you left and if they didn’t the older ones made sure they did” said Dumbledore smiling brightly.
“I have always been curious as to why you did what you did to the Slytherin’s in Potter’s first year” said Severus.

“What did I do Severus?” asked Dumbledore frowning.

“You awarded the Gryffindor’s points, and caused Slytherin’s too loose. You hurt them more than you will ever know” said Severus sadly. It would surprise many that he kept in touch with his students. Marcus Flint had been one of them, a good boy, bit rough around the edges but a decent young man. He had been told in great length they missed him and what Dumbledore had done.

“I…I didn’t realize” said a quiet shocked Dumbledore he had never looked at it that way.

“Yes, some of the Slytherin’s began hating you that night” admitted Severus.

This caused Dumbledore too look years older than he was, sometimes like any normal Gryffindor’s he did things without thinking of the consequences. Now he was just being told the consequences of his actions of trying to favour the Boy Who Lived.

“However, it’s the Potter twins that have me mystified” said Dumbledore.

“Excuse me?” asked Severus.

“The Potter twins, Nick and Harry” said Dumbledore.

“It’s like Harry should be the Boy Who Lived, he has the power and the thirst for knowledge and he’s smart” said Dumbledore.

“Indeed,” smirked Severus “And Nick?”

“Well he’s like Neville, just the usual Wizard, I don’t know if it’s just because he wants to prank and not do work or if he’s just like any wizard” sighed Dumbledore.

“Don’t let Lily or James hear you say that” warned Severus smirking at the thought of Nick Potter being described as a mediocre student.

“Ah, don’t worry I wont, I’m sorry about Lily Severus” said Dumbledore sadly.

“Well, nothing was the same when I called her that word; I expected to forget all about me. We had been friends since we were eight years old Albus I didn’t expect her to forget me completely” said Severus sadly.

“I am sorry, she doesn’t realize just how much you sacrificed for her” said Dumbledore looking quite angry at Lily.

“And she never will” said Severus narrowing his eyes at Dumbledore as if to say and you had better not tell her. Oh he didn’t love her the way James Potter thought he did, his preferences lay in his own gender thank you very much. It wasn’t something he publicized then again he didn’t publicise anything. He wasn’t the boy who lived nobody wanted to know about him.

“I’ve been asking around, it’s becoming apparent that Harry is hardly with his family” said Dumbledore.

“You are snooping?” asked Severus wryly.

“Not snooping, just ….concerned” mumbled Dumbledore.
“He’s a teenager, of course he doesn’t want to spend time with his mother and father” said Severus
“Plus he’s always seemed different from them all, if I didn’t know Lily had twins and they were hers I would say that Harry wasn’t there’s”

“I can see what you mean” admitted Dumbledore, Harry was so different from his parents and brother.

“What about the Other Potter brat?” asked Severus.

“Well Roxy I’ve never met” said Dumbledore.

“I see” said Severus not caring much on the subject of Potter’s.

“Well school is starting back up, first month is the worst, home sick students, drop outs getting the money out of the parents I wish it was someone else’s job to do that” sighed Dumbledore, everything was left to the Headmaster unfortunately.

Severus smirked “Well just arrange another day and I’ll come, until then Headmaster good day to you and thanks for the Basilisk” it was the nicest gift he had ever been given. He knew Dumbledore hadn’t defeated it, he had been told everything. He supposed he truly had Harry Potter to thank for the Basilisk; he had so many experimental potions going he didn’t know what to do with them all.

“Goodbye Severus and good luck” smiled Dumbledore. He watched Severus floo out once more. Going home to his mother’s ancestral home Prince Manor, his mother didn’t live there. Severus had wanted her to but she had seen enough of it to last her a life time. Instead Severus had given her some of the Prince money to buy herself a flat. He also knew she had opened a shop of some sorts, he hadn’t seen it yet. Preferring to talk to his mother up in her flat, away from customers. He had heard all about his mothers little summer helper, Harry he had asked her the other day for his last name and her answer stunned him. She didn’t even know his last name.
The summer was much the same as usual, delivering papers and listening to his parents bragging about his brother. He wondered how it never got old for them really; I mean how could they still praise a boy who's been praised about everything humanly possible.

He was of course, not that he had expected anything less - been completely ignored. They had sent him right up to his room, but they didn't care enough to check. He floo'ed out every morning and was back every night.

"Come on then let's see the results" said James apprehensively. After last year you could hardly blame him, even he had gotten better results. No where near as good as his sons, Harry Potter, but still did better than his other son Nick. Not that he was thinking anything like that, he didn't think about his other son unless he had to.

Lily took a breath before she opened the letter, her eyes trailed down the page looking for her son. "It's better than last year" sighed Lily disappointment in her green eyes.

"Then why..." frowned James taking the letter.

"First, Draco Malfoy, set up. Second Luna Lovegood, Pft a first year on the list. Third Hermione Granger, bloody ridiculous. Fourth Harry Potter, yeah right...and so it continued until he got to his son's "Nineteen...nineteenth in your year" It was actually number twenty but he refused to include the first year girl that was just beyond comprehension.

"I was scared! I thought he was the heir of Slytherin!" said Nick wide eyed.

"Not good enough, I'll get the list from Albus that you need for this year. The entire summer you will learn everything from the books, if you refuse no Quidditch and no outings for you." said James adamantly.

"Fine" groaned Nick.

"I can't wait to go to Hogwarts mummy!" grinned Roxy.

"Your time is coming fast sweetie" said Lily kissing the top of her daughter's head. Two more years and her daughter would be joining her brothers at school. When Nick was going into fifth year she would be going into her first year. She wasn't sure what she was going to do when her son and daughter was at school. She was actually considering taking up a job at Hogwarts, so she could be closer to them both. Of course she couldn't do that until she joined, they weren't allowed to bring their children with them to Hogwarts - the teachers. Again she was completely forgetting that she had another son. She shuddered at the fact Harry had such a dark gift it made her skin crawl.

"Yup two years!" beamed Roxy.
"You will be brilliant just like your mum" said James softly.

"Dad can I at least ask Ron over for the summer? Let him train with me?" asked Nick pouting childishly.

"NO" said James adamantly it was Ronald Weasley’s fault of that he was sure.

"Fine" pouted Nick leaving the room.

"Hi Eileen, do you need some help?" asked Harry coming in.

"I sure do son, by the way you never did tell me your last name…what is it?" asked Eileen. Harry sighed before telling her "Harry…Harry James" he couldn't get the Potter part past his lips.

"Nice name it suits you" said Eileen kindly. Not realizing Harry's struggle to get the last part of his name. She just took it for granted that was his name - Harry James.

Harry sighed it was probably for the best anyway that she didn't know.

"I'm going to put my feet up for a while laddie, that alright?" asked Eileen.

"Sure, no problem" said Harry, anything to stay away from that blasted manor.

So that's how Harry spent his summer days, stocking shelves, delivering newspapers. He enjoyed it, he liked Eileen a great deal, and she was kind to him when no one else was. He heard her kettle whistling as he put the chocolate frogs into their correct space.

"Mummy, can I have a chocolate frog?" whined a spoiled two year old as Harry finished up.

"Fine, just one" said the Witch sternly. Seeing her sticky fingered little girl trying to pick up more than one.

She pouted softly but her mother didn't cave.

She placed the papers she wanted, as well as the loaf of bread on the counter. Her daughter put her chocolate frog up, and Harry added the total, and then gave her the appropriate change. No one ever wondered if Harry was even old enough to be working in a shop. It was a testament to just how mature Harry must look compared to his twin.

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"Where have you been?" asked James as soon as Harry came through the floo.

"Hogsmeade" said Harry honestly.

"You are supposed to stay in your room" said James curtly.

"Sorry" said Harry bowing his head not wanting to look at James anymore.

"Go up the stairs" said James shaking his head in disgust. His son couldn't even follow a simple rule. Yet he was expected to believe he had saved the school? No Dumbledore must have been mistaken; his son was nothing special he didn't have the magic to kill a basilisk.

"Yes sir" said Harry.
James continued on never even realizing his own flesh and blood had just called him sir.

Harry grew to trust Eileen she truly was a nice old lady. Eileen had silently grown more and more curious and concerned about the mysterious boy who was working for her. She didn't believe for a minute that he was horrible or evil and had bad intentions. She saw more of him than his own parents did and it was very concerning.

"What are you doing when you go home then young Harry?" asked Eileen softly. She had a cup of coffee in her hand, sitting behind the counter.

"Me? Going to bed I guess" said Harry shrugging his shoulders.

"Don't you spend time with your family?" she asked cautiously.

"No they don't care about me just my brother" said Harry truthfully.

"That's a horrible thing to say, I'm sure it just feels like that…is he older than you? I'm guessing he learned to do everything first?" asked Eileen softly. She had only one child, and she loved him more than life itself.

"No same age" murmured Harry.

"I only had one child…but I couldn't imagine treating them different" said Eileen taken aback.

"Well I wish you were my mother," said Harry honestly.

"So are you trying to get enough money to leave?" asked Eileen her eyes narrowing already coming to the conclusion. So that's why the boy had been working so hard she should have guessed.

"Yes" said Harry truthfully no point in lying.

"I see well if you do not want to go home, there is a room in my flat up stairs empty and it has a bed if you would like to stay" said Eileen. Was Harry abused? Hurt? Neglected? She couldn't in all good conscience let him to back. Not with the knowledge she had, she had seen first hand what abuse did to someone. Her own son had been abused by his father, before she had gotten the courage to leave the bastard.

"You would let me stay?" asked Harry surprised.

"Of course" said Eileen not letting the sorrow she felt when Harry agreed so readily.

"Great! How long?" asked Harry curiously and immediately.

"As long as you need a room" said Eileen she would repay him properly for all the help he had been to her. She really shouldn't do this, but Harry deserved better he was the sweetest boy she had ever met. So hard working and loyal she wanted what was best for him. She didn't want to see Harry withdrawing into himself, and eventually coming closed off like her son had.

"Brilliant!" said Harry unable to believe his luck.

"Very well dear why don't you get your things together and we can close early get you settled in?" asked Eileen.

"Sure" said Harry smiling happily still, nothing could burst his bubble.

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Harry did indeed go right home to get his things together; his room was empty within a couple of minutes. Going down the stairs he waited until his parents actually noticed him then started speaking.

"I'm going to stay at a friends for the rest of the summer" said Harry.

"You don't have any friends!" sneered Nick his brother.

"Yes I do," said Harry flushing red when he realized it was very true, he didn't have any friends but he didn't care really. They were all just immature children; he would not become immature by hanging around with the likes of them. Maybe Luna would be his friend this year, she seemed alright to him. She was only a year younger than him but looked and acted so much older.

"Go on then, I'm sure you will be back in a few days" said James smoothly. Nobody in their right mind would want to keep a parselmouth under their roof willingly. It would remind them of the Dark Lord Voldemort, he would come home he was sure of that.

"Bye then" said Harry happily.

"Bye" said Lily distracted and they began going over the work Nick had done.

Harry sighed sadly, as he used the floo he heard Nick whining once more. He grinned widely; he wouldn't have to put up with that for the rest of the summer holidays.

"Why can't I stay over at my friends?" whined Nick.

"Because you have caused enough trouble this summer!" said James sternly.

"Fine," pouted Nick.

"He can come over here! Harry's away he can use his room" said Lily kindly.


"Fair enough" said James smiling at his son, Nick reminded him of himself when he was just a child always wanting to play with his friends and prank everyone. How could he ever say no to his son? He would never be able to. So his resolve was gone, he had only gotten Nick to perform around ten spells before he had given in.

"Great! I'll floo him now" said Nick excited.

"Ronald Weasley!" shouted Nick.

"Can I help you dear?" asked Molly kindly.

"Can I speak to Ron?" asked Nick.

"Sure hold on, RONALD!" shouted Molly.

"What is it?" asked Ron.

"Nick's in the fire" she shouted

"Hey mate" said Ron looking pleased that Nick had floo'ed him. It meant he wasn't going to have to clean his room before bed, hopefully his mum would forget that.
"Hey you wanna sleep over for the rest of the summer? My mum and dad have already said yes!" said Nick.

"Mum can I?" asked Ron.

"I don't know" said Molly thoughtfully.

"Come on mum!" said Ron whining.

"Oh all right" said Molly, it was one less pouting child in the house. Ginny was doing her head in at the moment, Ron was packed and floo'ing out within five minutes.

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"Right is that you settled in dear? Would you like some pumpkin juice?" Eileen asked.

"Yes ma'am I am settled in and no ma'am no juice" said Harry smiling happily.

"If you are staying call me Eileen, Harry" said Eileen softly.

"Of course…Eileen" said Harry testing the name out on his tongue.

"Good, now why don't you go and settle down for the night" said Eileen softly.

Harry was happier than he had ever been an early escape from the Potters. Harry put all his things out on display again, his clothes into the cupboard and his socks and boxers into the drawers as well as anything else he wanted too. All the books he had went onto the shelves, he was very proud of his books and would hate if anything happened to them. Once that was done he sighed in satisfaction just then a knock sounded the door.

"Come in" called Harry softly knowing it was just Eileen.

"Very nice dear! I didn't know you liked books so much" she said coming into the room once again.

"Thank you" said Harry softly.

"Now let's go and get some supper" said Eileen not taking no for an answer Harry was a tad on the thin side.

"Yes please" said Harry smiling as they went into the kitchen/sitting room. He had a plate of cheesy toast in front of him before he knew it, along with some pumpkin juice.

"How much will I pay you for rent?" asked Harry.

"Nothing dear" said Eileen. Her eyes were sad as she thought of such a young boy thinking he had to pay for somewhere to stay. The place was bought and paid for; she wouldn't have to pay rent for a lodger. He would only be there for the summers, the rest of the time at Hogwarts. So she wouldn't need to feed him all year, no she wouldn't accept rent.

"But!" protested Harry.

"I have spoken" said Eileen her voice booking no arguments.

"Okay" said Harry smiling shyly.
The rest of the meal was in comfortably silence, other than chomp. Chomp. Chomp nothing was heard.

"Why don't you go to bed Harry, you look exhausted" said Eileen kindly, she could see he was almost swaying on the spot.

"Ok" said Harry feeling kind of warmed no one had ever told him when to go to bed, his parents had never bothered to really. This was the first time and it meant a lot to him because she cared and was not just saying it.

"Night dear" said Eileen smiling softly at him before she went to her own bed.

"Night" mumbled Harry as he went to bed, closing the door behind him he was out like a light.

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Nick and Ron tore out of the living room right onto the Quidditch field.

"Should we let him? Its awfully dangerous playing Quidditch in this weather" said Lily.

"Nothing to worry about Lily" said James smiling charmingly.

Or that's what they thought.

Ron and Nick were outside, it had started to get really windy, but they didn't care. They both loved Quidditch and Nick was finally getting better. They were far up in the air when it finally began raining; it was like the heavens had opened up and let it pour out.

"I think we should go back" shouted Ron over the wind and rain.

"What because it's windy?" said Nick looking scandalized.

"It's pouring down!" snapped Ron.

"Fine, but once we have caught the snitch!" said Nick swooping after the snitch.

That would be their undoing, the snitch went higher, they went higher, next thing they knew the entire sky lit up with lightening. They realized too late that it was actually thunder and lightening, diving down they didn't get far. Wind seemed to force them back up into the sky, they saw people below yelling for them, but they were wasting their breath. Nick and Ron could not hear anything apart from the wind rushing in their ears. Their hearts were pumping, they were so scared, more scared than they had ever been in their lives. Apart from when of course Voldemort attacked them, stunning instead of killing.

"James it's raining! We must get them in" said Lily looking concerned.

"They will be in themselves in a minute" said James giving them way too much credit.

James and Lily relaxed into the sofa, expecting their son and his friend to come in in a few minutes. However, the few minutes passed, they didn't see the lightening fill the sky. However, the jumped themselves when they heard the loudest bang in their lives.

"Nick" shouted Lily scared running out of the house, they couldn't aparate, they had put anti apparition spells up.
Both of them ran faster than they could remember running, skidding to a halt outside. They saw their son and his friend trapped in a whirlwind. Wide eyed, Lily tried every spell she could think of to stop the wind but nothing worked. Not only that, but the lightning was clashing everywhere almost hitting the children.

"James!" shrieked Lily looking at her husband hoping he had something in mind. He should have done he was after all the Auror at the end of the day.

"I don't know what to do Lily!" said James looking at his son fearfully.

"Dumbledore" shouted Lily.

"Go get him! I will stay here" said James wide eyed.

"You do it! You can get closer to Hogwarts than I, you are an Auror!" shouted Lily.

"Fine" said James running on the grounds of his home, to the gate, wind howling around him, apparating when he knew the wards ended he found himself outside Hogwarts.

"ALBUS NICK'S STUCK WE NEED YOUR HELP PLEASE HELP US" yelled James, after using the 'Sonorous' charm on himself.

It worked like a charm, Dumbledore and a few other teachers were out of the school within minutes, heading towards himself. All of them looking concerned and worried, once they reached him, and caught their breaths Dumbledore asked what was wrong.

"There's a storm! We need help! Nick's stuck in a wind!" said James.

"Oh dear," said Dumbledore nodding, they would help all they could. There wasn't a storm in Scotland so they had not realized there was a storm, after all James and Lily lived in England.

James apparated away with Flitwick, McGonagall and Dumbledore.

"Albus what are we going to do?" asked McGonagall seeing the uselessness of the situation.

"I don't know!" said Dumbledore, he had, had no idea that it was that bad.

"Help my baby!" shrieked Lily once she had reached them.

"There's nothing I can do" said Dumbledore.

"What?" asked Lily looking shocked, nothing Albus Dumbledore could do? Was her perfect world coming to an end?

"There has to be something" said James looking scared. His son's cloak had come off him and he was now just stuck with a t-shirt and trousers. Ron was in a worse state! His top half was completely nude. His trousers were nearly off him completely, that's what happens when you have clothes too big for you. He had decided to wear his old cast offs for hanging around in. Even Nick had put his less new clothes on; he didn't want his good things ruined.

"I'm sorry" said Dumbledore regretfully and started watching their pair in baited breath.

The wind got fiercer, blowing the teachers of their feet, poor Flitwick would have blown away if Dumbledore had not managed to grab a hold of him.

"I think it's best if you go back to Hogwarts" shouted McGonagall clutching onto Dumbledore as
the wind got stronger.

"I agree," said Dumbledore, nodding his head.

Flitwick nodded back and apparated away, as soon as Dumbledore let go of him. They sighed in relief when the little professor managed to apparate in such conditions, the poor man had been lifted off his feet. It had gotten so bad now that the wind was shoving Nick and Ron like rag dolls their brooms hitting them everywhere as they tried to keep a grip of it. It was the broom alone that was stopping them from being sucked in.

"On three all of us summon them" said Dumbledore getting desperate.

"One" said Dumbledore.

"Two" said McGonagall.

"Three" said Lily.

"Accio NICK POTTER" they yelled together, and it worked, Nick came zooming to them, but they had put so much power into it that he slammed into the ground with a sickening thud.

"Ron next?" asked McGonagall.

"Let us get Nick seen to first," said Dumbledore.

"A few broken bones and a mild concussion take him in and get Poppy through the floo" said Dumbledore.

"The magically weakest should take Nick" said Minerva.

"I'll take him" said Lily adamantly.

"Ok" said Dumbledore nodding in agreement.

"Come on Nick, hold on for mum" said Lily sobbing as she held onto her son and ran towards the house.

"On one" said Dumbledore.

"One" snapped James.

"ACCIO RONALD WEASLEY" snapped all three of them, putting all their power into the spell.

Ron was ripped out of the storm, and fell with the same sickening thud as Nick had.

-Ron's POV-

I saw them summon Nick; it made me feel horrible, and hurt. I knew I was second best, but for them to rescue Nick first hurt more than I thought. I knew Nick had been more important ever since I started hanging around with him.

When Dumbledore made sure Nick was alright before they started getting ready to spell me down it hurt. It hurt worse than it did when the broom hit me on the face and broke my nose. I knew there and then I didn't want to be his best friend; I didn't want to be second fiddle to anyone.

I'm going to find someone else to play with, maybe then they will like me for me, and not just like
me because I admire him. Tears fell down my face, but the wind had dried them in seconds.

Finally they must have deemed me important enough to save, for I felt myself being magically summoned. I screamed until I couldn't anymore, then I fell to the ground with a thud, moaning in pain and despair. Wishing my mum was here, at least I knew I was wanted when she was there. Suddenly I found myself wishing for my mum's famous hugs.

This was the last thing I remembered, as blackness took over me.

- End of Ron's POV -

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Ron felt himself coming around, groaning in pain he couldn't remember anything. Blinking his eyes open he looked around, the memories came to him in slow motion. Tears entered his eyes before he could stop them; they were running down his face when his mother found him.

"Ron your awake, how are you dear?" said Molly coddling at her youngest son.

Ron just continued to cry.

"Ron are you hurt?" asked Molly getting worried about her youngest son.

"No" croaked Ron, his mother brought him into a hug and he lent in for the first time since he was four or five years old. When he started saying 'yuk' to hugs of his mother.

Molly realized her son must be very upset if he was actually letting her hug him. Not that she minded, she was actually quite happy to let him remain in her arms she loved her son.

They must have remained that way for a long time, before Molly remembered something.

"I must go and tell Albus" said Molly running around the room.

Ron glared at his mother; luckily she didn't see it or would have thought there was something seriously wrong.

"I'm really hungry mum, starving!" said Ron.

"Well I'll bring something right up Ron dear," said Molly going down the stairs and started making her son something to eat.

Ron smiled, he came first he still came first here in the burrow, where his family lived. He may share his mother with his sisters and brothers but right now he came first. And for the first time in his life he really appreciated his mother right there and then. Smiling softly he let his mum cook his food and try and baby him, and dug himself into the food.

"Do you need anything else?" asked Molly looking worried at her son.

"No mum, I'm just really tired now" yawned Ron feeling sleepy.

"You sleep then, when you wake up you will need another potion for the pain apart from that you are fine, your broken bones have been mended" said Molly soothingly.

"Thanks mum….I love you" said Ron.
Molly practically beamed, and Ron felt terrible that he never said it to his mum often at all. He swore from then on he would appreciate his mum more and tell her how much he loved her.

"Very well dear, you get a sleep," said Molly, tucking her son in and plumping up the pillows.

Ron lay down and was snoring before he knew it.

Molly smiled softly, before leaving the room the used bowls and plates and silverware trailing behind her magically.

Once she had cleaned everything up, she grabbed some floo powder and quickly shouted in the Headmasters office.

"Ah, Molly is everything alright?" fearing Ron's condition had worsened. The news he was about to get would surprise him.

"Ron's awake" said Molly looking relieved and proud.

"He is?" blinked a shocked Dumbledore.

"Yes! And recovering quite nicely" said Molly softly.

"Good, good I'm very pleased you told me Molly, now I have other things to do so please excuse me" said Dumbledore. He wondered how Lily and James would react to the fact Ronald Weasley was more powerful than Nick. His suspicions on Harry and how powerful he was kept coming back.

"Oh of course" said Molly coming out of the fire and cleaning up her home.

"Lily and James Potter!" shouted Dumbledore. Into the fire, it didn't take long for Lily and James to appear in the room.

"What is it Albus?" asked a concerned Lily.

"Ronald Weasley is recovering and awake" said Dumbledore eyes wondering how they would react to that piece of information.

"But that's not possible! That would mean that Ronald is more powerful than my son" said James wide eyed and gob smacked.

"Well believe it," said Dumbledore softly.

"What are we going to do?" asked a worried Lily.

"I do not know" said Dumbledore softly. "I thought I would let you know" assuming they were worried about their son, he didn't realize exactly what Lily Potter was getting at.

With that he ended the floo call.

"We have to use poly juice potion, parade around let everyone know he is well" said James immediately.

"Why?" Lily asked confused.

"We cannot let the world know that our son isn't powerful…Voldemort must have drained him…took some of his magic…we cannot let it get out" said James sadly.
"Oh, ok then, I'll get the Polyjuice Potion" said Lily nodding grimly.

"Here is Nick's hair" said James "Do you have the potion?" after a few seconds.

"Of course" said Lily "Let's go"

"Coming?" asked Lily once the potion had been drunk.

"Yes Lily" said James rolling his eyes.

"You can't call me that! Its mum remember Nick Sirius Potter!" snapped Lily.

"Fine, mum" said James testing it out and grimacing. "Let's get this over with"

"Don't mess up" said Lily.

James just rolled his eyes.

Once they stepped out the boundary of Potter Manor, reporters were surrounding them, their cameras flashing as they took pictures.

"Are you alright?" asked one reporter.

"I'm fine thank you" said James as Nick giving a smile.

"When did you wake up?" asked the next reporter.

"I woke up the night it happened, I've been on bed rest by mum there was no need for it! I was fine! I'm going to see my best friend who's just woken up today" smiled James as Nick.

"Lily where's James?" asked a more nosy reporter.

"James is at home having a rest, he was up all night watching his son even though he woke up" said Lily "He has been a rock for Nick and I've given him a dreamless sleeping potion".

"I see, Nick how do you feel now?" asked another reporter.

"I'm much better than I was when it happened" smiled Nick, he had frozen when his name was mentioned, and thankfully the attention hadn't been on him.

"Who pulled you down?" was asked from someone at the back.

"I don't know I was trapped in a whirlwind!" protested James getting annoyed with the stupid questions.

"It was thanks to me, James, Albus and Minerva that the two boys were brought down safely." smiled Lily.

James rose and eyebrow and indicated to the time, Lily understanding they didn't have much time left before he started transforming back.

"We have to go, we are off to see Ronald Weasley" said Lily, grabbing her son she took of at a fast pace and apparated before they could ask any more questions.

"Here drink more hurry," said Lily, "Its wearing off"

"Eugh," grimaced James "This stuff is disgusting I'm not going to take it in a hurry again"
"Lily! Nick how are you come in! Come in" shouted Molly upon going out and seeing them.

"Molly, nice to see you I just brought Nick to see Ron when Dumbledore told us he was finally awake" smiled Lily.

"When did Nick wake up?" asked Molly concerned looking the boy over.

"Oh the same night it happened" said Lily beaming proudly.

"Oh, good, good" smiled Molly she wasn't ashamed of her son, any of them and it deflated Lily's pride a lot.

"Ron is in his room Nick, why don't you go up and surprise him" said Molly.

Upon hearing his mothers shouts, he looked out of the window, he saw his mother talking to Lily Potter and her son. Groaning Ron quickly dived into his bed and pretended to sleep, he didn't want to speak to any of the Potters.

"Ron?" shouted James banging on the door "It's Nick!"

Opening the door he saw his son's friend was still asleep, rolling his eyes he decided to go back down the stairs.

"He's asleep!" complained James.

"Ah, must have fallen back asleep poor thing" said Molly "I'm just glad he woke up"

"You must be" smiled Lily. "I'm just glad I didn't have to wait".

"That's a relief," smiled Molly still smiling she really didn't care. Lily was awed how she loved her children even if she was making digs at them.

"Right well I'm going to get going," said Lily, she wanted to get back to her son now she had done her part. She just hoped he woke up soon, how can someone that killed Voldemort end up still asleep when Ronald Weasley had woken up. Her son must have used most magic while trying to get himself and his friend out of the whirlwind that's what it was. James had it wrong it had nothing to do with when Voldemort attacked; her son had always been powerful.

"Of course," mumbled Molly nodding.

Wasn't even ten minutes later, the burrow was once again quiet.

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"How is everything?" asked Dumbledore curiously. Everyone knew Nick had woken up curious indeed they had said he woke up immediately. He knew that was a lie and he wondered why they were lying. They had been in the paper for goodness sake it was hard to miss.

"Nick is fine Headmaster" said Lily quietly.

"And how is Ron?" Dumbledore.

"He didn't get the chance to talk to him! He's still sleeping constantly I think it was luck he woke up when he did" said James adamantly.

"No it's because Nick used his magic to try and get him and Ron out of the Whirlwind that they got
stuck in” said Lily adamantly.

"Oh I suppose it's possible" said James thoughtfully.

"Well I am glad everything is all good" said Dumbledore watching them curiously, Nick might be his first priority as the Boy Who Lived. If it turned out not to be him, he wasn't going to have to be so nice to the child or James and Lily. He again had noticed Harry was spending all his time away from the Manor.

"Yes me too" said Lily.

"Take care!" said Dumbledore, obviously Nick was awake somehow, and he wondered silently why they hadn't told him. He knew the child had obviously just woken up; he had been over there a few times to make sure the boy was fine. It had been the same response he was still asleep. They hadn't displayed any awkwardness or guilt so they hadn't done anything they shouldn't.

"NICK!" shrieked his mother when she noticed her son awake the next morning. Relief flowed through Lily, oh thank god for that her son was fine.

"Mum" groaned Nick, he hurt everywhere.

"Here take this" said James, thrusting a potion under his nose.

"How are you feeling son?" asked Lily.

"I'm fine mum! Honest" said Nick.

"Oh son we have been so worried!" sobbed Lily. James hugged her and nodded his head.

"Where's Ron? Nothing happened to him did it?" asked Nick, he wasn't sad just curious.

"No he's fine but we have to talk to you Nick" said Lily.

"What's wrong? I've not lost my magic have I?" asked Nick wide eyed.

"No but we told everyone you woke up the night it happened," said Lily.

"Why?" asked Nick.

"Because you did and then fell back asleep, we thought we would remind you just in case you didn't remember. We don't want the press calling us liar's son that's all" said James.

"That's right!" said Lily nodding her head; perhaps it was best if their son didn't know.

"Oh, well that's ok mum," said Nick.

"Yes, yes its ok now" smiled Lily.

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"Nick Potter's had an accident" said Harry a grimace on his face behind the paper.

"Has he indeed? Well is there nothing more exciting than that?" asked Eileen shaking her head. Her son had spoken about Nick Potter, he wasn't very good a student, very mediocre or so he said. She had no reason to distrust her son so she took it as truth.
"I guess I better get those papers delivered" said Harry.

"I shall see you in an hour Harry" smiled Eileen kindly know just how long Harry would be gone for. He had been doing it for two summers now. They were due to go back to Hogwarts soon, and she hated to admit it but she was going to miss him. His quiet company, his shy smile, his helpful ways and everything about him. She more than ever couldn't understand why his family were being so nasty to him.

"Bye" said Harry, he already had his Hogwarts things, and he had managed to get the letter before she saw his full name. After that he got all he needed and binned the letter in Diagon Alley when he was there.

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"Coming!" yelled James, when the front door of their Manor went.

"Surprise!" yelled Sirius barrelling in and hugging his best friend.

"Is Nick alright?" asked Remus his amber eyes alight with fear.

"Oh he's fine honestly you know the papers!" said James brushing it off as nothing.

"Uncle Remy Uncle Siri!" shrieked Roxy she hadn't seen them in years.

"Roxy!" beamed Remus hugging her and asking her all about her day as Sirius rounded on James.

"Pettigrew's signature has been caught here...we've been following for years this is the warmest it's ever been." said Sirius cautiously.

James' eyes narrowed in disbelief unable to believe Pettigrew had the neck to show up here of all places.

"Where was it?" asked James worried now.

"Scotland" said Sirius.

"I'm guessing you are both going to stay here while you look?" asked James looking hopeful. Sirius was the Auror getting paid to track down the wanted Wizard Pettigrew. Remus helped him, for nothing his sense of smell helped a great deal its how they were managing to get near Pettigrew.

"We hope so" said Sirius grinning nudging his best friend he had missed this for years.

"No problem pick a free room" laughed James.

"Where's Nick?" asked Sirius.

"Where's Harry?" asked Remus curiously.

"Nick is having a shower, Harry is staying with a friend" said James grinning widely.

"Can you read me a book Uncle Remy?" asked Roxy her eyes wide and hopeful.

"Of course just let me get settled in and I'll read you a whole one" said Remus wanting to make up for lost time.

"YAY!" whooped Roxy. James just smiled at her he loved his family, unsurprisingly that didn't
"Bye Eileen I'm going to miss you" sighed Harry hugging her softly.

"I shall miss you too, I have a gift for you" she said whistling, out of nowhere a black owl glided out of the side room.

Harry's eyes widened, tears he couldn't even stop flooded his cheeks, his own parents refused to get him one. Yet Eileen did, he did wish more than ever Eileen had been his mother she was so great and he loved her. He loved her more than anyone, Lily, James, Nick, Roxy even himself and Eileen could see that. Harry obviously got all the essentials but lacked with everything else. You could have all the money in the world but it didn't matter if they weren't loved properly. She wiped his tears away and put the owl on his shoulder, smiling sweetly at him.

"There now you can keep in touch with me!" said Eileen. It was the Galleons she would never regret spending to see the look on Harry's face.

"Thank you" said Harry softly.

"What do you want to name him?" asked Eileen waiting on the Portkey activating in twenty seconds.

"Hermes" grinned Harry happily.

"Lovely name, I shall see you next summer Harry take care of yourself and write!" said Eileen she saw Harry nod once before he was gone.

Harry had the train compartment to himself this year; he also didn't have the signed permission to go to Hogsmeade. He was probably going to be the only child not going, it was a good thing he had spent his summer there. But he would have liked to go, and spend the day with Eileen but some things weren't meant to be. Perhaps he should write to James, see if he would agree…but he knew the answer he didn't need to send the owl. It would be a wasted journey he would say no just because he could.

Before long the carriages had them arriving at Hogwarts steps, they were in and sitting down before the younger years. Younger years being the first years who took the boat over, again it took a long time for everyone to be sorted.

Dumbledore gave his usual speech, but he added something else and it caught Harry's attention.

"There is a known criminal who has been sighted not far from here, Peter Pettigrew; he is an animagus, a rat animagus at that. If you have any information, or see anything suspicious please come forward. If it get's any more dangerous the Dementors will be dispatched to the school, they are foul creatures and I do not want them here. So please! Be careful, alert and watchful! Let the feast begin"

"Hi Luna" said Harry softly.

"Hi Harry" smiled Luna right back.

"How are you? Did you enjoy your summer?" asked Harry curiously.

"Oh yes, Daddy and I went to see the Crumble-Horned Snorkacks" said Luna kindly.
"Did you what do they look like?" asked Harry he unlike the others didn't laugh at her.

"They are similar to the Thestrals I'd imagine we never did get to see them" said Luna sadly.

"I'm guessing it's a less known magical animal?" guessed Harry, he was indulging her now but it didn't mean he disbelieved her. There were probably a lot of animals out there that weren't well known especially magical ones.

"Yes, me and daddy hope to see one to prove it to everyone" said Luna her dreamy face on once more.

They were soon finished with dinner, and guided towards Ravenclaw Tower, Harry said goodnight to Luna. She said goodnight back and before long he was sleeping, ready for his first day back at Hogwarts. Wondering if Dumbledore would really allow Dementors to be allowed on the school grounds.

While everyone went on Hogsmeade weekends, he stayed behind thankfully with Luna who was becoming a fast friend. She loved books almost as much as he did, although she preferred to read about magical animals. The library became a retreat for both of them; Harry loved having a friend - a friend of his own that nobody else had. She didn't care for Nick as he came to learn, sometimes though she would get lost in her own little world. A place called her mind.

Rubeus Hagrid had become the Care of Magical Creature's teacher; Harry didn't like him but loved the class. He had allowed Nick to ride on Buckbeak but no one else had been given the opportunity. Then again it might have something to do with Draco Malfoy being an idiot and causing Buckbeak to scratch his arm. Needless to say none of the classes were quite as good as the first one, during classes all Hagrid said was Nick look at this, see this what are you doing Nick etc… it was all rather annoying he wasn't acting like a proper teacher.

The same happened in Defence Against the Dark Arts, Remus his father's old friend had become the teacher. Unfortunately for him he had Defence with the Gryffindor's this year; he had been behind Nick when they were facing a Boggart. When Remus realized who was at the front, he skidded in front of Nick, and then the moon became a balloon. He knew what it meant; he had heard his James speaking about it some times with Lily. Before he had left he had heard James saying he would give Remus enough money to buy a new potion called Wolfsbane. Created by Snape, so he was going to be safe to be the Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher. Harry had wondered for a while what his greatest fear was, but couldn't come up with any conclusions.

He had seen Remus spending a lot of time with Nick as well, that had hurt too it wasn't fair. It couldn't have hurt Remus to speak to him outside of class even just once. Luna had just told him it was Remus' loss because he was a great guy or so she said.

Despite that the year went very smoothly indeed, no Voldemort, no Tom Riddle's, and no Diary no nothing. For the first time he didn't have to watch out for anything suspicious, he was rather curious about Quirrell though. Had he gotten away? Or was he still there? He dared not go back in case someone was watching. He didn't want to be blamed for the Death Eaters' death thank you very much, and Quirrell had been a Death Eater. His scar had been constantly on fire, he had to have been connected to Voldemort someway.

That year though went far to fast for Harry's liking, Luna and Harry were inseparable. He had of course kept in touch with Eileen all year; she was fast becoming a grandmother sort of figure to him. He loved her she always wrote back to him right away, he was number one to her and it meant the world to him. He had noticed that Ronald Weasley had stayed well away from Nick that year too. Weasley had become friends with two other Gryffindor's Finnegan and Thomas.
Potions had been more of a nightmare; she was still being horrible, no matter what his potion was like. He wasn't nasty to anyone else just him, still he continued on his way not letting Reese get to him. Nearer to the end of the year though he had mellowed, began ignoring him instead which he was fine with.

Hufflepuff had one the Quidditch cup this year; Cedric Diggory had joined the team as their seeker. Even Harry had to admit he was very good, better than Nick or even Draco Malfoy, so they had deserved their win. He had no house loyalty; he didn't care much that Ravenclaw hadn't won.

Slytherin had won the house cup that year; it helped having Reese unfairly giving ten points to Slytherin for each completed potion. When the Ravenclaw's had completed their potions too, they never got awarded house points. Although Harry had to admit what classes he had with the Slytherins, they had won their points fair and square. Just not in Reese' class.

Before long he was in the steaming red scarlet engine on his way back to Eileen's now that he had definite permission. He had told James what he was doing, he got one scrap of paper saying OK and that was it. He was going home for the summer, a place where he was wanted, loved, happy. It had been a whole year basically since he had seen his family, or it would be half way through this summer.

"I'll write to you…unless you are going away this summer?" questioned Harry, knowing Luna and her father had a habit of going places looking for magical animals.

"Not for the first half of summer" smiled Luna serenely.

"Oh well ok then I'll be in touch" grinned Harry happily. Eileen had told him he needed a friend and perhaps she had been right. Then again she had been right about a lot of things, before long he was hidden in the toilets of kings cross using the Portkey to go home.

"Harry! Lovely to see you son!" beamed Eileen looking up and noticing him in the shop Portkey in hand.

"You too! I've missed you so much!" grinned Harry hugging her softly as not to hurt her.

Eileen's eyes widened at the changes in Harry, he looked like a carefree child, and all hope hadn't been lost. Luna had been a good friend to Harry, she was suddenly even gladder for the girl. Harry had also grown some more, he was going to be taller than her soon. She was a tall woman, her son even got her tallness, his da had been tall too so he might have got it from him. She doubted it though because her son got everything else from her including his magic which she thanked Merlin for.

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"No luck?" asked James.

"None at all James I'm at a loss!" sighed Sirius. "How was your year at Hogwarts?"

"Great, I've told him I'm going back to helping you this year…he's still here and we need to find him before he hurts Nick" said Remus gravely.

"What if he goes back to Hogwarts and you aren't there?" asked Sirius.

"Dumbledore is there, I doubt Pettigrew would chance it" said James.

"Maybe" said Remus.
"I just hope Nick did better this year with no distraction" said James it was getting embarrassing.

"Distraction?" frowned Remus.

So James told them everything that had happened in the previous two years of school stopping his son from getting perfect scores.

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oops sorry about mixup with chapters!
Chapter 9

Invisible

Chapter 9

Summer and Back To Hogwarts Year Four Part 1 - Tri-wizard Tournament Comes To Hogwarts!

“Why don’t we all chip in and train him then? I’ll train him in defence; you can do Transfiguration, Lily, Charms. Sirius can help him with Quidditch?” suggested Remus after hearing about Nick’s years. No wonder he couldn’t concentrate, if only he had thought about it from his view. He had been one of the top students and he turned into a wolf every month. Yet he hadn’t any problem with his school work, one could ask how he was so damn blinded. “Plus it would give us a chance to know him more…I regret not getting to spent time with them…but Pettigrew had to be found.”

“I suppose…” conceded James. Looking worried, he knew he would have to do it sooner or later. His son had no idea of the Prophecy and it would stay that way for a while until he was sure Nick was ready for it. He just didn’t like the thought of training his son to be a weapon, to destroy Voldemort. Especially considering he might not even be back for years yet, peace had reined in the world for the past thirteen years come Halloween. He wanted his son to be a child, the same loving boy he was right now at least until he left Hogwarts.

“Then that’s what we do, just stick to your guns James he will respect you for that” said Remus mistaking James worry. He thought James was worried his son would hate him for giving him extra tutoring instead of letting him play that summer.

“Where is Harry?” asked Roxy curiously coming in looking bored. She had noticed his room was empty, she saw Nick all the time but never Harry. It had piqued her curiosity; she was now nearing ten years old and would join Harry and Nick at school next year. She played with Nick a lot but recently she realized she hadn’t ever given her brother the time of day before.

“He’s staying over at his friends” explained James softly.

“Why is he never home?” asked Roxy cocking her head to the side, she had her mothers never ending curiosity.

“When you get to Nick and Harry’s age you wont want to be here, you will want to spend all your time at your friends” said James smiling wryly nobody noticed how tense it was.

“Do you want to go over to play with Marcus?” asked Lily, Marcus Longbottom was really the only child they know near Roxy’s age. Marcus was very different from Neville, loud, boisterous, loved Quidditch and hated his brother’s talks about plants. Then again people always said that they hated something about their brothers or sisters.

“No, Marcus’ grandmother’s over for a fortnight” said Roxy screwing her face up. She did not like Lady Longbottom at all. She was too strict for Roxy; she was used to getting everything she wanted when she wanted. Alice was like Lily just slightly stricter and Roxy could deal with that. However she couldn’t deal with the Granny, she stuck to her guns and Roxy hated how she treated her.

“I see” said Lily looking conflicted.

“Can we go to the beach pleaseee” whined Roxy she was so bored.
“Oh all right, but get something appropriate on the outing” said Lily giving in. Her children all had a few Muggle attires (minus Harry who she always forgot about) for every occasion they might need in the Muggle world. James let her do what she pleased but never joined her shopping trips to the Muggle world. He hated being there any longer than necessary so he made his excuses.

“Remus and I are going to fix up a schedule for training Nick” said James kissing his wife his way of making excuses.

“Oh, okay then I’ll just take them” said Lily smiling softly.

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“Luna wrote!” said Harry grinning widely when he noticed the strange bird, only that would belong to the Lovegood’s. It was probably why he loved Luna so much she was different, didn’t bow down to expectations. Neither would he when the time came, come to think of that, the world could screw itself.

“What does she say this time?” asked Eileen indulgently.

“She’s offering me a ticket to see the Quidditch match” gasped Harry in awe.

“Bulgaria Versus Ireland?” asked Eileen curiously. It had been in the newspapers and it was hard to miss. It was the Quidditch World cup after all so it was expected to be in the paper for the Quidditch fanatics.

“Yes” said Harry still stunned.

“That’s nice of her” said Eileen kindly.

“I didn’t think she was into Quidditch that much” said Harry genuinely taken aback.

“What else does it say?” asked Eileen.

“It’s for my birthday” said Harry his jaw was hanging on the floor. His own parents never remembered his birthday hadn’t in a long time. Even if it was on the same day as his brothers, Nick was more important to buy for.

“When is your birthday?” asked Eileen surprised.

“July 31st” said Harry stiffly. That date was well known for being the Boy Who Lived’s birthday. So far though Eileen hadn’t so much as twitched when Nick was in the papers, just last she had commented on nothing else being in the paper that they were putting that on the front page.

“I see” said Eileen an odd twinkle in her obsidian eyes. Her son had also gotten her eyes too; he was a male version of his mother. She knew immediately who this child really was, much to her shock. It had been a long time coming. Not Harry James, but Harry James Potter. This was Nick Potter’s twin brother, she remembered reading about twins that night, she had been so happy. Her son was finally free of the man he had joined himself to. Not that she cared about Nick Potter don’t get her wrong, she didn’t care who did it just that he was gone. Her son told her often enough that ‘The Dark Lord’ wasn’t truly gone he never called him Voldemort or you-know-who. He wasn’t scared enough to call him You-Know-Who but definitely didn’t want to call him Voldemort; it sent shards of pain through the mark. He had added a geis of sorts to the Dark Marks that reacted to his name.

“Harry where do your parents think you are?” asked Eileen with worry but she managed to conceal her worry from Harry.
“Staying with friends for the summer” said Harry quietly; he never spoke about his parents if he could help it.

“I see” said Eileen sighing sadly. The Potters had much to answer for, she realise they probably ignored their son in favour of his twin. How long had it been going on? All the child’s life? She hoped not.

“Are you going to go?” asked Eileen smiling softly.

“I think so” grinned Harry.

“I have an old tent up in the loft if you want to use it” suggested Eileen getting off the topic of his family. Harry obviously didn’t like talking about them, he always invaded her questions or answered with as little as possible. He obviously thought she didn’t know who he was, which he had of course been right until now.

“I’ll write back see what she says” chuckled Harry softly, it had been the best decision he had ever made. He knew his family would probably be going but he didn’t let that deter him. He would keep a low profile and keep well out of their way. He doubted Luna would have box seats anyway so they probably wouldn’t see them.

“You do that” said Eileen, she was more curious than ever about Harry and his life. She wondered silently if her son would have more information to share about that. She didn’t like the thought of going behind his back, however if she wanted answers it was going to be the only way.

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“Harry’s replied!” said Luna dreamily from her home, which wasn’t far from the Weasley’s home in Ottery St. Catchpole in Devon.

“That’s good!” ginned Xeno softly; he loved his daughter more than anything else in the world. He would do anything for her, go anywhere for her and even kill to keep her safe and alive. Her mother had loved her too, his greatest regret was that Luna had seen it happen, but he was also very relieved his wife had cast the containment spell on Luna when she realized what was happening. She had obviously not had the chance to do it on herself before the experiment had blown up in her face. He would have probably followed Luna and Lindsey if the worse had happened. (Lindsay is the name I’m giving Xeno’s wife! She was after all nameless)

So he continued watching her, a serene grin on his face, he had missed Luna, she was already going into her third year this year. It was hard to believe she was only his three months of the year now. He sometimes wished she didn’t have to grow up so quickly, only someone who had lost everything other than their child would truly understand. That Luna truly was his everything, without her he might as well be dead.

“He’s asking if we have a tent” giggled Luna.

“You best reply then sweetheart” said Xeno kissing her on her head as he left to get a coffee.

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“They have a tent so it’s ok thanks for the offer though,” grinned Harry it was now night time. Hermes was just back with Luna’s reply, he wasn’t about to send his owl back out again not at this time. He took Hermes over to the owl stand and placed a few treats into his owl dish and refreshed the water.
“No problem sweetie” said Eileen still awed by the change a year can make in Harry. When she first met him she had assumed he was older, he had lied about his age. He was always brooding and unhappy, not always but most of the time she supposed. He was always happy to help her and speak to her about all things that didn’t dibble on his family, friends and his life. She understood everything better now. Harry hadn’t had a true family, or any friends no doubt they preferred Nick Potter, that name, left a rotten taste in her mouth. She was like her son in that regard now, for once her son wasn’t like her, and she was like him.

“I’m awfully tired so I’m going to sleep now night Eileen.” said Harry softly hugging her quickly before leaving Harry hadn’t felt so happy before in his life.

“Goodnight.” she said to the closing door.

Harry tossed and turned most of the night before long he was having the most absurd and fearful dream in his life.

“There is a little more in the bottle, My Lord, if you are still hungry.” said an unknown voice.

“Later” hissed a second voice “Move me closer to the fire Wormtail.”

“Where is Nagini?” asked the second voice once more after a few seconds of silence.

“I-I don’t know, My Lord,” said the first voice again belonging no doubt to this Wormtail. It sounded nervous now even Harry could tell that from the dream. “She set out to explore the house, I think…”

“You will milk her before we retire, Wormtail,” said the second voice. “I will need feeding in the night. The journey has tired me greatly.”

“My Lord, may I ask how long we are going to stay here?” asked Wormtail.

“A week” hissed a cold voice “Perhaps longer. The place is moderately comfortable, and the plan cannot proceed yet. It would be foolish to act before the Quidditch World Cup is over.”

“The - the Quidditch World Cup, my Lord?” asked Wormtail. “Forgive me, but - I do not understand - why should we wait until the World Cup is over?”

“Because, fool, at this very moment wizards are pouring into the country from all over the world, and every meddler from the Ministry of Magic will be on duty, on the watch for signs of unusual activity, checking and double-checking identities. They will be obsessed with security, lest the Muggles notice anything. So we wait” hissed the cold voice.

“Your Lordship is still determined then?” asked Wormtail quietly.

“Certainly I am determined Wormtail,” the menacing note in the voice was hard to mistake.

“It could be done without the Potter twins, My Lord” said Wormtail quickly as if he was wanting to finishing speaking about this.

“Without the Potter twins?” breathed the second voice softly. “I see…”

“My Lord, I do not say this out of concern for the boys!” said Wormtail, his voice rising squeakily like the rat he was. It was almost like he had spent too much time in his animagus form and had forgotten how to speak instead of squeak. “The boys are nothing to me, nothing at all! It is merely that if we were to use another witch or wizard - any wizard - the thing could be done so much more
quickly! If you allowed me to leave you for a short while - you know that I can disguise myself most effectively - I could be back here in as little as two days with a suitable person -"

“I could use another wizard,” said the second voice softly, “That is true…”

“My Lord, it makes sense,” said Wormtail sounding hugely relieved. “Laying hands on the Potter’s would be so difficult; they are so well protected -”

“And so you volunteer to go and fetch me a substitute? I wonder… perhaps the task of nursing me has become wearisome for you, Wormtail? Could this suggestion of abandoning the plan be nothing more than an attempt to desert me?” hissed the second voice evilly.

“My Lord! I- I have no wish to leave you, none at all -” said Wormtail.

“Do not lie to me!” hissed the second voice “I can always tell, Wormtail! You are regretting that you ever returned to me, feel you shudder when you touch me…”

“No! My Devotion to your Lordship -”

“Your devotion is nothing more than cowardice. You would not be here if you had anywhere else to go. How am I to survive without you, when I need feeding every few hours? Who is to milk Nagini?”

“But you seem so much stronger, my Lord -”

“Liar” breathed the second voice “I am no stronger, and a few days alone would be enough to rob me of the little health I have regained under your clumsy care. Silence!”

“I have my reasons for using the boys, as I have already explained to you, and I will use no others. I have waited thirteen years. A few more months will make no difference. As for the protection surrounding the boys, I believe my plan will be effective. All that is needed is a little courage from you, Wormtail - courage you will find, unless you wish to feel the full extent of Lord Voldemort’s wrath -”

“Quiet…I think I hear Nagini” hissed Voldemort.

“Nagini has interesting news Wormtail” said Voldemort after listening for a few seconds.

“In-indeed, my Lord?” questioned Wormtail.

“Indeed, yes,” said the hissing voice “According to Nagini, there is an old Muggle standing right outside this room listening to every word we say.”

“Invite him inside, Wormtail. Where are your manners?” the cold voice insisted.

“You heard everything Muggle?” hissed Voldemort.

“What’s that you’re calling me?” asked the unknown Muggle.

“I am calling you a Muggle,” said the voice “It means you are not a wizard.”

“I don’t know what you mean by wizard,” said the Muggle “All I know is I’ve heard enough to interest the police tonight, I have. You’ve done murder and you’re planning more! And I’ll tell you this too,” he added “my wife knows I’m up here, and if I don’t come back -”

“You have no wife,” said the cold voice quietly. “Nobody knows you are here. You told nobody
that you were coming. Do not lie to Lord Voldemort, Muggle, for he knows...he always knows...”

“Is that right?” said the Muggle roughly “Lord is it? Well, I don’t think much of your manners, My Lord. Turn around and face me like a man, why don’t you”

“But I am not a man, Muggle,” said the cold voice, it seemed he was having trouble speaking as if it was exhausting him to even open his mouth. “I am much, much more than a man. However...why not? I will face you...Wormtail, come turn my chair around.”

Wormtail whimpered nasally.

“You heard me, Wormtail” hissed Voldemort.

The killing curse was uttered, then miles away Harry Potter woke up his entire body shaking with fear. He closed his mouth shaking, wondering if he had screamed at all. He pressed his palm to his scar, it felt as if someone had applied a hot poker to it. He hoped not because he didn’t want to wake Eileen up she was kind enough to let him stay after all. It took along time for the shaking to stop, the sweat soon dried in sleep never came back to Harry Potter that night. The pain faded very slowly, unlike that time during Quirrell’s classes. He remembered the dream...a Muggle had been killed by Voldemort...the name Wormtail was familiar to him he didn’t know why.

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“Are you ready to go to the Quidditch World Cup?” grinned Nick, both Potter’s and Weasley’s were packed to go. Only difference between both families was the fact everything was new on one and used on the other and the size of the family too of course.

“I can’t wait!” cheesed Ron his face almost splitting in two. For once Ron was glad his father worked in the Ministry of Magic - the Misuses of Muggle Artefacts office.

“Ah Amos!” grinned James good naturally finally spotting the man who was near the Portkey.

“This is my son Cedric Diggory!” beamed Amos as if they didn’t know. He was un-doubtfully proud of his son. He was a handsome boy; He was captain and seeker of Huffelpuff house Quidditch team at Hogwarts.

“Hi” grinned Roxy blushing bright red.

“Hi everyone!” waved Cedric happily obviously very much like his father with his bubbly happiness.

“Long walk Arthur?” asked Amos.

“Not to bad,” said Arthur, James wasn’t happy that no one was paying attention to him or his son.

“Can we go now?” asked Nick bored because the attention wasn’t on him.

“Merlin’s beard is that Nick Potter?” asked Amos Diggory, his eyes wide.

“Yes” beamed Nick proudly.

“Nice to meet you, Ced’s talked about you, of course,” said Amos, Nick puffed proudly until he heard the rest. “Told us all about playing against you last year...I said to him, I said - Ced, that’ll be something to tell your grandchildren, that will...you beat Nick Potter!”

The Weasley’s still at school all scowled at the reminder that they had lost to Huffelpuff that year.
“Er, isn’t it time to get going?” asked Lily forcing a smile on her face.

“Is anyone else coming?” asked Arthur.

“Oh no, the Lovegood’s have already gone” said Amos.

Before long they were Portkey’d to the Quidditch world cup.

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“Harry you have been awfully quiet…are you sure you are ok?” asked Luna softly.

“I’m fine…my parents and siblings are probably here by now” said Harry. It wasn’t only that, that was bothering him. His dream was too…if he had wanted any more proof he was the one that destroyed Voldemort that night he had it. He was connected to Voldemort through the scar and it disturbed him more than anything else in the world.

Luna blinked sharply before her dreamy mask was back up again “Don’t think on them, just enjoy the Quidditch World Cup” said Luna kindly.

“Yeah I guess I should” grinned Harry nodding his head.

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“Hello mother,” said Severus smiling softly, only she ever saw his softer side.

“Severus! Come sit down love I’ve made us some coffee” beamed Eileen happy her son was once again coming to see her.

“Why is the shop closed?” asked Severus curiously.

“Harry has gone to the Quidditch World Cup with the Lovegood’s” smiled Eileen as if it explained everything.

“I see” said Severus.

“How are your potions coming along?” asked Eileen.

So for the first hour they constantly spoke about what potions he was attempting and making. How much money he was making from the very successful Wolfsbane potion. How his time was limited because of the delicate stages it took to brew said potion. If anyone understood potions and had the same passion it was his mother yet another thing he had gotten from her - his love for potions.

“What do you know about Harry Potter, Severus?” asked Eileen unable to keep quiet anymore.

“Harry Potter?” asked Severus for confirmation his eyebrow raised in curiosity.

“Yes” nodded Eileen confirming she had said the correct name.

“I only taught him for a year” said Severus curious now.

“Yes, yes I know but did you notice anything about him? About his family?” asked Eileen.

“I don’t pay attention to the Potter’s mother” sighed Severus, which wasn’t strictly true.

“Severus!” chided Eileen softly shaking her head.
“Alright, alright Harry was very good at potions, his brother was what I expected totally inept at it” said Severus. “He is also very different from his twin, there’s nothing Potter to him at all, he’s quiet, shy, and very hard working…a loner and he…doesn’t seem to have the same enthusiasm for his parents as Nick Potter. He never received a single package or letter the entire year that I saw…he stayed for the holidays when the other left”

“Do you know why?” asked Eileen sharply.

“I don’t, no, Albus told me that Harry never spends any time with his family…he was snooping around” replied Severus knowing there was more to this conversation than he was getting.

“I see” said Eileen gravely.

“Mother what do you know? Why are you asking about this?” asked Severus a note of warning in his voice.

“The boy I’ve been telling you about…is him” said Eileen quietly.

Severus eyes widened in shock that was the last thing he had expected, Harry James was actually Harry James Potter. Severus felt like laughing, he had told her a half truth, that wasn’t a very Ravenclaw move to make. Then he thought of everything his mother told him, her suspicions about the boys’ family abusing him.

“Lily wouldn’t abuse her son” said Severus adamantly.

“I think I was wrong on that regard…it wasn’t physical abuse” sighed Eileen.

Severus shook his head a soft sigh leaving his lips, he couldn’t believe his well, ex best friend really would do that. Or allow it to happen…surely…not even she could ignore her son. He however, trusted his mother more than Lily. He knew she had changed; fame did that to someone unfortunately. She wasn’t the same quiet girl he had befriended at the age or eight.

“I think its neglect” said Eileen adamantly.

Severus just frowned and gestured to her to continue.

“I got him an owl last year; he just about burst into tears Severus! Over an owl! He’s never received anything like that before in his life I’m sure of it!” cried Eileen defending Harry from Severus who probably believed Lily incapable of such behaviour but he didn’t see what she did.

“I see” said Severus faintly disturbed now. The Potter’s had a lot of money, why wouldn’t they get their son a familiar. If no other reason than they actually were being neglectful in regards to their youngest son.

“His birthday has passed! Did you know that? He got nothing other than one card and tickets to the Quidditch World Cup!” she said with a huff.

“They are hard to come by … it’s a perfectly acceptable birthday present” said Severus, it had been more than he got that was for sure.

“From his only friend Luna!” finished Eileen smartly.

Severus looked into the room Harry was occupying and saw true to her word, only one card sitting on the beside table. He felt his heart lurch uncomfortably; he knew what it was like to be in Harry’s shoes. For the majority of his life he had only had Lily, but at least he had his mother
Harry Potter it seemed had no one. Lily had changed more than he thought if that was how she was treating her child; the Lily he had known wouldn’t have done such a thing.

“She has changed more than I thought” sighed Severus; he had seen the paper from when Nick Potter was hurt. He always order the Daily Prophet, even if the majority of it was rubbish he got it for the Potions section.

“That’s putting it mildly” scoffed Eileen.

“Do they know he’s staying with you?” asked Severus concerned.

“They are under the impression he’s staying with a friend…I doubt they asked who…and he hasn’t received anything from them he’s with me all summer unless he’s doing his paper rounds” sighed Eileen sadly.

“I’ll speak to Albus see if he can shed more light on the situation” promised Severus.

“Thank you son” sighed Eileen in relief.

“No problem,” smirked Severus in amusement. Just then a letter came through the open window, straight for Severus. Frowning in confusion he opened it when he noticed Dumbledore’s handwriting, upon reading the contents he froze in shock.

“Sev, Love, what is it?” asked Eileen alarmed not much could shock her son like that.

“Death Eaters attacked the Quidditch World Cup” he said hoarsely in disbelief. “Dumbledore think’s Voldemort is trying to find a way back”

“Harry” said Eileen looking positively sick.

“I have to go mother, Dumbledore wants to see me” said Severus getting up swiftly summoning his cloak from the peg his mother put it on. Clipping it in place around his neck, he kissed her goodbye and told her to be extra careful before apparating away.

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“That was brilliant!” beamed Harry practically babbling all the way back to the Lovegood tent. “I should have put a bet on! It happened just as I predicted its sooo not fair it would have won me some money”

“Did you see Krum do that Wronski Feint?” said Luna wide eyed.

“Oh yeah! That was definitely cool” grinned Harry.

“I didn’t expect it!” said Xeno looking amused.

“They wouldn’t have caught up! He wanted to end it on his own terms…its such a pity his team seems angry with him” sighed Luna.

“Oh no! They weren’t when they got applauded” Harry laughed remembering their taken aback looks.

“He’s an awfully big man to be such a good seeker” admitted Xeno.

“Are you writing the game in the Quibbler?” asked Harry curiously.
“I think you should daddy, the price sales will go through the roof for once and they might look at the other articles” said Luna smartly.

Harry grinned and nodded his head in agreement, finally after an hour of walking they were back at the tent. It seems like they had just gotten in when a commotion started, everyone trampling all over the place screaming. Xeno looked terrified upwards; Harry followed and saw that some Muggles were being levitated in the air by masked figures.

“Death Eaters” gasped Xeno terrified.

“Portkey now!” yelped Harry grabbing Luna before the Wizard barrelled passed her.

That shocked Xeno into action, two spells the tent was in his pocket, the Portkey was in hand. They had to wait three seconds on it activating, but they got out of there just as a stunning spell shot by. Harry found himself in a very strange house; no doubt it was the Lovegood abode. It suited them, they were strange but he really liked them Xeno was cool even when he was talking about animals he had never heard about.

“What on earth was going on?” asked Luna wide eyed her grey coloured eyes full of worry.

“Death Eaters attacked the Quidditch Cup” said Harry, Voldemort hadn’t authorised that if his dream was anything to go by. He had wanted to remain quiet; those Death Eaters were in for it if he managed to get back.

“Do you want a coffee?” asked Xeno his voice high pitched instead of the soothing calm voice he usually had.

“Um…sure” said Harry, Xeno obviously wanted something to do.

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“HARRY!” shrieked Eileen moving quickly and bringing Harry into a hug looking greatly relieved.

“I guess you heard then?” asked Harry his voice muffled by the strong hug.

“I did” said Eileen closing her eyes as relief flowed through her.

“I’m ok Mr. Lovegood apparated us out of there at the first sign of trouble” said Harry honestly.

“Thank Merlin, oh thank Merlin” said Eileen almost shaking with the relief.

“Can I get you a coffee?” asked Harry alarmed by Eileen’s pale complexion or rather, paler than normal.

“Oh no I’ve drank enough of that” said Eileen grimacing slightly.

Harry laughed at that “Me too” he had three before he could get away from the Lovegood’s.

Journal Entry

Today was bad but good. Death Eaters attacked the Quidditch World Cup but it was worth going for. I guessed right! I said Krum would get the Snitch but Ireland would win! I wish I had bet. It would mean I’d have enough money but I didn’t want to risk loosing any. Eileen was very concerned when I got back, it made my stomach do flips. She’s been so good to me and I don’t understand why, I’ve never been this lucky before in my life. For the first time I didn’t even think about the Potter’s on my birthday just glad to not spend it watching Nick opening presents and
getting cake. Luna is the best friend in the world and I’m glad I took the chance. However, I don’t know what to do now…do I distance myself from her? I don’t want to put her in danger by associating with me!

Harry

Journal Entry

Oh My God! Eileen got me a new present! I’ve got two cards now! I feel like I’m five years old counting my cards and presents. Unlike Nick though I will cherish everything I get knowing that someone cares about me. She got me a beautiful chain, its lovely it’s also very familiar I just cannot put my finger on it. I will figure it out sooner or later. She baked me a cake too! She wrote Happy Belated Birthday in blue icing I don’t know the last time I got a cake. I’ve sent a piece of to Luna and Xeno, Eileen passed a piece onto her son…I wonder who he is I’ve never asked. I don’t know why I just feel it was too personal or at least it used to be. Maybe she would share some of her stories with her and her son I’d love to know what a normal wizarding family is like. Maybe it’s what Luna and Xeno are like I don’t think the Potter’s are normal but I might just be bitter. I have every right to be! I hate them and wished I was adopted! I just wished I was off age and away from them. I will be able to afford my own flat the day I turn seventeen then I’ll move into it. I’ve not had any more strange dreams…am I connected to Voldemort? Or was my mind running away with me? I don’t think so I just wished I knew. Until then I’m going to watch my back and trust no one…other than Luna that is.

Harry

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After the events of the Quidditch World Cup the rest of the summer was very uneventful to say the least. Harry was actually glad for that, after his dream and the Death Eaters he just didn’t want anything usual happening. He was going to have to watch after himself, Voldemort was coming after him and his brother. Not that he was going to hold himself responsible for his brother anyhow, what Nick did was up to himself.

Before long Eileen had created a Portkey for him that to take him directly to the magical platform of nine and three quarters. Harry was almost crying this time, if it was possible he had gotten even more attached to Eileen than ever.

“Take care of yourself, you hear?” said Eileen sternly.

“I will, you too” said Harry softly, he would kill anyone who tried to hurt Eileen hell if he had to chose between Eileen and his mother he’d choose Eileen in a heartbeat.

With his owl and trunk safely in one hand he clutched the Portkey in the other and he was gone, a tug behind the navel the only indication it was a Portkey. He grunted as he landed but stayed on his feet, unlike his brother who fell all the time. His father had always explained that the more magically powerful you were, the more you fell. Then Nick started doing it for real thinking his father had spoken the truth.

As he was getting on the train he heard Ronald Weasley talking to Finnegan and Thomas.

“I’m telling you something big is happening at Hogwarts this year!” said Ron in a hushed whisper.

“Like what?” asked Finnegan doubtfully.

“Don’t know we will find out soon” said Ron smugly.
For once Harry wasn’t riding on the train alone; Luna had come in beside him, holding the Quibbler up side down. Harry barely blinked before a beaming smile spread across his features, “Hey Luna! How was the rest of your summer did you find anything?” asked Harry eagerly.

“No but come look at some of the pictures! We saw plenty of other things” said Luna gesturing for him to sit next to her.

That was how they spent their hours getting to Hogwarts; he bought them two chocolate frogs each from the cart. Luna in turn got them her favourite sweet - Berty bots every flavour beans. Some of the magical animals were weird; he was rather envious of Luna right there and then. He would have loved his dad to do something like that with him.

“Do you think they’ll find anyone for the Defence seat?” said Luna who was sitting next to Harry on the Ravenclaw bench.

“I don’t know…I doubt Dumbledore would have trouble finding someone” mused Harry.

“It was quite a mouthful” said Luna her dreamy look was back again after that.

They quietened down to listen to the sorting hat sing its usual song.

Marcus Longbottom joined his brother in Gryffindor boy his parents would be proud.

They got a few others joining Ravenclaw including Stewart Ackerley, Orla Quirke.

“I have just two words to say to you…Tuck in!” beamed Dumbledore happily.

During dinner he noticed a commotion at the Gryffindor table, surprise, surprise, it turned out to be Hermione Granger. He grimaced at her in disgust honestly, he hated that girl she was such a know it all. So was he but he didn’t put his hand up before the teacher finished their question…or at all really. Even after three years she hadn’t changed a bit.

Only once dinner and pudding had been completely demolished did Dumbledore stand once more, gaining the attention of the entire hall with just that act alone.

“So!” said Dumbledore “Now that we are all fed and watered I must ask again for your attention, while I give out a few notices. Mr. Filch, the caretaker has asked me to tell you that the list of objects forbidden inside the castle has this year been extended to include screaming yo-yo’s, Fanged Frisbees and Ever-Bashing Boomerangs. The full list comprises some four hundred and thirty-seven items, I believe, and can be viewed in Mr. Filch’s office, if anybody would like to check it”

“Who cares?” whispered Harry rolling his eyes.

“As always” continued Dumbledore “I would like to remind you that the Forest in the grounds is out-of-bounds to students, as is the village of Hogsmeade to all below third year. It is also my painful duty to inform you that the inter-house Quidditch Cup will not take place this year”

“What?” screeched Nick Potter furiously.

“No way!” protested Ron hotly he loved Quidditch even if Gryffindor always loosed and Nick
played for the team.

“That sucks” said Cedric looking disheartened.

Dumbledore it seemed wasn’t finished yet “This is due to an event that will be starting in October, and continuing throughout the school year, taking up much of the teachers’ time and energy - but I am sure you will all enjoy it immensely. I have great pleasure in announcing that this year Hogwarts -”

Suddenly the doors of the Great Hall banged open startling absolutely everyone.

A man stood in the doorway, leaning upon a long staff, shrouded in a black travelling cloak. Every head in the Great Hall swivelled towards the stranger, suddenly brightly illuminated by a fork of lightning that flashed across the ceiling. He lowered his hood, shook out a long mane of grizzled, dark grey hair, and then began to walk up towards the teachers’ table.

A dull clunk echoed through the Hall on his every other step. He reached the end of the top table, turned right and limped heavily towards Dumbledore. Another flash of lightening crossed the ceiling and Luna gasped.

The lightening had thrown the man’s face into sharp relief, and it was a face unlike anything Harry had ever seen. It looked as though it had been carved out of weathered wood by someone who had only the vaguest idea of what human faces were supposed to look like, and was none too skilled with a chisel. He could understand why Luna had gasped now.

“May I introduce our new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher,” said Dumbledore brightly “Professor Moody”

“Moody? As in the Auror Mad-Eye Moody?” asked Harry wide eyed.

“Yeah my dad told me all about him” said Cedric from seats away.

“As I was saying” said Dumbledore continuing on with his previous announcement “We are to have the honour of hosting a very exciting event over the coming months, an event which has not been held for over a century. It is my very great pleasure to inform you that the Triwizard Tournament will be taking place at Hogwarts this year.”

“Well Weasley had it right” said Harry quietly to Luna she nodded jerkily; he had told her what he said on the train ride to Hogwarts.

Harry faded out not listening to Dumbledore going on about things that didn’t concern him. He didn’t care that you had to be seventeen, because he most bloody certainly wasn’t competing anyway. It wouldn’t surprise him if his brother tried to get in, but he doubted anyone could jinx this Goblet of Fire.

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Luna and Harry were blessed with the most amazing sight of their life their second day back at Hogwarts. Nick and been arguing with Draco Malfoy, they had been in the newspapers again James and Lily. It quickly got out of hand and Draco had almost attacked Nick, only to be thwarted in the end. Moody had turned Malfoy into a ferret, and bounced him around the courtyard. Harry hadn’t been able to stop laughing; it was the funniest sight in the world. He actually liked his new teacher, and he hadn’t even had a class with him.

If only someone would be willing to do that to Nick … his ego could be blown away and he might
become more normal. Nick had for the past year after Ron ditched him had other friends, Neville, Lavender Brown and Parvati Patil. This year’s addition despite being a first year - Marcus Longbottom.

Better still they had seen Moody reprimanded by Minerva McGonagall like an errant five year old. Nobody could stop laughing at him for weeks.

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It was two days later he got his first taste of Moody’s class, the first thing he said as he came in put the books away nobody would be needing them. Harry grinned and did as he was told; he was slightly disappointed that again this year he had Defence with the Gryffindor’s.

“I’ve had a letter from Professor Lupin about this class; you have covered pretty much everything about Dark creatures. Boggarts, Red Caps, Hinkypunks, Grindylows, Kappas and werewolves is that right?” asked Moody.

“Yes sir” said Cho everyone else murmured assents.

“But you’re behind - very behind - on dealing with curses,” said Moody “So I’m here to bring you up to scratch on what wizards can to do each other. I’ve got one year to teach you how to deal with Dark -”

“Aren’t you staying?” blurted Nick.

“You’re James Potter’s son ante ya? I am only staying for the year, special favour to Dumbledore…one year then back to retirement” said Moody. He had a very awful grin on his face, making his scars worse and his face contort like he was in agony.

Harry was rather excited about this class now! Getting to do proper curses this was going to be great. Quirrell and Lockhart had both been useless; Lupin was alright he was just furious with the man.

“So- straight to it. Curses. They come in many strengths and forms. Now, according to the Ministry of Magic, I’m supposed to teach you counter-curses and leave it at that. I’m not supposed to show you what illegal Dark curses look like until you’re in the sixth year. You’re not supposed to be old enough to deal with it till then” said Moody “But Dumbledore has a better opinion of your nerves he reckons you can cope, and I say, the sooner you know what you’re up against the better. How are you supposed to defend yourself against something you’ve never seen? A wizard who’s about to put an illegal curse on you isn’t going to tell you what he’s about to do. He’s not going to do it nice and polite to your face. You need to be prepared. You need to be alert and watchful” said Moody.

“So…do any of you know which curses are most heavily punished by wizarding law?” asked Moody.

“Weasley?” said Moody after some hands had been raised.

“My dad told me about one…is it called the Imperious curse, or something?” said Ron.

“Ah, yes,” said Moody nodding “Your father would know that one. Gave the Ministry a lot of trouble at one time the Imperious curse”

“Yeek” said Ron when Moody had withdrawn spiders from his desks it caused most Ravenclaw’s
to roll their eyes. Everyone knew Ronald Weasley’s worst fear was spiders; they remembered the Boggart just last year.

Harry listened intently to Moody’s lecture about the Imperious curse, he didn’t laugh like the others did when the spider was imperious cursed. Eventually he stopped the spell after effectively scaring the day living shit out of everyone by saying he would teach them to beat it.

“Anyone else know another one?” asked Moody.

Hermione’s hand was waving in the air as usual and Harry had to roll his eyes at her, for once he put his hand up hoping the teacher chose him spitefully.

“Aye?” asked Moody staring at Harry intently.

“The Cruciatus Curse” said Harry bluntly.

The spider was quickly ‘Engorgio’ed and the curse was cast Harry didn’t react but half of the class winced at the spiders actions. Twitching horribly, rocking from side to side, no sound came from it but Harry could imagine what it must be going through.

“Right anyone know another?” said Moody bluntly.

Harry wanted to laugh when Nick finally raised his hand he had his back ramrod straight and he had a smug smile on his face.

“Yes?” asked Moody both eyes on Nick Potter.

“Avada Kedavra - The Killing curse” said Nick.

The last spider was killed quickly in a flash of green light, Harry felt suddenly sick for some reason. He had to stop himself retching, he looked back at Nick he seemed unaffected by it all. A sigh left his lips and he turned back to his teacher watching curiously to see what would happen. Would Moody go on about his brother being the only survivor? Who was he kidding he knew it was coming.

“Not nice,” he said “Not pleasant. And there’s no counter-curse. There’s no blocking it. Only one known person has ever survived it, and he’s sitting here right in front of me”

Harry wanted to roll his eyes but that magical eye would probably detect it so he refrained from doing so.

Surprisingly enough he said no more about it, he went on to tell them the three spells were the Unforgivables. Before long they were taking notes on the unforgivables until the bell rang, Harry was glad when it was time to go. As soon as he was free of the room he ran for the nearest bathroom and was spectacularly sick all over the toilet.

Journal Entry

Professor Moody showed us the Unforgivables today; I couldn’t eat my lunch or dinner. Luna understood though…I think she doesn’t know that I was the one to really survive it though. Sometimes she has that twinkle in her eye as if she knew what I was thinking. It’s impossible though right? She can’t know! It’s impossible. When I saw that green flash, I got this image in my head…of a snake like figure then that Muggle man. It wasn’t a dream I did see someone die, I guess its just starting to sink in how close I came to dying when I was a baby.
It was me that was nearly killed, yet it’s Nick that gets all the love and attention and fame. I don’t care for that, I’m glad I’m not like Nick…but I’d have loved even an ounce of mum’s attention. Sometimes I wished people knew so I could just get it over with.

I read in the library after school finished today, I could get myself emancipated early and get my share of the Potter inheritance. Then I wouldn’t have to live with the Potter’s anymore, I could get my flat right now if I liked. I’m seriously thinking about doing it, that way James or Lily couldn’t drag me back out of spite. I don’t know why but I’m getting a strong urge to go through with it.

Harry

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His next defence class was just as bad as ever, not because of anything Moody did but because he had attention drawn to him. Everyone had been put under the imperious curse; no one other than Harry had been able to fight it off. Not only that but his legs felt broken, meanwhile Moody just continued singing his praises. He wouldn’t have minded that but damn it, they were staring at Harry as if they hadn’t seen him before. The Ravenclaw’s pure started cheering for their house mate, the Gryffindor’s looked at Nick as if they couldn’t believe HE didn’t do it when his BROTHER could.

“The way he talks” growled Harry wobbling out of the defence classroom feeling very bloody weak “You’d think I was going to be attacked any minute” scowled Harry.

“You alright there Harry?” asked Luna, coming up beside Cho, Terry and Harry, Cho and Terry had a hold of Harry keeping him steady.

“No Moody broke my legs” said Harry simply.

“How?” asked Luna her dreamy look vanishing she looked furious.

“Put the Imperious curse on me” sighed Harry taking his hands away from Terry and Cho saying a quiet “Thank you”

“Welcome, I hope you get better soon” said Cho softly.

“Yeah mate, good luck” said Terry and they were gone. Harry seemed shock by the fact they were talking to him, hardly anyone spoke to him.

“He made you break your own legs?” asked Luna in mock shocked.

“Er, no” said Harry giggling slightly forgetting the soreness. “He told me to jump, but I didn’t want to ended up crumbling to the floor! He did it four times! Now I can throw it off altogether! The only one too”

“Wow, Harry, that’s really good!” beamed Luna happy for him.

“Thanks, now come on I’m starving” said Harry, happily dragging Luna along. He had his apatite back thank Merlin for that.

“What on earth is going on?” murmured Harry; people were crowding around the marble staircases instead of eating lunch.

“It’s telling you about the Triwizard Tournament” said Luna simply.
“What does it say?” asked Harry curiously, as they slid into Ravenclaw not caring about the Triwizard Tournament like everyone else.

“The Wizards from Drumstrang and Witches from Beauxbatons will be here at 6 o’clock on Friday the 30th of October. Our lessons are finishing half an hour earlier to greet our guests at the Entrance Hall” said Luna.

“That’s a week away, I didn’t think they’d be here so soon” said Harry surprised.

“Yeah,” said Luna nodding in agreement as she sipped her pumpkin juice.

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Needless to say the teachers were pretty tense when the time came for the students of Beauxbaton and Drumstrang to arrive. The Entrance Hall was heaving with people, but Luna and Harry held back while Nick the idiot had stood in the front with McGonagall as if he was a school mascot.

“Miss Lovegood straighten your hat!” snapped McGonagall “Miss Patil take that ridiculous thing out of your hair!”

Then the commotion began Beauxbaton had arrived, in a massive house flying in the air. Palominos winged horses, only they were the size of elephants. Harry sighed wondering when this was going to be over with; students everywhere were gasping, awing and aching as if they hadn’t seen anything like it before in their lives. Even Harry could see the woman emerging from the carriage she was huge, possibly the biggest woman he had ever seen. She could stand beside Hagrid and be the same height he reckoned as he watched impatiently for everyone else to move.

Eventually Drumstrang followed, their big arrival was a ship in the middle of the lake. It certainly impressed everyone other than Luna and Harry. Who were actually just sitting talking quietly in the corner, about how their day went. Harry never mentioned the fact he had the Imperious curse on him again, but spoke about everything else. Luna may be a year younger but she knew a lot of spells, and she was getting to know a lot more talking with him. She would have no problem in her fourth year if she kept that up anyway that was for sure.

If the pandemonium was bad it was nothing when they found out just who from Drumstrang had come. Victor Krum. Nick was positively drooling, grinning widely he had left his ‘friends’ and tried to see him but was too late. There were too many people milling around to even think about getting near him in time.

Finally Luna and Harry managed to get to the Great Hall for their dinner; the Ladies of Beauxbaton chose to sit at the end furthest from the first years on the Ravenclaw table. The Drumstrang students chose to sit at the Slytherin table where they were very welcomed. Once they had finished their dinner, they were shown the legendary Goblet of Fire. Then everyone was lectured once again on having to be seventeen to enter, honestly did Dumbledore think people didn’t listen? He had just heard the same speech at the starting feast.

“Come on I’ve had enough for one night” said Harry looking ready to be sick. He saw everyone milling around Nick Potter. Ladies from Beauxbaton and guys from Drumstrang were sitting with him; he was explaining his adventures to them quite loudly. Most of it was a lot of bullshit but there was nothing HE could do about it.

“You’re right let’s go” said Luna seeing how her friend was reacting.

“Night Luna” sighed Harry going up the stairs.
“Night Harry” said Luna going up the right hand side of the stairs towards the girl’s dorms.
Invisible

Chapter 10

Harry Potter Year 4 Part 2 - Triwizard Champions and making friends

Harry had just come from the hospital wing; Luna was feeling under the weather so he had to keep himself happy. To be totally honest he was completely bewildered by the Ravenclaw’s. He had known them for four years now, they hadn’t ever spoken to him - yet since that class where he bet the Imperious curse everything had changed. He was more comfortable talking to the younger years they hadn’t done anything to him. Right now he was dealing with the confusion by getting up early and found himself walking towards the huts nearby the Quidditch pitch. He took out one of the old school brooms and decided to fly. It had been a long time since he had flew, he knew exactly when - the day he got caught by McGonagall. Who then turned around and gave his position to his brother - Nick.

He didn’t notice he had company until he had flown down twenty minutes later.

“That was some good flying, do you play for your school?” asked a Bulgarian accented boy, who Harry knew to be Victor Krum. The guy who had caught the snitch earlier that year during the Quidditch World Cup.

“No, it’s only the second time I’ve been on a broom. I’ll bet its nothing like your flying, you were brilliant the dive you pulled off was awesome.” said Harry. He didn’t gush it or look at Krum in awe. He was just stating a fact he unlike most of the students at Hogwarts didn’t care that Krum was famous. He was a seventeen year old wizard and that was all there was to it. In fact he liked Krum more than Nick, Krum had earned his fame.

“Thank you.” said Krum in surprise. Normally they would hound him and ask for autographs especially the girls. He didn’t like the attention that came with playing Quidditch professionally. This boy was the first person to treat him normal and it was a nice change.

“Are you’re parents proud of you?” asked Harry sitting down on the green lush lawn that never seemed to grow.

“Of course.” said Krum looking at Harry a little weirdly.

“Do you have brothers and sisters?” asked Harry cocking his head to the side.

“Yes, a little sister.” said Krum, obviously this boy wasn’t obsessed nearly everyone knew he had a sister. There was plenty pictures in magazines with her and his parents.

“How do they treat her?” asked Harry curiously.

“She gets all the attention while I am at school, she writes about all the places they visit.” said Krum he knew there was more behind the question. He noticed the boy’s eyes were twinkling. They were beautiful; the boy was that is especially his eyes.

“That’s nice” smiled Harry, it reached his eyes, but his eyes told a different story. They were full of pain there was no need to guess what he was thinking anyway.

“So who are you?” asked Krum watching the teenager closely. He had seen pain lingering in those
eyes it wasn’t what he expected to see on a student at school. That’s the sort of pain you see when you loose all your family in one go - desolate hopelessness.

“Harry Potter.” sighed Harry half bracing himself for the next question.

“Ah, well it’s very nice to meet you Harry Potter, perhaps we can get to know one another better.” said Krum his accent making it harder to get the words out properly. He had his hand out, waiting on Harry shaking his hand.

Harry looked at Krum and thought about it, was it worth it befriending someone famous? He already got badgered about Nick all the time. It would be just the same if he befriended Krum. A sigh left his lips, he did want someone to talk to other than Luna that is. He loved Luna don’t get him wrong, but it just wasn’t the same as having someone older to talk to. He loved his conversations with Eileen perhaps that would fill the void. He held out his own hand and shook his, and this a friendship was born.

“I think your flying would be better on a proper broom, do you want to try mine?” asked Victor Krum.

“Oh no, I’ve never been on a proper profession broom, I’d be too scared I’d break it!” said Harry wide eyed.

“Go on, I’d like to see you fly.” said Victor kindly.

“Oh, all right then,” said Harry “But don’t blame me if something happens.”

That was how they spent their morning, taking turns in flying around the Quidditch pitch. Harry though had gone beet red upon seeing Victor Krum’s body. He had taken off his t-shirt; the weather was very different in Scotland compared to Bulgaria. Their clothes were much thicker so it came as no surprise that he would be too hot.

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The next day was Sunday; Harry was up early as Luna had been released from the hospital wing. They had just sat down in their normal seats when Victor Krum came over. Harry had to stop the blush from enveloping him, he knew now he was gay he wasn’t a stupid boy. Another thing for his parents to hate him for, not that it really mattered they didn’t care anyway. He wasn’t ashamed of who he was, he just hoped Eileen wasn’t disgusted with him. Now that would hurt more than anything else in the world. He had written a letter of to her last night telling her, he hadn’t heard back yet.

“Has anyone put their names in yet?” asked Krum helping himself to a large breakfast. The rest of the Drumstrang students surprisingly didn’t follow him; they remained seated at the Slytherin side.

“I don’t know,” shrugged Harry “We just got here.” he further explained.

“Ah,” said Krum nodding his head. “Ah well, we all put our names in this morning.”

“Do you really want to do it? I mean it’s supposed to be extremely dangerous, and you are already famous.” Harry couldn’t help but point out.

“True but I’d like to prove I’m more than just a Quidditch player, you cannot play forever you know. One day I will need a proper job, the latest I’ve heard of someone playing Quidditch is their early thirties.” said Krum in explanation.
“Very sensible.” said a new voice sitting next to them. It was a blonde haired girl, very pretty dressed in blue silk. She was part Veela he could tell but he wasn’t overly attracted to her. He could see nearly everyone, in the hall gaping over, at them.

“I am Fleur Delacour it’s very nice to meet you” she said shaking their hands.

“Harry Potter.” said Harry shaking her delicate feminine hand.

“Luna Lovegood.” smiled Luna kindly.

“Victor Krum,” replied Victor shaking her hand politely. “It’s very nice to meet you.”

“You too” she declared before beginning to eat her lunch.

“That is a very unusual necklace you wear Luna” said Fleur no expression on her face. So neither Luna nor Harry were sure whether she was mocking them or not.

“Thank you, my mother and I made it, she died three weeks afterwards. I saw it happen, it was a potions accident.” she explained, straightforward without her dreamy look about her. She never normally bothered when people said anything, or explained but today she did.

Fleur smiled a kind smile “I would wear it too” she revealed softly.

“Thank you” said Luna after swallowing her piece of egg.

“So what are you doing today?” asked Krum.

Just then there was a commotion causing them all to look around, Fred and George Weasley had been thrown across the hall. When they stood up Harry laughed in bitter amusement. Both twins had Dumbledore’s hair and beard; they had obviously tried to fool the powerful Goblet of Fire.

“Stupid idiots,” said Krum shaking his head “They are brothers to the other red head aren’t they? He wouldn’t leave me alone until I had signed his autograph.”

“Ronald Weasley you mean?” asked Luna quietly.

“Yes.” nodded Krum to emphasis his answer.

“He’s been alright lately actually, grew a brain over the holidays.” said Harry snorting briefly. Anyone that stopped befriending Nick was smarter than he gave them credit for.

Suddenly the doors opened, giving a resounding bang when Madame Maxime entered. She truly did put Hagrid to shame, she was huge. Behind her trailed every single member of Beauxbaton academy. The ones that actually came with her. Other than of course, Fleur. In a single file, they all added their name, into the Goblet looking rather smug.

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Harry was sitting in the library with Luna today; he was reading a book about wizarding custom. That was when he saw it - the choice of being emancipated and Harry’s mind exploded with ideas. He could even legally change his name after being emancipated. It didn’t matter that his family was alive! Better yet he would get his Potter inheritance. There would be nothing James could do about it; a smile broke out on his face.

“What’s got you smiling?” asked Luna curiously.
“I can get myself legally emancipated.” said Harry.

“Harry…I know you are unhappy but do you really want to do that?” asked Luna sadly. She knew about Harry’s family, how they ignored him, never bought him anything. It was why she had spent all the money she had saved up to get them the Quidditch World Cup tickets. However, getting emancipated was a big thing, who knew how the Potters would react.

“I have to, I can even legally change my name…take any one of my ancestors names,” grinned Harry feeling a weight coming off him. “As long as none of them are alive, like for instant the Black name or Weasley even.”

“I see” said Luna quietly.

And that was it, later that day he sent off a letter to Gringotts asking about it. He wanted to know everything, before he risked doing it. He had to know what to expect and what would happen.

He got a letter for Eileen that day too.

Dearest Harry

I could positively feel your anxiousness when you wrote, do not fear just because you prefer your own gender that I will abandon you. Just remember it’s widely accepted in the Wizarding world. Although there are always a few prejudice people, just like there are people who think it’s horrible and wrong in the Muggle world.

I would take you over my knee and wallop you one, if you fear what your despicable family think. One day they will regret what they have done, you mark my words sweetie. They will realize what they have done, when you are a powerful known young man. I have a feeling you will go places Harry, you are a smart boy.

Smart people do not end up with regular jobs unless they do something silly. I did that in my youth, to spite my own parents. It’s not something I want you doing sweetie, its part of the reason I helped you. To spite my own parents I left Hogwarts, and went straight to the Muggle world and married one. I cannot regret it completely, because I got a son out of it all. You see my parent’s were pureblood’s as pure as you could get. They disowned me, their only daughter because of it.

I miss you and your company,
I eagerly await your next letter!
Let me know who ends up the Triwizard Champions.

Eileen

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Luna, Krum, Fleur and Harry were sitting at the top of the Ravenclaw table. They ate their food leisurely, although Krum and Fleur were eating quicker than normal. They must be excited to see if they would be picked by the Goblet. Everyone was craning their neck to see if Dumbledore was finished, waiting on him announcing the champions.

“Well, the Goblet is almost ready to make its decision,” said Dumbledore. “I estimate that it requires one more minute. Now, when the champions’ names are called, I would ask them please to come up to the top of the Hall, walk along the staff table, and go through into the next chamber” - he indicated to the door he was talking about - “where they will be receiving their first instructions.”
Once he finished speaking, he waved his hands sweeping the Hall into darkness. The only light now shone from the Goblet and the candles in the pumpkins. Dumbledore really did have a thing for dramatics was all Harry could think.

“Any second” said someone but Harry wasn’t sure whom.

He was right, a second later a tongue of flame shot into the air, a charred piece of parchment fluttered out of it - the whole room gasped. Dumbledore grabbed it before it could float to the floor. Holding it at arms length as if he was long-sighted.

“The champion for Drumstrang,” he read, in a strong, clear voice, “Will be Victor Krum”

The cheering was loud and resounded all around the great hall. Harry was clapping enthusiastically; Fleur and Luna were a little more composed wincing at the loudness of cheers and screaming. Victor nodded at them before getting up, making his way to Dumbledore. Then around the head table, disappearing through the other room.

The clapping and chanting died down. Now everyone’s attention was focused again on the Goblet, a second piece of parchment shot out of it, propelled by the flames.

“The Champion for Beauxbatons,” said Dumbledore “Is Fleur Delacour!”

“Well done” said Luna over the loud cheering that had started up. She too got up from the Ravenclaw smiling warmly at Luna and Harry. It wasn’t long before she disappeared from view joining Victor in the other room.

When she had vanished into the side chamber. Silence fell again, this time it was a silence so stiff with excitement you could almost taste it. The Hogwarts champion was next.

“The Hogwarts champion is,” he called, but his face had gone funny, something was wrong. People could tell, they were whispering with their neighbours wondering what was wrong. Dumbledore cleared his throat and said in a voice filled with disbelief “Nick Potter.”

“What?” whispered Harry wide eyed he knew his brother couldn’t possibly have done it. Which brought him back to his dream, and he felt cold goose bumps rising.

Every head had turned to look at Nick Potter, who had paled a sickly white colour. There was no applause. A buzzing, as though of angry bees, was starting to fill the Hall; some students were standing up to get a better look at Nick. Professor McGonagall rose from her seat, passed Ludo Bagman and Professor Karkaroff to whisper urgently in Professor Dumbledore’s ear. He bent towards her, frowning slightly. Suddenly Dumbledore straightened up and nodded grimly to Minerva.

“Nick Potter!” he called again. “Nick! Up here, if you please!”

Nick sighed before getting up; smirking smugly he knew his parents could get him out of it. He didn’t have to worry, he was sure of it right now he had to make sure people thought him unbothered by these turn of events. The smirk made everyone furious, which caused Nick to falter in concern. No one had ever been like that with him! They seemed furious.

To Harry, Nick took his damned time walking towards Dumbledore.

“Well…through the door Nick.” said Dumbledore but he wasn’t smiling.

Everyone was still sitting there in stunned silence when the Goblet started yet again. Dumbledore
looked worried and stunned; he snatched the piece of paper with dread. His long arms holding it away from him, just like he had with the other three.

The next name just left the Great Hall in stunned silence, completely bewildered by the new turn of events.

“Harry Potter!” shouted Dumbledore.

“Oh dear” said Luna wide eyed, eying Harry with worry in her grey eyes.

Every eye in Hogwarts was fixed on him, causing him to shudder. He felt as though spiders were crawling up his back - he didn’t like it at all. His face emotionless he walked into the chamber with the others feeling dread washing through him.

Fleur and Krum were standing by the fire, staring at Nick frowning; Nick was just standing there looking stunned and wary.

“Do they want us in the hall? He’s not speaking!” said Fleur sniffing in disgust.

“No, we’ve been entered into the Triwizard Tournament.” said Harry bluntly.

“No way.” was Krum’s wide eyed respond.

“How did that happen?” asked a baffled Fleur she knew Harry better than to think he had put his name in. He didn’t seem to care about the Tournament which was why she had chosen to talk to him.

“I have no idea” said Harry crossing his arms looking broodingly into the fire wondering what on earth was happening now.

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“They said I’ve no choice but to compete, the rules are binding” snapped Harry bitterly coming and sitting down in the library looking like he was about to rage.

“We told you” said Victor pity deep in his eyes and voice. We as in Fleur and him, they had told Harry last night that it was binding.

“Even our parents can’t get us out of it! They are raging at Dumbledore. Threatening to sue if anything happens to Nick” sighed Harry his shoulders slumped looking older than ever.

When he had gone up to Ravenclaw tower, he had been patted on the back. Every single Ravenclaw old and young had said they would be with him the whole way through. Supporting him, egg him on to win, help him in any way they can. That had been even more freaky than what happened his first week! Things were going to fast for Harry and he didn’t like it. People were gawping at him constantly; he could feel their beedy eyes analyzing him. He just wasn’t used to it; the sorting had been enough for him thank you very much.

“Just Nick?” queried Fleur confused.

“Yeah he is the Boy Who Lived after all.” said Harry emotionless.

Needless to say Fleur didn’t say anything after that. Victor however, had the confirmation he needed. The conversation he had first had with Harry, out in the Quidditch pitch had always bothered him. It was beginning to make more sense the more time he spent with Harry, and his
sudden remarks about his parents or Nick.

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Mister Harry James Potter

You wanted information about Emancipation and the procedures done. You will find an enclosed booklet that will let you know about it. Send it back to me and I’ll begin the process for you should you wish to go through with it.

Griphook

“Brilliant!” cried Harry digging into the book.

The booklet basically told him the same as the book, with added information. There was also the paperwork, and a list of names he could have from the Potter line. Harry smirked in bitter amusement, breathing deeply he began filling in the form. He chose his new name, and signed it before sending it off with Hermes.

Harry James Peverell.

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Two days later they wrote back, it had gone through. He had also asked if it could get him out of the tournament. No such luck, his name will have changed if anyone looked. Harry didn’t want anyone to know just yet, so his new name was only shared in secret with Luna. He didn’t even need to change the P on his trunk.

He was also the proud new owner of an Invisibility cloak. And a large chunk of Potter inheritance and the Peverell money as well. He was a descendant nobody could contest it; it was in his blood - the name. James couldn’t hope to touch the money; he wondered silently how long it would actually take them, to figure out what he had done.

His good mood was ruined every time he thought about the Tournament.

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“Harry! Wait up.” yelled Krum.

“What’s up? I’ve got to go to class I’m already late?” said Harry cocking his head to the side curious.

“It’s Dragons, the first task.” said Victor whispering it into his ear. Harry’s face had gone a little red at Krum’s closeness. Swallowing heavily it took a few minutes for the sentence to sink in.

“How?” questioned Harry wide eyed, how on earth did Victor Krum know.

“Ronald Weasley told me about them, said Hagrid was there with Maxime too. Fleur probably knows I know so I’m telling you” said Victor quietly.

“Thank you Victor” said Harry smiling gratefully.

“No problem, if you need help I’m sure we can come up with something together. Or if you would prefer speak to Luna and Cedric alone, I mean whatever you want” said Victor smoothly. He wanted to help Harry, standing next to him he seemed awfully small, albeit gorgeous too.
“I don’t want to think about it unless I have to, to be honest with you Victor. Classes are hard enough without worrying about things like that! Although I sure am glad they aren’t treating me like Nick” conceded Harry. Nick was being ignored by every single Gryffindor. Whereas the Ravenclaw’s were all packing around Harry helping him.

The Huffelpuff’s were disappointed one of their own hadn’t been chosen. It changed quickly when Cedric began hanging around with three of the champions. Fleur, Victor and Harry.

The Slytherins were jealous of Nick’s fame always had been - so it was no surprise they were going at any length to annoy Nick. Calling him a liar, a sneak, a cheat anything they could. They never bothered him though; then again he hadn’t truly existed until this shit all happened.

Victor just smirked “Well I’ve told you what I needed to. I’ll see you at class. I’ve got ten minutes to get back on the boat for lessons”

“Sure thing. No problem, I’ll see ya later!” said Harry running in the other direction hoping he didn’t loose points for being late. He knew he would it was potions he had after all.

As much as he tried he couldn’t keep his mind off the bloody dragons! What were they supposed to do with bloody dragons what kind of tasks were they having us perform?
Chapter 11

Harry Potter Year 4 Part 3 - The Games Begin, A Yule Ball and Figuring Out The Clue

Harry woke up early the next morning; he went down to the common room and waited on Luna. It was something he had been doing for a while now; thankfully Luna wasn’t like most girls. She was awake within fifteen minutes of him and dressed for the day. You didn’t see any other girls down in the common room until five minutes before breakfast. Just because they were bookworms it didn’t mean they didn’t like to wear make up and gossip. Although the gossip was more academic related, but that was something else altogether. They were going down to breakfast before they knew it; as usual it wasn’t long before his other friends joined him. Cedric Diggory was a new edition to their group; he had been very upset not to be chosen. Especially loosing out to Nick Potter of all people but there was nothing to be done about that. Cedric really liked Fleur, so that might have also been another reason for his joining. Cho had been practically glaring daggers at both Cedric and Fleur since then. She obviously liked Cedric but unfortunately she was nothing on a Veela.

“Did you get any sleep?” asked Luna as they sat down. No one else was there yet, apart from the teachers of course. None of the Drumstrang students had ventured from the boat nor had any of the Beauxbatons ventured from their carriage house. Luna had told him it was beautiful, she had gone with Fleur one time to see it. Or rather the horse creatures pulling it, she just loved magical creatures. That had already been firmly established; Fleur was used to them and didn’t see them as magnificent creatures. She was proud of her school though and everything in it, hence why she hadn’t had a problem showing Luna around.

“I suppose so.” said Harry. Harry was so used to getting up early it was a habit. He had to get up early during the summer to open the shop and deliver the newspapers. The people of Diagon alley and Hogsmeade preferred their post delivered through their door. The people of Diagon alley and Hogsmeade were mostly housewives with husbands working. It was hard enough looking after children without them woken up at the crack of dawn.

“What do you have first thing?” asked Luna, she always did despite probably knowing his schedule back to front.

Harry grimaced in distaste “Potions.”

“Ah, good luck with that.” she said knowing about Reese’s hate for Harry. Although the teacher had cooled down somewhat in her regards of being nasty. It might have something to do with Harry no longer doing his best in her class. It was always the right colour and texture but never, to the extent of being perfect like before. He did however; continue reading his potions books, and keeping sharp with his written knowledge. He loved potion’s it was by far his favourite subject. Or it had been, until Reese came along, part of him resented Professor Snape for that. He couldn’t blame him though not really, given half the chance he would leave and become an apprentice to a Potions Master. Defence came next, he loved that at least his defence scores weren’t bad like his Potions one. Reese was truly out to get him, and Harry couldn’t figure out why. At least with Professor Snape he knew why he hated Nick. He remembered all the times James had spoke about him with disgust, he usually ended with trying to tell Nick a name he used
to call him. Sniv something but Lily always shrieked at him for trying to do so.

Potions had just started; Reese kept staring at him while he was talking. Talking about poisons and anti dotes. He had a sinking feeling that he was going to be the test subject. He didn’t let the teacher see how bothered he was, even if his heart was beating a mile a minute. He was just wishing he could fade away, when there was an urgent knock on the door.

The boy that came in was the same boy who followed Nick around all day. His brother had taken to do it too, they were both short, skinny little runts. Colin and Dennis Creevy he thought their names were, if he remembered the sorting properly. Colin was positively beaming at Nick as he went up to Professor Reese’s desk.

“Can I help you?” frowned Reese confused, this was a fourth year class after all and this boy looked like a first year.

“Sir, I’ve to take the Potter’s up the stairs!” beamed Colin.

“They have an hour of Potions to complete, they will come up when this class is finished” said Reese glaring at Harry before softening her eyes as she looked at the eager Gryffindor.

“Sir, Mr. Bagman wants them, all the champions have got to go, I think they want to take photographs” said Colin.

“Very well, Nick, Potter go” said Professor Reese curtly.

Harry and Nick quickly left the classroom, Harry eager to get away, Nick not wanting an opportunity to get his pictures taken.

“It’s amazing, isn’t it Nick” said Colin gazing up at Nick in hero worship “Isn’t it though? You being champion?”

“Of course, if anyone’s going to be a champion it’s me!” said Nick smugly.

“What do they want photos for?” asked Harry curtly.

“The Daily Prophet, I think!” said Colin barely glancing Harry’s way to busy staring at Nick in awe.

Harry grimaced; great he was going to have his picture across the bloody globe. There was hope that maybe they would only put Nick’s picture up, he would sell more papers than him. So without more ado he crossed his fingers and prayed for the best.

When he entered he saw the classroom was rather small, Krum was staring moodily at the corner. Fleur was just standing there near Krum, he waved at them all feeling like copying Victor Krum. Who he had come to know hated all press; no wonder the things they do to get a picture of the Quidditch hero. He also saw Bagman sitting there talking to a Witch he had never met before. Nick had though because he had perked up and straightened his robes.

“Ah here they are champion’s number three and four!” beamed Bagman. “Come in, come in… nothing to worry about it’s just the wand weighting ceremony, the rest of the judges will be here in a moment.”

“Wand Weighting?” asked Harry frowning.

“We have to check that your wands are fully functional, no problems, you know, as they’re your
most important tools in the tasks ahead” nodded Bagman soothingly.

“This is Rita Skeeter she’s doing a small piece for the Daily Prophet.” said Bagman introducing the Witch.

“Maybe not that small, Ludo.” said Skeeter’s, Harry noticed she only had eyes for Nick and nearly whooped in relief maybe his face wouldn’t be on display after all.

“May I have a conversation with our youngest champion?” asked Rita after a few seconds.

Harry didn’t even bother to mention that he was technically speaking the youngest. He didn’t want attention drawn to himself thank you very much. Before Ludo or even Nick could agree Skeeter’s was dragging him along and pulling him into a broom cupboard.

Meanwhile, Fleur, Krum and Harry sat down on their chairs conversing quietly. Even as the judges came, Maxime, Karkaroff, and Crouch and of course Ludo Bagman was already there. He saw Madame Maxime and Karkaroff frowning at the fact they were talking to one another. The teachers were taking it a lot more serious than the students were anyway. Harry had no desire to win the Triwizard Tournament, even if it would prove he was better than his brother. They would assume it was a fluke, wonder how he had won and not his brother.

“Harry where is Nick?” asked Dumbledore kindly to his student.

“In the broom closet” said Harry bluntly, go figure Dumbledore would eventually talk to him but only to ask him about Nick bloody Potter. Sometimes he felt like strangling the old man, if Dumbledore had any brothers and sisters he pitied them. Having to put up with him, no doubt it was just like him and Nick all over again.

Dumbledore frowned before quickly making his way over there, he didn’t pay attention to the conversation that had started up. Nick quickly joined sitting surprisingly next to him. He shifted a bit but not making it too obvious, he didn’t want it in the paper he was jealous and envious of his brother’s fame thank you very much.

“May I introduce you to Mr. Ollivander, he will be weighing the wands” said Dumbledore his eyes twinkling big time.

“Mademoiselle Delacour, could we have you forward first, please?” said Mr. Ollivander causing Nick to frown and twitch beside Harry.

Fleur smiled at them before sweeping over to the wand maker and handing him her wand.

“Hmmm…” he said.

He examined it for a bit more before stating.

“Yes,” he said quietly “Nine and a half inches…inflexible…rosewood…and containing…dear me…”

“A hair from the head of a Veela,” said Fleur “One of my grandmothers”

“Yes,” said Mr. Ollivander “Yes, I’ve never used Veela hair myself, of course. I find it makes for rather temperamental wands…however, to each their own, and if this suits you…”

“Orchideous!” muttered the wand maker and flowers emerged.
“Very well, very well, its in fine working order” said Mr. Ollivander picking up the flowers and handing them to Fleur along with her wand. “Mr. Krum you are next”

Nick began tapping his foot impatiently he wasn’t used to waiting Harry found it hilarious.

“Hmm…” said Ollivander starting over again. “This is a Gregorovitch creation, unless I’m very much mistaken? A fine wand-maker, though the styling is never quite what I…however…yes hornbeam and dragon heartstring. Rather thicker than one usually sees…quite rigid…ten and a quarter inches…Avis!” a number of small twittering birds flew out the end and disappeared through the open window.

“Good, now Harry Potter!” said Ollivander.

Harry stopped his snickers from breaking through at Nick’s indignant look. He handed over his polished wand to the wand-maker and waited patiently.

“Ah, now this is one of mine!” said Mr. Ollivander with much more enthusiasm.

“Eleven Inches, Phoenix feather, griffon blood and unicorn hair! Very unusual combination!” proclaimed Ollivander.

Harry just nodded he already knew that.

The wand shot out wine before Ollivander said it was in perfect working order. Then he said Nick Potter, Nick got up huffing as he handed his wand over. Acting as if he was doing a great service to Ollivander by letting him touch the ‘Boy Who Lived’s wand.

“Ah, another of my own nine inches, Holly, Dragon Heartstring” said Ollivander using it to bring wine out of it much the same as Harry. Nodding his head he proclaimed it in working order. It wasn’t long before Ollivander was gone and it was time for the dreaded photos. Harry almost wanted to beg Ollivander to do them all again. Then again he knew even Fleur and Victor would kill him if he did that. He could tell by their faces that they were getting very bored.

Harry was wiped out of his thoughts just to catch Rita saying individual photos. She was looking at Nick as if he was the holy grail of the Wizarding world. Harry just smiled almost smugly, he knew that Nick would definitely only be the only one on the front cover of the Prophet. He almost rubbed his hands gleefully putting up with the flashing pictures. Unlike the others he didn’t even attempt to smile, not that anyone noticed of course.

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Harry was right, the next edition for the Daily Prophet only had Nick on it. Not only that but she had spewed lies about Nick across the front page. Harry couldn’t see Nick saying he was scared, or letting his ‘green eyes glisten with tears’ at the thought of disappointing his parents. Skeeter’s was in for it that was for sure. James wasn’t about to let that go, he may only be an Auror but he had plenty of connections. Mostly that was because of who his son was though.

“We are only mentioned at the bottom of the page.” huffed Fleur her accent even thicker than normal as she tried to contain her fury.

“You get used to it eventually.” said Harry softly.

“They had no right, he’s stealing the limelight from everyone!” said Cedric furious on Fleur’s behalf.
“How do you put up with it Harry?” asked Krum, not as bothered as Fleur he had been on the papers all summer back home. He was actually glad for the reprieve he was getting here.

“It’s all I’ve ever known…so what can I say?” shrugged Harry, deciding not to tell them he was bloody glad his face hadn’t appeared in the paper. It was a shame for Victor and Fleur he knew that, but he wasn’t them - he did not want eternal glory. Fame wasn’t everything and he loathed the thought of being famous.

“I still think it’s wrong at least daddy did a good piece” said Luna. She had taken a picture of Victor, Fleur and Harry and sent it home. He had indeed done a piece, for those who actually bought the magazine.

“Xeno is great” smiled Harry nodding in agreement.

“Look at that, that’s a good picture Luna! You might be able to go into that business.” stated Fleur kindly.

“Oh yes, I plan on it I’d rather take pictures of magical animals though” she said dreamily.

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Two weeks had gone flying by, between classes, homework and spending time with his friends he was exhausted. He had brewed two potions alone, one that would make him invisible, a potion he could take to repel flames off of him and found a spell to erase his scent so the Dragon couldn’t hurt him.

Before long they were in the tent, listening to the roaring of the crowd. Crouch brought a bag forward, inside was mini versions of dragons and before long they were picking one out. Fleur got a green welsh Dragon, Krum ended up with the Chinese Fireball. Harry got the Swedish Short-Snout. Which left Nick with the most dangerous of all - the Hungarian Horntail.

Bagman took Nick outside; he came back in ten minutes later.

Harry barely heard the commentary that was being shouted. He was fluttering with nerves, he didn’t want to do this but he had to. It was a magical contract; he nodded curtly to each of his friends as they went out to fight their own Dragon. Krum went first, ten minutes later he had successfully caught his egg if the crowd was anything to go by.

Fleur went next, she looked rather sick and clammy, Harry had to hand it to her though. She walked out with her head held high, even if her wand was held rather tightly in her grip.

Finally it was his turn; he gave one glance to his brother, who actually looked green. Shrugging his shoulders, he wasn’t about to help him it wasn’t his problem. His brother had never once helped him in their lives so why should he give him any comfort now.

Out in the arena he looked at everyone and swallowed thickly, they gasped in shock when he drank a potion and disappeared from view. They saw only a vial being raised to his lips as he drank the one to stop the fire hurting him. They never heard the spell he chanted, without more ado he went forward. Harry’s hands were shaking, and his forehead was wet with sweat still he went on. He had to keep quiet, he hadn’t thought about his footsteps. Swiftly he grabbed the egg and made a dash for it, the fire caught him but did no damage as the Dragon hissed and blew fire in every direction he could be in. They knew where he was; of course…they could see the egg clutched in his arm. They had gasped, and the stadium went quiet when the fire should have completely fried him. He still ran, once he was safe from the Dragon he raised the egg in triumph.
It was Nick’s turn Harry never stuck around to see it happen, needless to say it was an hour before they could check their scores. Nick had eventually managed to summon the egg from the basket an hour later.

Fleur got a ten from Maxime, eight from Karkaroff, seven from Crouch, and eight from Dumbledore Bagman eight. = 41

Krum got seven from Maxime, ten from Karkaroff, seven from Crouch and seven from Dumbledore and seven from bagman. = 38 Mostly because he had caused damage to real Dragon eggs. The Dragon handlers were not happy in the slightest about it.

Harry got nine from Maxime, nine from Karkaroff, Crouch gave him ten and Dumbledore gave him an eight Bagman eight. = 46

Nick for three from Maxime, two from Karkaroff, four from Crouch and Dumbledore gave him ten points Bagman three. = 22

“Well done! All of you” beamed Bagman “Now just a quick few words. You have a nice long break before the second task which takes place in February. We have given you something to think about in the meantime! If you look down you will see the egg, see the hinges there? Yes it opens it will tell you how to solve the next clue and gives you time to prepare for it! Got it? Alright! Well, off you go!”

Of course Nick was picked on by Skeeter’s once more, this time luring him in by acting shocked at his score points.

“He’s an idiot isn’t he?” said Krum watching Harry’s twin ramble on with scorn.

“He can’t help it…its how he’s been raised it his parents hadn’t done it…maybe he would have been different.” shrugged Harry. They weren’t his parents anymore, he had changed his name. He had wanted to use the cloak for the task but didn’t want to risk it being set on fire.

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“Ah Severus good to see you! Come in.” beamed Dumbledore.

“How’s it going?” asked Severus coming out of the floo.

“Terrible.” sighed Dumbledore sadly.

“How’s that? Did he die?” asked Severus dryly.

“Oh no, I was told by James and Remus that they had trained Nick during the summer. However I find it hard to believe, it took him an hour to summon the Dragon’s egg to himself,” said Dumbledore “Harry did it the quickest, and I hate to say it but very wisely too.”

“What did he do?” asked Severus cocking his eyebrow curiously. Declining the sweets Dumbledore insisted on giving to everyone, he absolutely loathed lemon drops.

“He used two potions apparently, one to turn him invisible, the other to stop fire affecting him.” said Dumbledore smiling almost proudly his customary twinkle was gone though.

“Smart.” smirked Severus in amusement, and then again the boy was a Ravenclaw it was to be expected.
“I do not understand Nick at all!” sighed Dumbledore agitated.

“Do you know how the Potter’s treat Harry?” asked Severus ignoring Dumbledore’s pity party. He wanted no part in that, he was sick of it. Dumbledore’s constant doubts that Nick wasn’t the boy who lived. Severus couldn’t care less…or wouldn’t until Voldemort came back then he’d worry.

“What do you mean?” frowned Dumbledore not liking Severus’ insinuations.

“Well you say he never spends time at home, the other brat does why doesn’t Harry?” questioned Severus smartly. He wasn’t about to tell Dumbledore that Harry was living at his mothers during the summers. Goodness knows what damage Dumbledore could do, the Potter’s might even insist on Harry going home this year. If what his mother suspected to be true it wasn’t advisable. If they continued down that road it was just asking for trouble, the boy could even go to Voldemort to get some bloody sort of attention.

He knew what it was like to go without a stable family or friends, and it had made him join Voldemort. He had even had his mother to go to, Harry Potter didn’t have anyone. He didn’t want that for someone apparently as smart as Harry Potter.

“All teenagers like spending time away from home.” Dumbledore pointed out.

“True then why isn’t Nick Potter doing just that?” asked Severus again.

“I’m not sure,” said Dumbledore “I assume because he’s getting training.”

“Yet you just told me it took him an hour to get the summoning charm right?” asked Severus dryly.

Dumbledore just looked rather constipated at that.

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Harry had been in Transfiguration when the unexpected news was told. He had practically run towards the lunch hall afterwards. Completely and utterly gobsmacked and furious for them just dumping that on them. Harry hadn’t worn dress robes in years, his parents hadn’t brought him a pair in long enough either. He didn’t have the kind of money for a dress robe either! Life was going from bad to worse in his bloody book.

“What’s wrong Harry?” asked Luna noticing Harry’s sour mood.

“He’s angry because of the Yule ball.” giggled Fleur.

“Not funny.” hissed Harry between clenched teeth.

“It’s not so bad!” insisted Luna.

“Oh right? You think so? Try going to a ball with normal robes on when everyone else is dressed up!” huffed Harry his green eyes showing his apprehension instead of anger.

“You don’t have dress robes?” asked Victor sitting down and joining them.

“No, and I am not spending a ridiculous amount of money to wear something for one night!” said Harry adamantly. He wasn’t exactly rich, even if he now had the cloak and the Peverell money, and the money he had been saving up for years working his arse off. He had plans for that money all of it, getting himself a flat and also apprenticing himself cost a lot of money unless they showed ‘great promise’. Which according to his academic records he didn’t, thanks to Reese.
“I have a few sets with me, if you want wear them I’d have to shrink it for you.” suggested Victor.

“That would be great!” said Harry his face lightening up, nodding eagerly.

“Cedric would you like to come to the Yule ball with me?” asked Fleur as soon as she saw Cedric approaching.

“I’d love to!” nodded Cedric not seeing Cho’s defeated look.

“Very good” said Fleur smiling.

“It’s a pity you cannot invite a champion” said Victor.

“Why’s that?” asked Harry jealousy stirring in him thinking Victor wanted to ask Nick.

“I would have asked you” said Victor his face softer than anyone had ever seen it.

Harry flushed bright red, a smile on his face he nodded that he would have accepted.

“Luna I’d love to ask you but as my best friend of course” said Harry quietly.

“I’d love too” beamed Luna she wouldn’t get to go if she didn’t agree anyway so she might as well.

“Is there a boy you like Luna?” asked Victor.

“Neville” blushed Luna softly.

“Well ask him just say you are doing me a favour” suggested Harry.

“I think I will” said Luna grinning widely without her usually dreamy look.

“Now I just have to find someone who would rather go with someone else…who will put up with me just for one dance” said Victor his distaste for it evident.

“Thomas asked the Weasley girl…why not use her?” suggested Cedric.

“I guess I could ask” said Victor reluctantly.

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Christmas morning was fun to say the least, Victor had given him the robes and shrunk them. He had also asked Ginny Weasley for the first dance with the champions. She had spoken to Dean Thomas and agreed, unable to pass up the opportunity to dance with Victor Krum. Fleur, Victor, Cedric and Eileen had all given him presents this year. Victor had gotten him an advanced Potions book, a very rare one at that, also a defence potion book. Fleur had given him a raven clasp, to put his hair up she was always complaining that he didn’t do his hair properly. Fleur always had perfect hair whenever he saw her and it did make him feel rather messy. So she had gotten him the perfect gift, he wasn’t surprised to find a comb next to it. Although it wasn’t any comb but a blue jewel incrusted one. It wasn’t one you leave lying around and it made Harry feel bad. He hadn’t gotten anything as nice as that for her.

Cedric had gotten him a selection of chocolates, he had gotten him lots more of his favourites than anything else. Lots more chocolate frogs, sugar quills and exploding bon bon’s.

Eileen had gotten him some casual wear, some chocolates and a few books. She had seen all the
books in the room she lets him have, and gotten some really nice ones he didn’t have yet. She had also given him a brand new journal. This one he had decided to use like the Half-Blood-Prince any new spells or potions he makes in the future would be placed inside this beautiful journal.

Harry had given Eileen a nice old fashioned locket he had found in the Peverell vault. It was embedded with onyx which was why he had given her it. It reminded him of her, plus it was a locket he wasn’t about to go around wearing it. Fleur he had given a beautiful silver photo frame, extremely large and decorated. She had been going on about not having a picture of her family together on her wall because there wasn’t a photo frame big enough. Why she didn’t just put it up he didn’t know but that’s what he had gotten her. He had given her fudge too; he had seen her eating it numerous times before. Cedric he had given a toffee tray, and three bars of chocolate, white, dark and milk chocolate. Victor had been the hardest to buy for, he had given nothing away when he asked. What do you get a Quidditch star that has everything? So he had gotten him a dragon hide wallet. He noticed just a few days ago that his other one was very worn. He got him one that had a picture place in it, he knew Victor missed his family especially his sister.

Luna had gotten chocolates, a spell that would imbed in all her things so she could say the safe word and they would appear in her trunk. It had taken him a year to complete it but he had managed. Luna’s things always seemed to go missing especially nearer the end of the year. Harry actually suspected Peeves the annoying pest that he was. He had given her a new camera, which he had gotten at a discount rate.

The day went exceedingly fast, it wasn’t long before Fleur wandered off needing a few hours to get ready. Luna left half an hour later! Krum had to leave to get ready, as he had to go all the way back to the boat. So it was just Cedric and Harry, both left for their own towers might as well get it over with. Harry got dressed in the clothes Victor had given him, a light flush lighting up his features. He couldn’t believe Victor Krum actually wanted to be with him. He wasn’t special, or famous or even worth noticing really. Or that was how he felt, being ignored all his life didn’t deter him with his assumptions. He was slowly beginning to realize he wasn’t truly invisible, it would take a while for his self worth to be established. Perhaps Victor would be able to do that before the end of the year.

There hadn’t been dinner and he was starving by the time it was eight o’clock. They met everyone down at the entrance to the Great Hall. Harry had Luna on his arm; she was dressed in a green gown that looked remarkably like a Christmas tree shape. She had some accessories on and she actually looked good in it if it was possible. Victor was standing next to him with Ginny on his arm. Fleur and Cedric were together; near them the only one that didn’t look comfortable was Ginny. It didn’t surprise any of them as she wasn’t part of their group. He noticed Nick out of the corner of his eyes, he was with one of the Patil twins, and he wasn’t sure which because they didn’t have their uniform on.

Everyone else was allowed in bar the champions and their partners. They had to make a grand entrance, also dance; Luna was great to dance with much to his relief. Once that dance was over with they were allowed to sit down and eat.

“Sweet and sour chicken” said Harry, and the food appeared. All around him people were doing the same, and then digging into their food apparently ravenous. He decided on a chocolate log and strawberry tart and some ice cream for afters.

Once that single dance was over with Ginny had left to get Thomas. Luna approached Neville and they began dancing, poor Luna though Neville wasn’t the best of dancers. Not as bad as Ronald Weasley though, who was stomping on Patil’s poor feet. She was wearing an open toe shoe as well; they were already bright red along with her face.
Harry got with Victor, much to the surprise of nearly the entire hall. They danced most of the night, talking about things and in general having a good time. Eventually midnight approached, Harry was going to see Victor off to his boat.

“Thank you for the Wallet Harry, I needed a new one” smiled Krum. He had already added a picture of himself, Harry, Fleur and Cedric too it as well as one of his family.

“I’m glad you do!” proclaimed Harry relieved “I really wasn’t sure what to get you and you wouldn’t give me any clue!”

“True” grinned Krum.

“I’ll see you tomorrow” said Harry softly.

“You certainly will” said Krum smiling softly, he didn’t smile often and when he did it changed his entire face. Which Harry had realized was getting closer to his own. Harry automatically opened his mouth, and let Victor lead in the kiss. He was very inexperienced so he preferred it that way. Eventually they broke apart panting heavily; Harry had flushed red which caused Victor to smirk in amusement. Suddenly they heard a noise behind them and broke apart and said goodnight. Turned out it was only Fleur and Cedric doing pretty much the same thing as he and Victor had.

Harry practically floated all the way back to Ravenclaw tower, he wrote off a letter to Eileen despite having written one yesterday along with his present. He wrote about the Yule ball, Victor and of course he thanked her for the presents.

He wasn’t surprised he had gotten nothing from his parents - again.

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It was January before Victor and Harry tried to figure out the egg clue. It was actually one of the Ravenclaw’s who gave him the idea to use the Prefects bathroom. She had commented that it sounded like a mere person or something. Ironically enough the comment she had made as a joke was actually right. Victor and Harry had been spending a lot of time together by themselves. Luna had Neville to content herself with much to Harry’s relief. He didn’t want to feel guilty for leaving her like that; he would have stayed if she had been alone.

“You ready?” grinned Harry, his confidence had grown in leaps and bounds. He was finally comfortably in his own skin, by the looks of things.

“You’re egg first.” said Victor both of them had nothing on.

So they went under and listened to Harry’s, Victor too put his under and found it was the same message.

“What do you think it means?” asked Harry curiously, wrapping his legs around Victor’s under the water grinning mischievously.

“Well obviously something we value will be taken under the water” said Victor frowning thoughtfully trying to ignore Harry’s actions which were getting harder by the second. It wasn’t just getting hard to ignore Harry’s actions but his body was as well.

“Hm…mine will be Luna then if it’s a person” said Harry confidently. Rocking back and forth pulling a strangled gasp from Victor’s lips.

“Hm…who could they use for me?” grunted Victor who just shook his head and took his boyfriend
properly in his arms. Letting Harry have his wicked ways with him. For a virgin Harry seemed very experienced, he knew how to drive him mad with desire. If only he had seen the large selection of sex books Harry had been reading…he would have thought differently.

Victor turned them around; Harry grabbed the edge of the large bath, and wrapped his arms around Victor’s torso more securely. Harry gasped feeling the intrusion, but when Victor hit that spot inside of him he pushed down delving them deeper into him moaning deeply. Two fingers were added rather quickly, Victor grabbed his wand and used a spell, lubricating Harry. The third finger hurt a little, but it was forgotten when he hit his sweet spot over and over again.

Victor withdrew his fingers, and replaced it with something much larger and thicker. Slowly but surely, he sank deeply into Harry, a tortured moan leaving his lips. Harry was going to be hard to leave behind, very hard indeed. Thankfully the bath was magical and didn’t have the water spreading all over the bathroom. As they moved together, panting, moaning and keening in desperation wanting more and wanting to come. Fortunately the need to come became too much, with a groan Harry had spewed himself, his essence erupting in the bath. Victor followed close after only his seed was deep in Harry.

Victor sat there for an hour, holding onto Harry and basking in the afterglow. Eventually though their skin looked like prunes, they gathered their eggs, Victor banishing their activities from the water. Getting dry they quickly got their clothes back on, kissing a little more they realized Victor had to get back to the boat his own curfew was coming up quickly. Harry chummed him to the doors waved him away and made his way back up to Ravenclaw tower.
Chapter 12

Invisible

Chapter 12

Harry Potter year 4 part 4 - The second and third task - Voldemort comes…

New Year had positively flown in and the cold weather was beginning to be felt even in the castle. The months since then had flown in. Viktor Krum and Harry Potter continued their relationship; they were as close as Siamese twins. They were practically always joined at the hip; the same could be said for Luna and Neville, and Cedric and Fleur too. Fleur had been told what the egg was by Harry and Viktor since they wanted it to be fair. Of course they all just conveniently forgot about the other Potter twin - Nick. Harry was having the time of his life, for the first time he mattered not his twin. They didn’t care that he wasn’t the boy who lived, and for Harry if he had been standing in front of a mirror showing his hearts desire Harry reckoned he would see himself with his friends at his side. He had realized he had made friends for life, whereas Nick only had fans. Nick might have his parents wrapped around his fingers but he was going to have no one when he was older.

Only a week ago Nick had stuck up a conversation with Viktor as if they were best friends. Pretending to be sympathetic that Harry was stealing Viktor’s fame, and that he, Nick was used to it. Viktor had just sat there stunned at the boy’s audacity, saying such things when he knew that he, Viktor was going out with Harry. Viktor then promptly ignored the pompous windbag and left the table. Viktor had of course told Harry about it, the next day he received a letter from Lily and James. They were furious about who he was seeing, and reprimanding him for stealing Nick’s limelight. Unfortunately for Harry, Viktor had been there when he read it, much to his shame. Viktor had gone nuts upon reading the missive; he was furious and rightfully so. He couldn’t believe a parent could do that to their child, any doubts (if he had any) about Harry’s statements regarding his parents were gone.

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“So what are we going to use for the second task?” asked Dumbledore sitting down, his office was full of the Triwizard judges. They were sitting discussing everything, now Dumbledore felt it was time to get down to the proper business of the day.

“Fleur’s little sister will be hers” said Madame Maxime immediately.

“If that’s the case I think its best we use Viktor’s little sister also” muttered Karkaroff darkly.

“What about the Potter twins?” questioned Bagman.

“Ah, for Nick I think we should use his sister” said Dumbledore.

“Unfair! It’s Harry’s sister as well they might get confused” protested Madame Maxime at once.

“Oh no, Harry is very close to Luna Lovegood I think it would be obvious to him” said Dumbledore patiently.

“Would the Potter’s agree?” asked Karkaroff curtly.

“Good question!” murmured Bagman cautiously. He knew they never seemed to let their children
out of their sight. They were always in the paper together, it wasn’t right fourteen year old children
shouldn’t spend so much time at home. His own children he had hardly seen them once they began
Hogwarts. Always floo’ing over to friends to stay, of course his wife always made them stay the
last two weeks of summer at home. They did reluctantly he saw more of them now they were
grown up, than he had when they were teenagers. Didn’t stop him from trying to help Nick, he
actually felt sorry for the boy. Everything always seemed to happen to him; first you know who
now bloody tournaments.

“They will or I shall find alternative means” soothed Dumbledore eyes twinkling that he had once
again got his way.

“Very well then, we shall inform them the morning of the second task!” nodded Bagman grimly.

“Indeed, indeed!” beamed Dumbledore happily.

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Yet another week later it was finally time for the second task, Viktor still wasn’t sure what he was
sorely going to miss. He assumed it was one of his friends, but he couldn’t be too sure. Harry had
told him not to worry, if anything went wrong nothing would happen. It’s not like Dumbledore
would want Hogwarts to get a reputation for people dying especially innocents who hadn’t entered
the tournament.

“Well, all our champions are ready for the second task, which will start on my whistle. They have
precisely an hour to recover what has been taken from them. On the count of three…One…two…
three!” yelled Bagman a Sonorus spell on him making his voice heard even over the roaring of the
crowd.

Harry downed a potion, one he had created himself, the first to be added to his journal. It didn’t just
work for an hour but twenty four hours. Nothing changed about his appearance or his insides. He
just had the ability to breath underwater; the main ingredient in this potion was Gillyweed. An
ingredient he knew let you breath under water and gave you gills. With the ingredients he added
stopped the gills from advancing, yet still made it possible to breath underwater.

As he swallowed he looked over at the others, Viktor was now half shark half human. Harry had to
stay and admire his boyfriend’s awesome piece of magical transformation. Even McGonagall was
looking quite proud of it, Fleur had wanted to use a bubble head charm but Harry told her not to.
He had insisted it could be broken, and she and Cedric tested it and found Harry was correct. She
was using Gillyweed instead, at Harry’s suggestion. As he immersed himself he heard people
laughing, he wondered why as he looked up he found out just why. Nick Potter was just standing
there looking like a spare end.

So Harry began swimming, something he wasn’t that used to doing in all honesty. It didn’t surprise
him as he was reaching the bottom that Fleur and Viktor were already grabbing their sisters and
going. Harry gave them the thumbs up, they nodded (even his shark bodied boyfriend and began
swimming once more. Harry smartly untied both girls at the same time and swam off with them
before the mere people could think about it. He knew nothing could happen to them but really…
Nick wasn’t going to appear. He might as well save the sorry idiot who was going to have to
retrieve Roxy.

It was a good thing, he wasn’t sure why but Roxy began struggling along with Luna as they got
closer to the top. What if they had still been down there? Would she have drowned? He didn’t like
the thought of that thank you very much, he was glad he wouldn’t have to find out. Despite the fact
he hardly knew her she was his sister, even if it was just in blood only. It certainly wasn’t in name,
as was legally a Peverell not a Potter much to his pleasure.

Once they were at the surface, he helped them up, paying well more attention to Luna than Roxy. He went to grab towels when one was wrapped around him, then another for Luna. It was Viktor he had already dried himself off; Harry did the same instead of using towels beaming at his boyfriend in thanks. He handed his towel to Roxy and helped Luna up and sat her down away from the water.

Ludo Bagman’s voice surrounded the air again, this time he was going on about a chief merperson, and awarding fifty points for the champions.

“To Miss Fleur Delacour, for her use of Gillyweed to great affect and for coming second we award her forty five points!” beamed Ludo Bagman as the cheering erupted.

Fleur now had eighty six points altogether.

“To Mr. Viktor Krum, for an excellent demonstrated piece of transfiguration we and coming first we award him forty seven points!” yelled Bagman, the cheering was louder for the famous Quidditch star. He flushed a little when Harry’s cheer could be heard the loudest.

Viktor was now up to 85 points.

“To Mr. Harry Potter for coming third and the excellent use of an unknown potion and saving a hostage not his own we award him forty eight points!” yelled Bagman even louder. The cheering was loud but nowhere near as loud as Krum’s had been not that Harry noticed. Viktor had just smiled at him, a proud glint in his eyes and it sent Harry’ stomach turning to mush. It was then he realized why he refereed older people, he wanted approval and love, someone young couldn’t do that for him.

Harry was now up to 94 points.

“To Mr. Nick Potter we award him Zero Points” said Bagman looking well and truly disappointed and a little embarrassed. Nick obviously hadn’t managed to figure out the clue…whereas his brother had.

Nick remained at a low score of 22.

No one noticed just how furious Alastor Mad Eye Moody was about that. Moody had been so sure the boy had figured it out, his twin sure bloody well had. He didn’t understand why his Master wanted both of them, instead of just Nick ‘The Boy Who Lived’ Potter. He would do as he was commanded he was a loyal follower and would remain so until his dying day.

“The third task will take place on the twenty-fourth of June” continued Bagman “The champions will be notified of what is coming, precisely one month beforehand. Thank you all for your support of the champions!”

It was finally over with…almost. One more task to go before he could fade back into obscurity.

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A curious thing happened weeks after the tournament, Barty Crouch showed up at Hogwarts. He had been in the papers, everyone was looking for him, he wasn’t at home, St. Mungo’s or anywhere else they could think off. Percy Weasley was working in his stead stating that he was 'overworked’ and taking a break. Not that Harry knew much as it had happened to Nick; Nick had left to get Dumbledore. It was the worst kept secret in Hogwarts; apparently by the time anyone got
there he had disappeared. It was supposedly after they had been told about the upcoming final task. Fleur, Viktor and Harry had left immediately, Nick stayed behind and it had obviously happened.

Harry silently wondered if Nick had seen it, or if this was another bid for attention. He and the others had come to the conclusion that Nick couldn’t have lied. Not about something like that - he just wasn’t smart enough to think up something like it. No, for attention he would have sought out Skeeter’s or someone for an interview about how hard it was competing with seventh years.

Nick was getting very jealous of Harry; he glared murderously at him all the time. He hated it, hated his brother had figured out the egg clue, hated he was getting attention and acclamation. That was usually reserved for him, he was hurt, but at least he still had a few Gryffindor’s on his side. Neville had even left him for the group! Neville had been his friend for nearly two years he didn’t like it. Marcus seemed to be slipping off and befriending those his own age now. The only two people still following him around were the Creevy Brothers. The Gryffindor’s were still at odds with him, even the Quidditch team too. He didn’t realize his fifth year was going to be even worse, the team had decided that enough was enough. They were going to get a decent Seeker to play Quidditch next year. Some of them actually wanted to win before they left Hogwarts for good and joined the real world.

Harry, Viktor, Fleur, Cedric, Luna or Neville couldn’t figure out why Crouch had snuck into Hogwarts and demanded Dumbledore. It didn’t bode well with Harry though, as he thought more on his dream he had at the beginning of the year.

He had yet to even tell Viktor about that.

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“You are in luck Wormtail,” said Voldemort “Your blunder has not ruined everything. He is dead.”

“My Lord!” gasped Wormtail “My Lord, I am…I am so pleased…and so sorry…”

“Nagini,” said Voldemort “You are out of luck. I will not be feeding Wormtail to you, after all…but never mind, never mind…there are always the Potter boys…”

“Now Wormtail,” said Voldemort “Perhaps one more little reminder why I will not tolerate another blunder from you…”

“My Lord…no…I beg you…” whimpered Wormtail.

“Crucio” snarled Voldemort.

Miles away a boy named Harry Potter screamed as his scar seared hot red as if a hot iron brand had been placed upon him. It was a good job he had a room to himself, still the same room he had acquired in his first year. As he lay there panting his palm squashing his scar as if to make the pain go away. It was a long time coming before it did, before Harry could truly think on what he had seen. He shuddered remembering the threat, Nagini, Voldemort planned on feeding him to a snake. He hated snakes or rather he didn’t like them because of the Basilisk he had faced. He might have liked them if he met a nice snake that didn’t intend to kill him.

He sighed softly; he sure wished he had someone to speak to, especially about those visions or dreams whatever the hell they were. He didn’t trust anyone one hundred percent other than Luna, Eileen and Viktor. None of whom he could really ask to bear such a burden.

Added to it was today was the third task he just felt everything was wrong. His mind was screaming at him, but he couldn’t understand why. So with great reluctance he got up to start the
day. His mind was in overdrive, he was studying for his exams and studying for the upcoming task, he would have no trouble with defence this year with the amount of spells he had learned; not that he ever had.

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“Ladies and gentlemen, the third and final task of the Triwizard tournament is about to begin! Let me remind you how the points currently stand in first place Harry Potter with Ninety four points! For Hogwarts School! In second place stands Miss Fleur Delacour with eighty-six points for Beauxbatons! In third place Mr. Viktor Krum with eighty-five points for Drumstrang! In fourth place Mr. Nick Potter with twenty-two points!” said Bagman, if it was possible he had whispered the last part compared to the cheerful shouts of the other champions scores.

Harry went into the maze first, it wasn’t long before another whistle surrounded indicating Fleur had entered, then Viktor it was a few minutes before another whistle surrounded the air.

Harry stumbled back in shock when he saw himself, grinning widely mouthing words. ‘I’m Harry Potter I’m The Boy Who Lived’ what on earth was happening? How could he be facing himself? Blinking rapidly he realised it must be some sort of spell. “Finite incantantum” it didn’t even blink. Just continued grinning widely, scar on display it was truly freaking Harry out. Seeing this version of himself like that, it was his worst fear for people to know he was the boy who lived…to become his brother. He choked when he realized the answer had just been handed to him. “Riddickulus!” and it disappeared in a puff of smoke.

So he continued on wondering what else he could come up with, shuddering slightly. He came face to face with a Blast-Ended Skrewt! With a swift Reducto curse it was splattered everywhere. He hoped Professor Hagrid didn’t like them; he was just getting his own back for all the bloody burnt fingers he had to put up with. Or the stings he had received from the digesting things.

Five minutes later he took another turn, he was faced with mist, he tried getting rid of it but nothing seemed to work. Frowning Harry wondered if he should head back in the other direction or not. What made his decision was a scream from a female; it could only be one person. He bolted uncaring that he might come upon anything; Fleur was more important Merlin help anything that got in his way. He would blast it to kingdom come just like the Skrewt.

He ran into nothing other than two dead ends, which he just completely ‘Reducto’ed’ and continued on his way. It was ten minutes later when he finally heard voices; it was Fleur’s she was begging someone. Frowning he kept up, it was then he heard his boyfriends voice growling out an unforgivable.

“Viktor, please! Come back, stop this please! Come back” pleaded Fleur.

“Crucio”

Fleur’s screamed in agony as the Crucio curse tormented her body riddling it with pain.

Harry saw his boyfriends eyes were blank…just like everyone’s had been that day they tried to fight the imperious curse.

“Stupefy” yelled Harry quickly.

Viktor fell to the floor boneless.

“Fleur are you ok?” asked Harry running over looking worried.
“My wand give me it” she managed to say her voice croaked and strained in pain.

Harry did as she asked, she sent sparks up, she couldn’t even think about moving her entire body was still jerking and spasming in pain. Harry sent up sparks for Viktor as well, having every intention of staying there.

“Go Harry, don’t let him win,” said Fleur “Viktor wouldn’t want that.”

“I don’t want to leave you” said Harry worriedly.

“Don’t worry about us, the teachers are coming just go and finish this!” said Fleur softly.

“Oh all right” said Harry nodding admitting defeat.

“Good luck and be careful…there’s obviously something here” said Fleur looking around worriedly.

“I will” said Harry adamantly, gripping his wand he began as he meant to.

Ten minutes he wandered, never seeing hide nor hair of his brother - not that he cared. He was just about to turn another corner when he bumped into a creature he had only ever seen in a book - the book of Monsters. This was a sphinx.

“You are near your goal, your quickest way is through me” she said.

“Okay how do I do that?” asked Harry knowing a riddle was coming and looking forward to it - he wasn’t a Ravenclaw for nothing.

“Answer my riddle, get it right I let you pass, wrong I attack, remain silent and I shall let you by unscathed” said the woman/sphinx.

“Sure what is the riddle?” asked Harry eagerly.

“First think of the person who lives in disguised. Who deals in secrets and tells naught but lies. Next, tell me what’s always the last thing to mend, the middle of the middle or the end of the end? And finally give me the sound often heard during the search for a hard-to-find word. Now string them together and answer me this, which creature would you be unwilling to kiss?”

“Hum…lives in disguise and tells naught but lies…a spy - er and a creature you would be unwilling to kiss…definitely not a frog then…spider! That’s it a spider!” said Harry excitedly.

The sphinx smiled broadly and moved out of the way for him to pass.

“Thanks!” grinned Harry moving forward quickly, he had to get this over with he wanted to make sure Viktor and Fleur were alright.

He saw the cup, but just as he looked he saw a shadow, raising his wand he glanced around. Then he saw it, a huge spider coming out of the shadows, Harry promptly fired off five stunning spells in rapid fire. The huge spider fell and before Harry could even celebrate that, he felt his arm taking in a tight grip and hoisted towards the cup.

“Nick let me go!” snarled Harry furious at being manhandled by his brother. Who by the way hadn’t listened, he continued on and touched the cup. As he did so Harry noticed two things, one Nick was also under the imperious curse, two the cup was a Portkey.

Hogwarts disappeared from view, and an abandoned run down graveyard took its place.
He felt his scar sear in agony but he was too scared to react, he knew what was coming, he could feel it in his bones. He was just about to grab his brother and the cup - he knew the Portkey would take them back. Before he could do that, he and Nick were levitated from the ground and held against headstones. He could hear hissing, and he swallowed fearfully - Voldemort was back and if he had his way Harry would be snake food tonight. He didn’t even listen to Nick’s snivelling obviously the Imperious curse had worn off. It didn’t surprise him Nick was a coward under all that swagger, but he couldn’t listen to anything anyway as his scar continued to burn in agony. It was a good thing he couldn’t clutch his head and give himself away, or it surely would have happened by now. His arm was trapped by the bloody bindings on him.
Invisible

Chapter 13

Harry Potter Year 4 part 5 - Lord Voldemort will they survive?

Harry grimaced, biting his tongue to try and redirect the pain from his forehead. It didn’t succeed in making his head hurt even more, or rather the front side of his face. His brother didn’t seem to be bothered by any pain, just peeing himself in fear if Harry wasn’t mistaken he would say that was a yellow stain on his trousers. He was a Ravenclaw and a smart boy so he’d say he wasn’t wrong but he didn’t want to spend time thinking on whether his brother had peed himself or not.

“Pettigrew!” whispered Nick fearfully watching him wide eyed. He was carrying with him some sort of bundle. A bundle Harry knew to be Voldemort, he knew that from the strange visions alone. Although he hadn’t seen Voldemort properly, his scar was giving it away.

Harry remembered James going on about Pettigrew, the look on his face; the scowl had been disturbing to say the least. They had tried for years to catch him, Black and Lupin that was anyway. Also a few other Order members chipping in now and again, Black had been given the task of tracking him down as an Auror. Of course a few other Auror’s had been drafted in now that Black wasn’t solely looking for Pettigrew anymore. Harry should have hated Pettigrew it all he had as well, it was his fault his family didn’t care about him.

One day when he had been a little younger around nine or ten years old, he had come upon a trunk. Full of photo albums, he had looked through them, tears running down his face when he realized something. After Voldemort attacked, there hadn’t been a single picture of him taken. He knew because his and Nick’s scars were slightly different, his was a lightning bolt, Nick’s was more of a zigzag than an actual lightning bolt really. Nick’s was longer side ways and more to the left, whereas his was right in the middle of his forehead. Not one single picture of him was there to be found, he had flipped through thousands of photos desperate for at least one to be there. There was plenty of James, Lily, Nick and Roxy but none of him. It had broken his heart even more if it was possible, and he thought he had been done with feeling hurt when his ‘parents’ had did anything.

Harry shook of his thoughts; he looked down and saw the name of the graveyard he was pinned too. Tom Riddle. He wondered briefly and insanely why that particular tombstone but shook it off just as quickly. He didn’t want to let his mind wander thank you very much, not right now … maybe if he survived then he’d do it. He felt sick just thinking about being fed to a snake…what an excruciating way to die.

It suddenly dawned on him why the Riddle headstone, this was a Muggle graveyard. Riddle had been Voldemort’s name while he was in school…there wasn’t a Riddle line. Voldemort’s father was a Muggle…he had an insane urge to giggle madly. He remembered reading about Voldemort’s goals, to rid the world of Muggles and Muggle born’s. He had all the Pureblood’s working for him, did they even know they were bowing to what they themselves like to call a ‘Mudblood’. He hadn’t paid the slightest bit of attention to everything Riddle said during the Chamber incident…he had been concentrating on too much on how to get out of there.

Just as he thought that, he began hearing hissing at his feet, he barely heard Nick squealing like a little girl. The snake was circling the gravestone where he and Nick were tied. With great difficulty he managed to get his wand back into his pocket. It was a good thing he managed, because his
hand began spasming because of the tension in them. Also good because he could hear something being dragged across the floor, twisting his head to the side, thankful that he didn't need glasses like his brother he saw what it was. Pettigrew was dragging a huge massive cauldron across the graveyards; Harry silently wondered where he had managed to get it. Pettigrew was the most wanted man in the world there was no way he just Willy nilly walked into a shop to purchase one.

Another thing occurred to him, whoever the spy was - he was someone at Hogwarts. Which right now could be anyone, but that wasn’t strictly true, whoever it was had handled the Triwizard cup. Was also circling the maze or wouldn’t have managed to use the imperious curse on Viktor, Fleur and his right now smelly brother. He frowned remembering who was patrolling the maze, McGonagall, Dumbledore, Moody and Flitwick.

He felt a sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach, he remembered Reese accusing him of stealing ingredients. Ingredients associated with the poly juice potion, if he remembered it correctly. Moody, it had to be Moody otherwise Hogwarts was well and truly compromised if it was McGonagall, Dumbledore or Flitwick. They controlled the wards of Hogwarts, as Headmaster and head of Houses. If one set of wards were weakened Hogwarts would be penetrated.

He came out of his thoughts to bubbling, the cauldron was heating up fast, and there was a fire beneath the cauldron now. He also saw a bundle hissing beside it, persistently as if it was getting agitated. His scar burned hot searing red across his forehead; he looked away hissing in pain trying not to bring attention to himself.

Steam billowed out of the cauldron as a voice hissed “Hurry!”

“It is ready, master” said Pettigrew.

“Now…” said the cold harsh voice of Voldemort.

The bundle was put into the boiling water unceremoniously, Harry could hear Nick murmuring ‘let it drown, let it drown’ and he wanted to laugh. Pettigrew wouldn’t risk something as stupid as letting that thing drown. If he didn’t know any better he would have said that’s what something would look like if a snake a human got together. He wondered what kind of name they would come up for that, like he knew half human, half horse were called Centaurs. Snaumans? He knew immediately he was getting hysterical with his nonsense.

At least he wasn’t expecting Voldemort to drown - the thought of it actually happening was enough to make him laugh uproariously. Then again it would have added a sense of irony to the whole thing.

“Stop it Nick” hissed Harry utterly humiliated that he had began whimpering now.

Nick just stared at him as if he had lost his mind.

Pettigrew began speaking, his entire pudgy form quaking in fear “Bone of the father, unknowingly given, you shall renew your son!”

The surface under Harry and Nick’s feet quivered, horrified Nick and Harry watched as a fine trickle of dust rose into the air at Wormtail’s command. It felt sizzling into the cauldron which hissed and steamed some more. The water had turned a very poisonous blue colour.

Harry eyed the dagger that Wormtail had just produced warily, meanwhile Nick just whimpered some more. If Harry hadn’t been wondering what would happen next he would have rolled his eyes at his brother. That wasn’t to say he wasn’t scared, because he was there was a difference between
being scared and being a coward. Nick’s wand was over by the Portkey if any indication he was truly stupid. He wondered silently though why they hadn’t taken his wand yet.

Another whimper brought him out of his thoughts; he realized right away it wasn’t Nick. It was Wormtail, and he was cutting off his hand and Harry gagged in disgust unable to look away. The man was actually cutting off his arm, and Harry had never seen anything more gruesome in his entire life. “Flesh - of the servant - w-willingly given you - will-revive- your master.”

Fantastic thought Harry glancing at Nick quickly his eyes where closed and he was very pale. The cauldron water had turned a bloody red, no surprise there considering what had just been added. Harry’s heart was thumping a mile a minute, he knew what was coming before anything happened.

“Blood of the enemies, forcefully taken, you will, resurrect your foe.”

“No don’t!” shrieked Nick loudly, trying to move in the bonds but having no luck. He was stuck just as tightly as his brother with no chance of getting away. Tears were running down his face, as his upper arm was sliced into.

Harry was next; he bit his tongue and glared at Pettigrew, a glare that promised death. The man had the nerve to squeak before returning to the cauldron where he added both their blood. The cauldron turned instantly blinding white, nobody could see at all.

The next thing they could see when the light disappeared was lord Voldemort standing nude in a cauldron. Harry actually gagged at that, unfortunately he hadn’t been able to hold back. The man was disgusting; you couldn’t tell me was a man anymore either…if you get the drift. Voldemort was more Snake than human and it was rather disgusting sight to behold.

“Robe me” hissed Voldemort, Wormtail still sobbing did as he was bid. Harry was actually quite grateful for that Harry didn’t think he would be able to sleep for a long time.

Voldemort, tin and bony stepped out of the cauldron and stared between Nick and Harry. An unholy gleam in his blood red eyes, he was doing something with his mouth but Harry wasn’t sure what. It looked like a thin line, no lips nothing he could have been grimacing or grinning for all Harry knew. The eyes though made him shiver; he felt something in the back of his mind. Memories were floating to the surface, breaking eye contact with the man. He closed his eyes and concentrated on shutting that presence out before it saw the memories.

He wanted to shout, tell Nick to stop looking but he couldn’t, he wasn’t given the chance. Wormtail interrupted them begging Voldemort on bending knees for goodness knows what.

“My Lord…” he choked “You promised…you did promise.” the nasally voice was getting on Harry’s nerves.

“Hold out your arm” said Voldemort sounding as if he was granting an honour than anything else.

Wormtail held out his bleeding stump saying “Thank you Master, thank you.” but Voldemort just laughed.

“The other arm Wormtail”

Harry bit the inside of his mouth to stop himself from laughing; the idiot had brought it on himself. He spitefully hoped Wormtail would bleed to death, this was the second time the bastard had almost killed him. This time he might succeed he didn’t see a way of getting out of here alive.

“Master, please…please.” whimpered Wormtail his arm was extended nevertheless. Voldemort
pushed the sleeve up.

“It is back,” he said softly. “They will all have noticed it…and now, we shall see…now we shall know…”

He pressed his long, white forefinger to the brad on Wormtail’s arm. Wormtail howled in fresh pain. Harry didn’t even get a sense of satisfaction because as Voldemort pressed that mark, Harry’s scar flared in agony and it took every ounce of control he had to stop himself screaming too.

“How many will be brave enough to return when they feel it?” he whispered his gleaming red eyes fixed on the stars “And how many will be foolish enough to stay away?”

Harry’s eyes widened, it finally dawned on him what Voldemort was doing. He was calling his followers to him, they had to get away soon or they were in trouble. Snaking his hand down into his pocket once more, he grabbed the end of his wand. Grabbing it he chanted in his head “Finite incantantum” the bindings holding him disappeared into nothingness.

He didn’t count on his brother screaming as they fell with a thud from the stone. Using a curse word that Eileen definitely wouldn’t approve off he grabbed his brother and was about to run. However, Nagini had wrapped herself around his foot; he had to bite his lip from actually telling the thing to get off of him.

He let the thing get inches from him, before he blasted it with a Reducto curse, he vaguely heard Voldemort’s horrified screech as he kicked the dead snake from him. Both Nick and Harry were running, ducking behind gravestones, Voldemort was sending killing curses at them. None of which were finding their target thankfully, Harry was throwing anything he could think off. They were however, getting cuts and bruises from the debris that was getting flung everywhere.

Harry managed to hit Pettigrew in the chest with another Reducto curse. Unfortunately for him, just as he was about five feet from the Portkey, Voldemort hit him with a Crucio curse. Nick continued running and grabbed the Portkey and he was gone.

Voldemort stopped the Crucius curse, and walked towards the fourteen year old who lay panting in pain. Harry was actually feeling quite shocked as well, he couldn’t believe Nick had actually gone and left him. He shouldn’t have expected anything less but damn it, it bloody hurt.

Not as much as the Crucius curse that’s for sure.

“Imperio” hissed Voldemort his eyes gleaming maliciously.

Harry decided to go along with it, decided not to fight it for now. He was only told to walk so far then stop, suddenly swishes filled the air. Voldemort’s Death Eaters had finally arrived. Harry had no wand, it was way over there, and he had no reason to think he’d survive now. The only available transportation was gone, the Portkey was gone.

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Nick fell with a grunt outside the maze; everyone was huddling around him wondering what had happened. Obviously deadly confused, the stands were full off cheering that slowly died down seeing the state of Nick. Dumbledore for an old man began going down the stairs at an alarming rate.

“Voldemort’s back, he killed Harry, he’s back” he sobbed hysterically.

Viktor’s eyes widened in fear, what had happened to Harry? Could they trust that Nick was telling
the truth? Nothing but lies came out of the boy’s mouth. Fleur looked like she was about to burst into tears. Cedric brought her into a hug, comforting her while he looked pale himself. The rest of the staff and students as well as visitors didn’t know just what to do. They had heard Nick Potter loud and clear, and just stood there in confusion.

Moody grabbed Nick and started dragging him to the school; James wasn’t having any of that. He grabbed his son right back; he didn’t want Nick out of Dumbledore’s sight. He was after all the only man Dumbledore ever feared, he realised Moody of all people would know that.

“Who handled the cup last?” demanded James.

“Alastor” said Dumbledore confused as to where James was going with that.

“Stupefy!” shouted James quickly; Moody moved out of the way grinning maliciously.

Dumbledore was finally realizing something was wrong; Lily, James and Dumbledore cast the stunning charm at him. Two managed to hit their targets sending the man flying five feet.

“What exactly is going on here Dumbledore?” demanded Fudge puffing up like a peacock the only problem was he didn’t look as good as one.

“I intend to find out” said Dumbledore grimly; going over to Moody he raided the man’s pockets. He found what he needed and brought it out. He poured the contents out and said loud enough for everyone to hear “Polyjuice Potion.” he said grimly.

“Who is it?” asked James.

“We need to get Nick to Poppy James! He’s in shock” sobbed Lily, who had brought her child into her lap and cuddling him for all he was worth. She wasn’t even paying attention to what was happening around her.

“Take him I’ll take care of this” said James nodding grimly to his wife.

“Roxy come!” demanded Lily; she was unable to lift her son so she used a stretcher instead. They disappeared into the castle, Dumbledore grimly waited on the potion to wear off. It was getting dark but the students didn’t move even when they were told to. Everyone seemed in a state of shock, even Fudge was afraid to say anything - he didn’t know what to do.

Eventually the potion wore off; James took a double take and Dumbledore’s eyes widened in shock. Whoever they were expecting it to be - it obviously wasn’t him. The students whispered to each other, Fudge paled when he saw who it was. He wasn’t stupid; he knew good and well who it was. Barty Crouch Jr.

“Colin do you have Veritaserum?” asked Dumbledore, calling his potions professor - Reese by his first name.

“Of course” said Reese handing over the potion without even blinking.

“This cannot be happening” said Minerva looking shocked.

“Do you even care that your son is dead!” snarled Viktor furiously trying to get at James Potter. Cedric Diggory surprisingly managed to keep the furious Bulgarian back.

“Don’t Viktor please!” said Fleur looking devastated if she hadn’t told Harry to go on he would still be here.
“He doesn’t give a damn! I read the letter you sent him! Just because he was going out with me you thought he was stealing his brothers fame!” snarled Viktor viciously.

Dumbledore looked stunned at the accusations going James Potter’s way. He wasn’t the only one, everyone had drawn a breath stunned they couldn’t believe what the Bulgarian had said but believed it nonetheless.

Dumbledore shook his head; this wasn’t the time for arguing among themselves. Harry Potter’s death was regrettable but he was very glad it wasn’t Nick or things would have gotten messy. Nick was after all the boy who lived, the one destined to save them all from Voldemort.

“What’s your name?” asked Dumbledore sternly.

“Bartemius Crouch Junior” intoned Crouch.

“How did you get out of Azkaban? How did everything think you had died?” demanded Dumbledore.

“My mother wanted me out of there, it was her dying wish. So my father agreed my mother took Poly juice potion and so did I. We switched places; she died in there and was buried. My father kept me in the house with the imperious curse on me…eventually I began to fight it and made my way to my Lord” said Crouch madly.

“Do you have proof Voldemort is back?” asked Dumbledore, this way if everyone heard they couldn’t deny it - or rather Fudge couldn’t deny it.

“My mark burned not even half an hour ago, he’s back and called his followers to him…I shall be awarded for bringing him the Potter boys” he hissed madly even under the Veritaserum.

Everyone gasped as one, screaming was heard and even a child or two burst into tears.

“This isn’t good” said James looking terrified.

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“Master…Master” said every Death Eater as they fell to their knees at Voldemort’s feet. Kissing the hem of his robes, obviously very willing to bow to the half blood. Harry grimaced in disgust, he was kind of glad none of them were looking at him to be honest.

“Welcome Death Eaters,” said Voldemort “Thirteen years…thirteen years since last we met. Yet you answer my call as thought it was yesterday…we are still united under the Dark Mark, then or are we?”

“I smell guilt” he said sniffing the air “There is a stench of guilt upon the air.”

Maybe Voldemort was more snake than human….if he could smell emotion. Harry just wished he wasn’t so scared, he hated the thought of Voldemort smelling his fear.

“I see you all, whole and healthy, with your powers intact - such prompt appearances! - and I ask myself…why did this band of wizards never come to the aid of their master, to whom they swore eternal loyalty?”

Harry wanted to snort Voldemort had a flair for dramatics that was for sure.

“And I answer myself” whispered Voldemort “They must have believed me broken, they thought I
was gone. They slipped back among my enemies, and they pleaded innocence, and ignorance, and bewitchment…and then I ask myself, but how could they have believed I would not rise again? They, who knew the steps I took, long ago, to guard myself against mortal death? They, who had seen proofs of the immensity of my power, in the times when I was mightier than any wizard living?"

Harry wondered if Voldemort was ever going to stop talking, he was terrified…so perhaps the long Voldemort spoke the safer it was for him. He would survive just a little bit longer right now though his hate for his family sizzled any fear out of him. As he thought of what his cowardly brother had just done.

“And I answer myself, perhaps they believed a still-greater power existed, one that could vanquish even Lord Voldemort…perhaps they now pay allegiances to another…perhaps that champion of commoners, of Mudbloods and Muggles, Albus Dumbledore?”

Everyone there began shaking their heads and denying the possibility.

“It is a disappointment to me…I confess myself disappointed” muttered Voldemort.

“Master,” someone suddenly shrieked falling out of the circle and right in front of Voldemort’s feet. “Master forgive me! Forgive us all!”

Voldemort laughed and Harry associated that with pain…he knew what was coming. He was just a teensy bit glad that it wasn’t him…yet. No doubt Voldemort would get around to it and Harry wished for nothing more than to die quickly...maybe the killing curse would work this time...should he be so lucky. That wouldn’t happen, he knew deep down he was going to be made an example off. He had killed Nagini and Pettigrew…and helped his brother escape (the arsehole that he was).

“Crucio” snarled Voldemort, a few minutes later he stopped it “Get up Avery, I do not forgive, I do not forget! Thirteen years of repayment then I shall think of forgiving you.”

“Macnair…destroying dangerous beasts for the Ministry of Magic now? You shall have better victims than that soon, Macnair Lord Voldemort will provide…” hissed the snake voice.

“Thank you Master, thank you” murmured Macnair.

“And here” he said “We have Crabbe and you, Goyle? You shall do better this time, will you not?”

“Yes Master…” said Crabbe dully.

“We will, master…” grunted Goyle.

“And here we have six missing Death Eaters…four dead in my service. One, too cowardly to return…he will pay” hissed Voldemort thinking of Karkaroff. “One who I believe has left me forever…spying for the commoner Dumbledore…Snape will be killed. And one, who remains my most faithful servant, and who has already re-entered my service”

Voldemort wondered silently if he was still alive, he hoped he would take care of Nick Potter before it spilled out. Damage limitation of course, he didn’t want anyone knowing he was back so soon.

Harry blinked in surprise…Snape was a spy? Well that took guts his respect for old Potions Master/professor grew. He had always respected him for taking Nick down a peg or two in potions. It was immature he knew but he couldn’t give two fucks especially not anymore. He was going to
die because of Nick Potter his own brother - who had abandoned him to save his own arse.

Harry was brought of his musings when he felt his scar beginning to burn; he wasn’t surprised at how close Voldemort was to him. It took him everything he had to keep his face neutral. Not to give away the agony in his scar, he didn’t want Voldemort finding out he was the boy who lived. He couldn’t live with that, he would be killed ten times quicker if he found out.

….I could not touch the boys” he heard Voldemort finish.

Harry couldn’t hear anything other than the blood rushing through him. It was agony at its finest when Voldemort touched him. His entire body was shaking, it was a good thing it was just suspected to be the after affects of the Crucio curse. He didn’t listen as Voldemort went on about how his curse had reflected, how he had been abandoned, how he had used Quirrell. How Wormtail had found him, how Bertha Jorkins had been killed. Harry barely noticed that he failed to mention that Wormtail was dead or that Nagini was. They weren’t there, they had obviously been banished or something, obviously Voldemort didn’t want to be embarrassed that a fourteen year old had outsmarted him.

Voldemort removed the imperious curse and demanded Lucius give Harry back his wand. Harry was confused, why was he being asked to fight? Voldemort couldn’t possibly know he was the boy who lived!? Or was it just bloody stubborn pride. He knew spells but nowhere near as many as Voldemort. He wasn’t about to cast the unforgivable curses - he wasn’t evil like Voldemort. So there was no way he was going to be able to survive, his wand was pressed into his hands by a grinning gleeful Lucius Malfoy.

Before he could even raise his wand or tighten his grip on it he was on the floor screaming as the pain of the Crucio curse washed over him once more.

“Get up Potter…” said Voldemort looking amused.

Spitting bitterly, he stood up determinedly if he wasn’t going to give Voldemort the satisfaction. The red eyes just gleamed maliciously and Harry silently wondered if he had done what Voldemort...WANTED him to.

“Crucio!” snarled Voldemort.

And Harry was down once more, he wasn’t sure how much he could take. His head was splitting open in agony. His scar had literally split open, blood was running down his forehead. His bones felt like they were being burnt with acid, pricked with needles and scraped with a cheese grater all at once. He wasn’t sure but he could feel the pain becoming less...Harry became fuzzy and his vision distorted and Harry fell unconscious his body still jerking and writhing under the curse.
Chapter 14

Invisible

Chapter 14

Harry Potter year 4 part 6 - things go from bad to worse - Nick lies and Harry’s taken

“You already know” said Severus narrowing his eyes when he finally got to Hogwarts. He had felt his forearm burn for the first time in thirteen years. His trial had been too public to ever conceive being welcomed back into the fold with open arms. No, he would be dead before he could protest that he was only doing his ‘Lord’s’ bidding. He was confused as to how Dumbledore already knew though; he knew he was the man’s only spy so again how did he know. He could tell by just looking at the old man, he looked like he had aged twenty years since he saw him last.

“I do indeed” said Dumbledore grimly; he had just gotten everyone settled down. An hour ago he got everyone off the pitch; Crouch Jr was arrested once more. James and Lily refused to leave the hospital wing despite it being improper; parents weren’t allowed to stay over night like that. Given the circumstances and the fact everyone was shaken up nobody bothered complaining. Dumbledore had been furious when he got to the hospital wing, Lily and forced Poppy to feed Nick a dreamless sleeping potion. He wasn’t going to get any answers from the fourteen year old until he woke up.

Once the Minister had stopped floo’ing him for advice and his teachers had finally left him alone. Only then did he allow himself to think about Harry Potter and with great shame too. He had ignored that child in favour of his brother and it seemed his family had too. The words Severus had asked him came back to haunt him, and that wasn’t the only thing. He was having flashbacks to when he was seventeen years old, just left Hogwarts…being with Gellert and hating his sister for being such a downer. For hating magic, for letting the Muggle boy’s win, for embarrassing him. In the end he had lost her, the saying was true unfortunately …. You have to lose something before you realize just how much you’d miss it/and or them.

That was how Severus Snape found him - catching him off guard for the first and probably only time in his life.

“How?” asked Severus sitting down curiously had someone else deflected? Did Dumbledore have a spy? Then again he knew if Dumbledore did he wouldn’t ever know the name. It was just too dangerous especially with him who was already wanted no doubt on Voldemort’s hit list.

“The Triwizard cup was a Portkey, somehow both twins took the cup no doubt for a shared victory,” was his voice truly as hollow as his thoughts? He didn’t even have the heart to defend Nick Potter not after what Viktor Krum had implied. Severus snorted quietly, shared victory indeed that certainly wasn’t the Nick Potter he knew.

“Somehow Voldemort brought himself back, Nick got back in the brink of time I think…and Harry Potter was killed.” said Dumbledore.

Severus looked startled at that, nothing much could make Snape show anything other than disgust or seriousness. However, right now Snape looked worried and a tad bit upset. Severus didn’t know how his mother was going to take this latest blow. He wasn’t stupid, Severus knew she loved the child like a son or grandson or there abouts.
It was going to devastate him to have to tell her this; it was something he wasn’t looking forward to. The first casualty in the war, and it had to be a bright willing to learn Potter, who liked Potions.

“You would have liked him Severus…do you know he created the potion that let him breath under water?” questioned Dumbledore, the ache he felt growing more pronounced.

“Did he indeed?” asked Severus curiously, but his voice was a little flat. He wanted to get this over with and ensure his mothers safety. Nobody knew that Eileen was his mother, not many people did. Which was why it helped her be safer in her little shop, she already had a Portkey that would get her out of there too. Severus was a suspicious man, so it was no surprise really. The Prince broach Eileen always wore hidden under a cardigan was a Portkey.

“Look” said Dumbledore handing over the journal. He had looked thorough Harry’s things, he as headmaster had that right. Before giving it back to the parents just in case there was something disturbing. Like a journal full of depressed thoughts, if the wizard or witch had been suicidal and killed themselves. Or Dark Arts, anything really that would upset the parents. He noticed though that he couldn’t read one of the journals, no doubt it was Harry Potter’s diary. He didn’t know why but he had slipped it into his drawer, not even attempting to look at it. If Harry had been treated as he had, he didn’t want the confirmation in the scribbling’s of a scared hurt teenager/child.

“That is a very good combination…no doubt the gills wouldn’t even form it’s very good indeed.” said Severus his black eyes reading over the ingredients and notes Harry had written down. It would be quite popular for those who liked swimming but suddenly had a phobia of it. Or parents who wanted to make sure their children didn’t get hurt; it was useable even in the Muggle world… as there would be no gills or attachments that gave anything out of the ordinary away. Unless of course the child stayed under and gave the Muggles heart attacks.

“It contradicts his potion grades” said Dumbledore sadly as he pulled out the results for Harry Potter’s tests over the years.

Severus’ eyes widened, Troll indeed, what a lot of cow dung Harry Potter had gotten Exceeded Expectations from him. It was a well earned one too; unlike most of his students Harry had a flair for potions.

“Obviously there’s something wrong there” snorted Severus bitterly. The Potions teacher had thrown decent students grades down the pan. It was a shame and now Harry Potter would never get to fulfil his potential in anything. He wondered again if anyone would care that Harry Potter was dead. How many people around the UK were glad it hadn’t been Nick? That thought alone left him cold and disgusted. Savior or not Harry Potter was a fourteen year old boy who had died painfully no doubt at the hands of Voldemort. Voldemort didn’t know the meaning of killing without a dose or two of Cruciatus curse. He shook off his disgusting horrific thoughts and concentrated on Dumbledore. As hard as it may be, there was nothing he could do for the child.

“I was wondering if you would come back to teach? You will need somewhere safe…where better than Hogwarts herself?” asked or rather pleaded Dumbledore.

“I’ll see” said Severus with a note of finality in his voice.

“Thank you” said Dumbledore, he knew that tone of voice, even if he asked for an answer by the end of tonight Severus would still take his time. No amount of begging, cajoling or asking would get him his anger. Like any Slytherin Severus seemed to think all his options over before deciding something.

Severus took one last look at the journal of someone who could have made a great Potions Master
one day and put it down. As much as he wanted to put it off he knew he couldn’t, his mother
deserved to find out from him not the newspapers. He knew it would be in the newspapers, no
doubt about it. How much would it be about Nick surviving and Harry dying?

Eileen heard a pop as she was getting dressed, spelling her clothes on which included her broach.
She walked out of her room with her wand at the ready, slipping the light switch and light flooded
the house. She let out a breath of relief when it was just Severus, who had never done that before.

“What is wrong with you Severus?” asked Eileen sternly her hands on her hips; she trailed off
though when she noticed his face. It looked pinched, drawn as if he was…going to tell her
something she wouldn’t like. Her obsidian eyes narrowed upon her sons a mirror reflection of her
own.

“Sit down” said Severus softly, putting the kettle on with a flick of his wand.

It boiled within seconds; he put the hot brew in her hands wondering why he was having to do this.
Oh right, Harry Potter had stayed with his mother, without anyone even realizing it. Nobody knew
just how much his mother loved Harry, apart from him and perhaps Harry had known too.

“The Dark Lord came back tonight” explained Severus grimly.

“You cannot go back! I mean you…your trial” said Eileen wide eyed, concerned for her sons life.

“I wish this was all it was about, but no. Someone died tonight when Voldemort was brought back”
said Severus sadly. Knowing without a doubt his mother would realize who without him having to
say the damned words.

“No!” said Eileen her voice thick with disbelief, tears already entering her obsidian eyes.

“I’m sorry mum” said Severus quietly, before pulling her into a hug. He wasn’t by anyone’s
divination an affectionate man, but his mother needed him right now. He put his own discomfort
aside and helped her as best as he could.

“This cannot be happening Severus!” whispered Eileen shaking her head. “I refuse to believe he’s
gone.”

“He’s gone.” repeated Severus grimly.

And Eileen sobbed inconsolably. Miles away at Hogwarts, a girl named Luna Lovegood was
sobbing in her own dorm. Those that usually bullied her felt a big lurch of sadness for her. In a boat
on Hogwart’s lake a boy named Viktor just stared at the ceiling wondering where it had all gone
wrong obviously in shock, it didn’t help that their Headmaster was missing.

Together in Huffelpuff dorm two people called Cedric Diggory and Fleur Delacour cried for their
friend. Fleur felt inconsolably guilty - she had told him to go on. If only she had said nothing, he
would have stayed and maybe her fourteen year old friend would still be alive today.

“Ah Nick, it’s good to see you awake and well” said Dumbledore with forced kindness.

“Hello sir,” said Nick smiling slightly at Dumbledore.
“Can you tell us what happened last night?” asked Dumbledore sitting down looking worried. Lily and James sat grimly and worried on the other side of Nick and Dumbledore couldn’t even bring himself to look at them.

“Someone put the imperious curse on me, forced me to take my brother and I to the cup,” started Nick, not looking at Dumbledore it was a good thing for nothing but lies were about to spew from his lips. “We were then tied to a headstone; I managed to keep a hold of my wand. Harry had dropped his, we were forced to watch Voldemort brought back. I got a grip of my wand, and ran my brother was behind me he fell, I looked back he was just lying there not moving. I dropped my wand as I ran avoiding curses and grabbed the Portkey.”

“What ritual did he use?” asked Dumbledore pensively.

“Bone of the father, flesh of the servant and my blood” whispered Nick thickly.

“Who did he use for the flesh what exactly happened?” asked Dumbledore.

“Pettigrew, he cut his own hand off…” shuddered Nick sick to his back teeth.

“Don’t worry, everything is fine now Nick” soothed Dumbledore kindly. This time it wasn’t so forced, Nick couldn’t help how he was brought up. He chose instead to not even look in the Potter’s direction as he walked away.

“I’m going to ask them if we can stay here this summer…Voldemort won’t attack Hogwarts” whispered Lily adamantly. She didn’t see her son flinching a mile at the name.

“I don’t think they let people do that Lily” cautioned James but he was inwardly agreeing with her. He wanted his son safe, and perhaps he could get him trained properly this time! So he was ready for facing Voldemort at the end of the day.

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“Can I help you two?” asked Dumbledore, his face neutral he couldn’t outright be nasty to them. He had to ensure their son was getting the support he needed for his battle with Voldemort. He would however, show his disappointment on how they had chosen to raise those two boys. He had seen the letters Viktor had spoke about last night when he looked through Harry Potter’s trunk.

“Albus can we stay here during the summer? We need somewhere safe…and we are hoping some of the Order members would train Nick with us” said Lily sitting proud and tall. She didn’t even look slightly upset, they had lost a son last night and they were despicable in his eyes.

“I see…I shall find out if I can get permission from the board of governors” said Dumbledore.

“Can’t you just say yes?!” asked Lily indigintly.

“No, during the summer they come to fix the wards…they would realize right away. For those days you will have to leave the school grounds, the wards cannot be strengthened if anything is inside the building. I help strengthen the wards, everyone else leaves no exceptions made.” explained Dumbledore, James Potters should already know this after he was a member of the board of governors.

“Well we can go to Hogsmeade or Diagon Alley on those days or visit Molly Weasley” said Lily nodding. She didn’t even know that Ron had stopped being friends with her son she was that self absorbed.
Dumbledore realized that also but refused to even try and tell her.

“I shall see what I can do” repeated Dumbledore gravely.

“Thank you” sighed Lily.

“We are grateful Albus” said James his brown eyes full of worry.

“I have one thing to ask you…the Daily Prophet want a picture of Harry with his family for the announcement page” said Dumbledore steadily.

“We shall look for one…but I don’t think we have anything recent he’s been staying at friends houses he was hardly ever home” said Lily, not displaying her shock and worry at what was being asked. She didn’t think she had any pictures of Harry come to that, and that actually shocked her a little.

“Come, Lily. I want to get back to Nick” said James.

Nick was unhurt just a little shocked yet he was still in the hospital wing. Which was full of sweets and cards from Gryffindor’s who had miraculously made up with him and forgiven him. No one had seen Viktor, Luna, Cedric or Fleur since it had happened they hadn’t even been down to breakfast or lunch that day.

Pomda and Filius had sent food up to them, understanding how upset they were with what happened. The Ravenclaw’s were all subdued; they had just started to get to know Harry. Now he was gone and they’d never be able to make up for all those years of practically ignoring him.

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Harry woke up slowly, his entire body felt as if it was on fire, Harry half expected to be burning. However, he wasn’t, he was in some sort of Dungeon. That caused him to sit up; a moan of agony slipped passed his lips he didn’t want to move ever again. He hurt in places he weren’t sure had existed before today, he could tell one of his ribs were broken. He could feel it, at least it was one at the bottom, not too near his lungs, but it was still agony at his finest. He wondered how long he had been there and why he hadn’t been killed.

A house elf popped into the dungeon, his ears flat and eyes wider than normal. He had with him some food on a plate, and Harry felt like choking on laughter he was being fed by Death Eaters. When his own family could barely remember to feed him, the ironies of life didn’t fail to humour that was for sure. He was always given food yes, at meals anything in-between was a no-no. It didn’t help that his family didn’t call for him and by the time he got there the food was mostly all done.

“This is for you…Is managed to sneak some Mr. Potter…” said a house elf placing the tray with the food beside Harry, its eyes wide and fearful. It was obviously going against its master to give Harry food, and Harry found that odd. Most house elves would never do such a thing, if he was found out he would be killed for sure. He somehow doubted house elves were cared for in a Death Eater dwelling.

“What’s your name?” asked Harry his voice hoarse and raspy. He suddenly realized how ravenous he was, and he practically gobbled the soup down. He knew it must be lunch time, this wasn’t dinner food in a pureblood home, and it certainly wasn’t breakfast. Unless of course it had been re-heated and given to him but he couldn’t see that happen any time soon.

“My name is Dobby Mr. Potter sir” said Dobby very quietly his small body trembling as Harry ate
his fill. Dipping the bread in like a starving man stuffing his face. Normally Harry had more manners than that but right now he couldn’t care. Everything hurt; he was scared, cold and wary.

“Nice to meet you Dobby, how long was I out?” asked Harry, the bowl was empty but at least his stomach was temporary satisfied. He wondered what he was going to do and where he was he couldn’t rely on this Dobby for food. He had to find a way out of there, he really didn’t want to die starving to death or tortured to death in some dungeon.

“You have been here for two day’s Mr. Harry Potter sir” said Dobby eyes wide and solemn.

Harry swallowed sharply he had been out of it for two days? That was unexpected to say the least whatever he had expected to hear that wasn’t it. Two bloody days, no wonder he had been so starving but why did the pain still feel so fresh? Everything still hurt. Surely the pain would have abated by now.

“Jesus where am I?” asked Harry slumping with a groan against the stone wall near him.

“Malfoy Manor Mr. Potter sir” said Dobby his ears twitched up, listening intently, he disappeared abruptly, the tray of food disappearing too. Harry blinked in confusion, until he heard it himself. Footsteps were coming down the stairs; towards him no doubt a broken sigh left his lips.

“Well well Potter I hope you’re enjoying your stay” sneered the anything but dulcet voice of Lucius Malfoy.

“What can I say? I’m very comfortable and warm I don’t even want to move” sneered Harry hiding his worry.

“Oh don’t you worry, I’m sure you wont be able to move soon” said Lucius smoothly, his voice might be smooth but his tone was dangerous. Harry felt the soup quivering dangerously in his stomach.

He was right, Lucius Malfoy had left him unable to move or even breathe without agony ripping through him. He didn’t know how much more of this he could take; he was after all only fourteen years old.

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Harry was curled up in the very corner shaking and shivering, Avery and Macnair as well as Malfoy had been at him today. Macnair had gotten physical with him, not just cursing him with spells. The things Macnair had said made his skin crawl and he wanted out of there. He knew he wouldn’t last much longer, not if they did what he suspected they would. Macnair had leered at him unpleasantly, suggesting that he might as well get some ‘enjoyment’ out of him being there.

Dobby had showed up half an hour ago with some food, unfortunately Harry just didn’t have the stomach to eat anything. He had tried some of the bread but he just couldn’t eat anything else. He was in too much pain to even contemplate anything else, the only relief he had gotten was that Voldemort wasn’t there. His scar didn’t hurt, and they obviously didn’t think he was ‘The boy who lived’ so he was grateful for that.

Dobby popping in and out had given him a great idea, he had read about apparating. Name a fourth year Ravenclaw that hadn’t, he was trying to ignore the pain and concentrate on remembering what the book said. Draw the magic from your magical core; concentrate on where you want to go. When it reaches what feels like your heart you concentrate even more firmly and apparate.

He sat there in agony and tried to apparate out, to no success nothing worked. He either wasn’t
successful or the manor was warded to stop apparation. There was also the possibility his magic was trying to make him better to think about apparating. Lucius Malfoy appeared in the doorway, sneering nastily at him. Harry wished he would live to see that smug smirk wiped off his face.

He was grabbed harshly by the arm; he practically wrenched it from its socket to drag him away. His scar began burning ferociously; it had gotten worse since the re-birth that didn’t sound good at all. He let himself be dragged as his mind whirled in panic; he was dumped unceremoniously in the middle of the room. Death Eaters circling like vultures dressed in black. Lucius joined the circle again, putting on his Death Eater mask and looking like everyone else.

He concentrated on apparating hoping against hope it would work - this was his very last chance of survival. He concentrated on his magic, forcing it up to help him, to leave his injuries for the moment. His magic seemed to know what Harry wanted, and did what it was commanded to do.

Harry opened his eyes and prayed as he wished more than anything else in the world to go home.

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Severus had ended up spending the past few days with his mother; she wasn’t coping very well with her loss. Her shop hadn’t been opened in the past two days, and she had avoided looking at the papers like they were the plague. Severus hadn’t realized just how Harry had helped his mother. He had wrongfully assumed that his mother was helping Harry.

Harry had apparently got up every morning at five, sorted the papers and advertisement leaflets out. Bundled them into groups, got the shop ready to open, brought Eileen a cup of coffee and then delivered the papers. Opened the shop, only taking a break from the shop when it was three o’clock time for the Evening Prophet to be delivered. Eileen gave him somewhere to stay, paid for his work and of course cooked his dinner. Sometimes Eileen would look after the shop with him, or other times she’d tell him to take a break and look after it herself.

She had thought she could handle such a job, but now she knew it wasn’t true. Severus had suggested her getting a new worker in, and regretted it seeing the pain shine through his mother’s familiar obsidian eyes. She had proceeded to ignore him for an hour, until Severus worked up the courage to apologize. Apologizing wasn’t something that came easy to a man such as Severus Snape. He knew when he was wrong though, and his mother was all he truly had so he had bit back his pride and said sorry.

It was now three days since it happened - since Voldemort had returned and Harry had died. Severus had been told by Dumbledore he was furious with Lily and James, for giving Nick dreamless sleeping potion. For once Dumbledore had wanted to do the right thing by Harry Potter. He had wanted to retrieve the boy’s body; instead he had found Pettigrew’s and Nagini’s. Dumbledore hadn’t been sure what to make of it, but knew without a doubt Harry was probably dead. Severus kept to himself just what the child had probably gone through. It had given him nightmares, that badly he had hardly had any sleep in the past two nights. He doubted he would get much sleep tonight either, Voldemort never usually tortured children. This wasn’t any child though it was Harry Potter the brother of the one destined to kill him. No doubt he would send the child’s body back in a right state. As a warning to the Potter’s of what was going to happen to Nick Potter when Voldemort got his hands on him.

He shuddered anew at his thoughts.

Just as he was going to tell his mother to get some sleep, and give her a dreamless sleeping potion. A pop resounded the flat; Severus was on his guard immediately, pushing his mother behind his back.
“Stay.” said Severus his voice cold and hard. One he used on first year students to ensure they did what they were told. His mother didn’t even twitch at his tone, even if she was unhappy at being spoken to in such a way. She knew it was only out of concern for him; he frowned when they both heard a low moaning sound.

Severus ventured further; the noise was coming from the living room peeking around the door. He saw something that made him want to be sick, there wasn’t a part of the child unharmed. Stalking forward quickly, he got down on his hands and knees and felt for a pulse. There was one, weak and fast but it was there raising his wand he summoned his potions kit to him.

“Severus?” asked Eileen her eyes wide and completely stunned.

“Get some water and a basin” said Severus curtly, his fingers grabbing a pain relieving potion first. It was hard to get the uncooperative child to swallow it; he seemed to be half conscious and half unconscious. Knowing something was happening but not sure what, he had to rub Harry’s throat to get the potion into him. Almost immediately after consumption the child went lax as the pain disappeared completely. Harry struggled to stay alert, awake but the potion and his exhaustion was too strong.

“Sleep Harry, you’re safe.” said Severus softly, which was very unlike him. However the child had been tortured and had probably been in agony for three days. It seemed perhaps his accidental magic had saved his life - if it was accidental at all.

Harry must have believed him, either that or the potion had won because he stilled completely. Severus grimaced at the state of him; his face was black, bloody and swollen. He didn’t want to see the rest of him but need’s a must he wasn’t about to let the child die.

He didn’t even need to spell a medical scan to appear, he knew the Cruciatus curse after affects when he saw it. Considering he had been put under it often enough when Voldemort had been in power. It was a good job he always kept a few vials on him just in case. With the war on going he had no doubt that he would be supplying it to everyone. He wondered silently just who had gone back to Voldemort and who had stayed away. He knew Karkaroff would no doubt be one of them to stay away, he also but who else was the question. Who had taken part in hurting a fourteen year old boy? Most Death Eaters had sons that age. It disgusted him to no end that they could do such a thing, which was why he hadn’t been cut out to be a Death Eater. It was why he had left and sought redemption from who Voldemort liked to call ‘the champion for Mudblood’s and Muggles’ Albus Dumbledore.

Even as he sat there deep in thought his fingers were busy, he was of course healing the worst of the injuries first. Many of them were surprisingly physical wounds made by some sort of dagger or knife. He knew immediately who had been part of the proceedings - Macnair. He was the only one sick enough to actually do that, he had watched him work too many times. To many times to ever forget the screams of his victims, even in his nightmares while Voldemort watched like a proud father grinning insanely.

He wondered if the boy would have him arrested, at least that would be one less sadistic Death Eater around to torture people. He knew the Ministry had declared Voldemort’s return, it was hard not too. Crouch junior much to his surprise (because he was thought dead) and everyone else’s was sentenced to Azkaban. Crouch Junior was the most hated and most sadistic Death Eater right next to Macnair. He liked cursing Muggles with the Crucio and turning them insane. They had mercifully been killed with a painless potion to bring about their demise. Dumbledore had protested against it but the Ministry had overruled him. Fifty Muggles in total had been given the potion, which would see them dying in their sleep after five minutes. He had created the potion,
one that wasn’t published. It didn’t mean others didn’t know about it, Lucius Malfoy did with his connections in the Ministry unfortunately.

“Will he be ok?” asked Eileen her voice tremulous. She had watched her son feed Harry pain reliever’s, Skelegrow, blood replenishes, and put wound sealers on his open wounds which sizzled unpleasantly sounding. It did its job though, and a few other potions she was unfamiliar with. One of them stopped the trembling quite noticeably, and she realized it must be the Anti torture/Crucius curse potion Severus had created.

“He will be fine” said Severus adamantly. He wasn’t going to fail Harry Potter, not now not after all he had been through.
Chapter 15

Harry Potter year 4 part 7 - Harry get’s better and Nick get’s a fright another ‘Potter’ bites the dust

Harry felt himself wakening up, and like the past three days he kept still wondering where he was. He could feel a soft bed under him, and taste the residue of potions on his tongue. Not only that but the excruciating pain he had been feeling for three days was gone. That’s not to say he wasn’t in pain it was just dull throbs right now, there was something familiar about the smell of where he was. The throbs were getting worse stealing his attention from the familiar smell. He tried to open his eyes only to wince he couldn’t open them at all. They felt glued shut; they were probably swollen as well, very badly. His whole face hurt come to think of it, damn Macnair to hell and back he’d see that bastard in prison. He was a Ravenclaw, a Lord the Ministry wouldn’t have a choice but to meet with him. Pensieve memories didn’t lie, couldn’t lie it was Veritaserum of the memories instead of words.

A groan left his lips when a vicious jab of pain penetrated his side, his ribs still hurt that was for sure. As he groaned he heard something stirring, someone was obviously next to him. Where was he? He must have escaped he doubted very much Voldemort would heal him. Which meant he had successfully apparated, and he was obviously somewhere magical.

“How are you feeling Harry?” asked a soft feminine voice Harry knew very well - Eileen.

Harry only croaked in reply, he couldn’t speak his mouth was far too dry. His tongue was literally stuck to the top of his mouth.

“Squeeze my hand if you are in pain” said another voice, it was as smooth as Eileen’s but different it was male. He recognized the voice, but he couldn’t place it at all he had a feeling he knew it though. Now that the voice mentioned it he could feel someone’s hand in his, and did as instructed squeezing lightly.

There was some more shuffling before a cold vial was pressed to his lips; he knew he was safe if he was with Eileen. Without more ado he opened his mouth and let the pain reliever course through him.

“How are you feeling Harry?” asked a soft feminine voice Harry knew very well - Eileen.

Harry practically inhaled the water, his thirst finally quenched after what felt like month to him. He jumped when he felt long fingers touching his face; he winced when it began to burn.

“This will sting some but the bruising will all but fade.” said the male voice as he continued to rub it in.

Sting it did, but he could feel the bruising receding and his swollen eyes weren’t so swollen anymore. In fact he could finally open his eyes five minutes later, but the paste stung his eyes so he kept them closed. A warm cloth across his face took the potion residue off, and a minute later his face was pretty much back to normal. The first thing he saw when he did open his eyes, was his old Potions Professor and felt like hitting himself. So that’s where he had recognized the voice from, then again he shouldn’t have because the Snape he knew didn’t speak softly like that. In school he was curt, witted and snarling as he should be because Potions was a dangerous subject.
“How do you feel?” asked Eileen her face was bright and cheerful.

Harry blinked, that was a very good question how did he feel? Oh yeah like killing his brother for a start. Then getting revenge on those three Death Eaters, nothing would please him more than to see them in Azkaban. It was a good job you could tell when someone was under the imperious curse. Their eyes were sort of glazed over and their voice was like a monotone. They had been excited and their voice and eyes would give them away.

He didn’t want to curse at Eileen, but he did want to tell her he felt like shite.

“I’m alright all things considered” grunted Harry, he was a good liar but not where Eileen was concerned.

“What happened?” asked Severus sitting forward, Eileen quickly scrambled away to grab a tray. Forgetting to use magic, she never had been all that powerful - probably due to the inner breeding with Pureblood’s. Her son though she was proud to say was very powerful, and it goes to prove that you did need new blood now and again. Any son she would have had with a pureblood would have been a squib or had hardly any magic she could bet.

She put it in front of Harry, and Severus helped him sit up stacking a few pillows at his back for support. Severus actually surprised him by how un-awkward it was to help the teenager. He wasn’t a hands on man; he preferred his solitude and was not a person to comfort another. Yet he didn’t have a problem helping Harry, his thoughts should have been grumbling that he wasn’t a nursemaid. It wasn’t he was just mighty concerned for the teenager right now.

“What’s my brother been saying?” asked Harry scowling darkly, his emerald eyes went dark at the thought of his twin. He quickly ate the food in front of him utterly starving once more.

Severus noticed this and became slightly alarmed just what the hell had happened that night? “I don’t want to know his version of events I want to know yours. Look at me when I am talking to you and you to me” said Severus his voice soothing but tone adamant.

“Nick somehow ended up under the imperious curse like Viktor who was cursing Fleur. I stunned Viktor but Fleur was too hurt to continue on, Fleur sent up two sets of sparks and she told me to go on. Neither Viktor nor Fleur wanted Nick winning, and to be perfectly honest I didn’t want him to either. I sent six stunning spells at a gigantic spider…and I was grabbed pretty strongly as well. I told him to let me go, but he wouldn’t I couldn’t get out of his grip for some strange reason.” sighed Harry, Nick wasn’t the strongest person in the world. He was looking Snape straight in the eye as he spoke, wondering why slightly but not arguing the man had saved his life after all. He drank the rest of the pumpkin juice and pushed the tray away slightly. Severus with a flick of his wand had it levitated to the sink and it was cleaning itself and placing itself neatly back into the appropriate cupboards.

“While you are under the imperious curse, you can do things you normally couldn’t. Which no doubt includes strength and agility, it was nothing to do with you being week.” said Severus his eyes solemn.

Harry nodded his head curtly “I only noticed he was under the imperious curse when we had actually grabbed onto the cup. It was a Portkey, I was about to get the cup and get us out of there when we were tied to a headstone.”

“You are leaving something out.” observed Severus his eyes narrowing dangerously.

Harry was breathing heavily now, how did he know he was leaving something out? That thought
left him chilled to the bone what could he do? Just avoid the question and continue? He somehow doubted it would work.

“Nick realized it was Peter Pettigrew...James’ old friend the one that had been our secret keeper.” continued Harry avoiding Snape’s eyes.

“Why didn’t you just assume it was a part of the task? Why reach for the Portkey immediately?” questioned Severus “And look at me when I am speaking to you.”

Scared green eyes met his and Severus knew it was something important and probably life altering that the child was hiding. He got the feeling it was something he had kept to himself for the longest time.

“Oh Harry...you can tell us we wont let anyone know” said Eileen looking heartbroken.

Harry knew he could trust her but could he trust Snape? He took another look at Snape’s eyes and gasped. It was a revelation a long time coming, Eileen was Professor Snape’s mother...he was her son. Which would of course explain why he was here, both of them, instead of being in St. Mungo’s or Hogwarts. If Snape hadn’t been here Eileen wouldn’t have been able to help him. The half blood Prince...Harry hadn’t realised just how literal it was. Harry felt very foolish indeed, he had known Eileen along time and hadn’t guessed.

“My scar started to hurt as if someone had applied a hot poker to It.” confessed Harry his eyes falling immediately to his hands afterwards.

“Your scar?” asked Severus his obsidian eyes larger than normal. Never let it be said that Severus Snape was stupid. He made stupid choices but he wasn’t a stupid man not now anyway. He understood all too well what Harry Potter was saying, and if he had avoided telling them it could only mean one thing. He had already known before the tournament that he was the boy who lived. The true savior of the wizarding world and NOT Nick bloody Potter. “How long have you...” he ended speechlessly.

“I’ve always known...” said Harry uncomfortably, although his heart had burst with adrenaline. They actually believed him, it was a difficult concept to accept especially now.

“Why didn’t you tell anyone?” gasped Eileen shocked. There was an undertone in her voice which told them ‘why didn’t you tell ME’ as well.

“Who would have believed me? They would have just accused me of being jealous of Nick.” sighed Harry sadly, but biting out the word ‘Nick’ as if it were a curse. It was the same way Severus Snape used the word ‘Potter’ much to the obsidian eyed males amusement.

“Indeed.” said Severus dryly knowing it was nothing but the truth.

“So your scar hurt, you realized something was wrong. You were bound to a headstone along with your brother then what?” asked Severus sitting even further forward he wanted to know every detail that had happened.

“Nick had dropped his wand, I still had mine, and Pettigrew dragged a man sized cauldron next to us. He did a ritual to bring Voldemort-”

“Don’t say his name.” hissed Severus unable to help himself.

“Does the mark hurt when people say it?” asked Harry, thinking back to tonight when Pettigrew had screamed in agony when Voldemort pressed his finger to it.
Severus’ eye twitched a sure sign of shock how could this boy possibly know?

“It does.” said Eileen for her son when he didn’t answer. Not many things could shock her severe stoic son into silence.

“Oh, well Pettigrew dropped Volde into the cauldron, and said with his wand; bone of the father unknowingly given you shall revive your son. Then flesh of the servant willingly given you shall revive your master. Pettigrew cut of his entire hand and it dropped into the cauldron. Then he said blood of the enemies forcefully taken you will resurrect your foe and took mine and Nick’s blood.” said Harry heavily.

“I see I shall need to speak to Dumbledore about getting those remains destroyed to ensure it doesn’t happen again.” said Severus smoothly.

“Volde appeared in the cauldron,” said Harry his face going pale and sick looking as he remembered the disgusting thing. “He looked more like a snake than human, slit for a nose and red slits for eyes. He used Pettigrew to call his Death Eaters…he touched the mark on his forearm.”

Severus nodded grimly and Eileen had her hand over her mouth in silent shock.

“I knew we had to get out of there, Nick was no help at all - he had peed his pants!” cried Harry indigintly. “I managed to grab my wand from my pocket despite being bound. I held my wand and kept chanting Finite incantantum until the bonds gave way. Nick cried out as he fell…alerting them. We were about to run, Nick ran I was caught up in Nagini’s hold…I waited until he or she whatever it is, was about to bite me then I hit it with a Reducto curse.”

Severus’ lips were drawn in a faint line either in disgust or amusement at Harry’s proclamation of Nick peeing himself.

Eileen however sounded like her son at that moment when she snorted in derision.

“We ran, ducking behind headstones and dodging curses…I kept flinging spells back um…I hit Pettigrew with a Reducto curse in the chest I think. Nick was three feet in front of me when Volde hit me with the Crucius curse.” Harry couldn’t help but wince painfully at the reminder. Eileen whimpered softly, smoothing out the bedding stopping herself from smothering Harry in a hug.

Severus barely withheld a wince himself; it wasn’t pain he’d wish on a fully grown adult never mind a fourteen year old boy. Mind you he wouldn’t mind James Potter being held under it so his thoughts weren’t strictly accurate.

Harry shrank in on himself when he whispered the last part “Nick grabbed the Portkey and left.”

“He what?!” snapped Eileen her obsidian eyes just as large as her sons were at this very moment.

Harry brought up his legs and wrapped his arms around himself; part of him was of course rightfully furious. Another part of him, the more innocent part despite his life, that had remained, was shocked by his brother’s actions. He wouldn’t have done it, he didn’t think not if his brother had only been three feet from him.

“He just left you there?” asked Severus in disbelief, he believed the boy, and he had seen the truth of it in his eyes.

“Yes. I was trapped there with no way out, Volde used the Imperious curse on me…he didn’t know I could fight it obviously. I decided to go along with it…try and see if I could work something out. Get out of there, then the Death Eaters began showing up and Volde began his
speech I never realized he had a flair for dramatics” commented Harry itching his head.

Severus didn’t know whether to snort or laugh either way he was greatly amused with this fourteen year olds guile. Especially considering he had spent three days in the bastards company no doubt.

“He went on about Death Eaters that hadn’t turned up, four dead in his service…one to cowardly to return and you…he said he was going to kill you.” said Harry watching his old Potions Master curiously.

“That doesn’t surprise me, it was a good thing I did not attend the summons.” said Severus smoothly a perfect black eyebrow arched.

“I cannot remember much else…apart from trying to stop myself screaming in pain…the pain in my scar was at its worst. I didn’t want to give myself away…I don’t think he realizes I was the boy who lived. I don’t think he would have let me survive that night if it were true,” said Harry. “He put the Crucius curse on me until I passed out…I woke up two days later still in agony as if it had just been applied. A house elf brought me some food…it disappeared when it heard footsteps…turned out I was in Malfoy Manor. He cursed me with loads of different spells…um then left again.”

“Malfoy will be a fool then should he go anywhere in public” said Severus curtly.

“He brought Macnair and Avery the next time…at least that’s what I think they were called…they didn’t have their masks on and they were calling each other by their last names,” Harry shuddered in disgust remember Macnair. “Macnair was the worst…he said he might as well have some fun with me while I was there.”

Severus’ eyes widened once more at the implication “Were you?” asked Severus swallowing nervously. There were a few sadistic Death Eaters who liked that, Macnair was one of them Avery was the other. Lucius refused to touch anything that wasn’t pure or he would be doing it himself too.

“No…um…I had read about apparation at the start of the year, I tried while I was in the dungeons but I couldn’t.”

“No you couldn’t. Malfoy’s dungeons were warded against apparation and Portkey’s. Otherwise it wouldn’t be a very affective prison, it was no fault of your own” said Severus quickly.

“Lucius Malfoy dragged me out and up the stairs into this big dining hall…I’ve never seen anything like it before. The Death Eaters surrounded me at every angle, Malfoy then went back and put his mask on and took his place in the circle. I felt my scar flare and I knew he was there…I tried to apparate and that’s the last thing I remember.” said Harry honestly. He still had his arms wrapped around his legs, his head was lying on his knees but his eyes met Snape’s all the time.

Severus sighed silently; he wasn’t looking forward to telling the teenager about what Potter was telling everyone. He had to tell Harry of course, the world thought he was dead for goodness sake. He realized with a start that he wasn’t exactly terribly shocked now that Nick had left his brother. Whether he had known Nick was a coward or whether it was just because he believed the worst of all, the Potter’s he didn’t know. Well not this one, this one was different from the lot of them. He had known that by being his teacher for only one year at Hogwarts.

“The world believes you perished the night the Dark Lord returned…your brother has taken the credit for killing Nagini and Pettigrew” explained Severus softly - he was interrupted.
“Not surprising he’s taken credit for everything I’ve done, the night Voldie died, my flying, the troll…I guess I’m used to it now.” sighed Harry morosely. Not only had his brother left him to die…he had taken credit for something not his own doing - once again.

“You bloody well shouldn’t be!” snapped Eileen furious on Harry’s behalf.

“What date is it?” asked Harry.

“It’s the fourth day since you were taken…it’s the last day of Hogwarts tomorrow. Just relax and get yourself fit again I shall contact the headmaster to let him know.” said Severus.

“DON’T! I mean please don’t I’ll go to school tomorrow.” said Harry his green eyes gleaming like emerald stones.

Severus narrowed his eyes, before grudgingly nodding his head.

“Promise me you won’t tell anyone about me being you know…” said Harry warily, shuddering as he remembered the Boggart.

“This cannot be kept secret Mr. Potter.” said Severus severely.

“Please…I don’t want anyone to know.” whispered Harry panting in fear as his heartbeat sky rocketed at the thought.

“On one condition…you allow me to train you.” said Severus.

“Why?” demanded Harry warily.

“Because I know of…something you don’t something important…it’s nothing a fourteen year old should know.” said Severus somewhat cautiously.

Harry narrowed his eyes that didn’t sound good at all. “Meaning what exactly?” Harry didn’t like how weak his voice sounded there but it couldn’t be helped.

Severus looked deeply conflicted, the boy had a right to know…but should he? As young as he was. He could tell Harry wasn’t going to be satisfied with half truths or avoidances. He decided on the truth, he had kept his mouth shut about him being the boy who lived, also managed to keep Voldemort ignorant of that fact too. Perhaps he could be trusted with this information also.

“There was a prophecy created about a year or so before you were born, I was still…loyal back then. So when myself, Malfoy and another Death Eater overhead Trelawney a seer predicting the Dark Lord’s downfall we immediately told him. We only ever heard the first half of it…the one with the power to vanquish the dark lord approaches…born to those who have thrice defied him…born as the seventh month dies this is all we heard. The bartender had caught us lurking and accused us of spying…quite rightfully so I suppose.” said Severus his obsidian eyes watching Harry’s emerald ones cautiously as he told his story. He felt relief flood through him when there was no accusation or hurt in them. “I did not expect the Dark Lord to start hunting unborn children down…he became obsessed, with finding out who it was. He finally narrowed it down to two families. The Potter’s and the Longbottom’s who by the way went into hiding. When…you defeated the Dark Lord the Longbottom’s went straight back to Longbottom manor. It was a good thing as Bellatrix Lestrange and a few other Death Eaters entered the home intending on getting information. They were captured instead, and sentenced to Azkaban along with a lot of other Death Eaters.”

“When did you become a spy?” asked Harry his eyes wide as he digested this new information. He
had the power to vanquish the ‘Dark Lord’ as it said that was unexpected to say the least and he didn’t know what to make of it.

“When I realized he was going after your family, I went to Dumbledore to protect you all. This was my way of repaying the life debt I owed your father but I was also good friends with your mother when we were children.” said Severus his lip still curled in disgust.

Harry blinked at that new information “You were friends with my mum? Why aren’t you friends anymore?”

“I knew her from we were eight years old until we were sixteen… I called her a ‘Mudblood’ when she tried to help me when your father was humiliating me in front of the entire school before your godfather was bored.” sneered Severus.

“Sirius Black? Hum… I’ve not seen him since I was a little boy three or four years old if I remember right.” said Harry cocking his head to the side.

“You don’t know the mutt?” asked Severus taken aback.

“Nope, and Lupin pretty much ignored me when he taught last year spent all his free time with Nick.” shrugged Harry his eyes briefly displaying the hurt before it was gone.

“They will regret it one day you know…” said Severus trying to comfort and renew the teenager.

Harry smirked almost ferally “I know and when I’m ready for everyone to know they will.”

“Drink this and get some sleep.” said Severus handing over a purple potion. Not only did Harry need sleep, Severus and Eileen did too, they had spent the entire night healing him. Eileen had left so Severus could remove his clothes and wash him down. Once that had been done pyjamas had been conjured and placed on the teenager. Thankfully not too much physical damage had been done to his body. Just three slashes from a knife or dagger to the chest. Which had been cleaned out and healed, they were scarred unfortunately, but the scarring would fade with time. The knife or dagger had been magical and you couldn’t make magical made scars disappear. Especially not dark ones anyway that was for sure.

“Dreamless sleeping potion, goodnight.” said Harry as he opened it and drank it down in one go. Almost immediately he began feeling drowsy, a yawn left his lips as he snuggled into the pillows. He fell asleep feeling so much better, a burden had been erased from his mind. As he fell asleep he realized Fleur, Cedric, Viktor and Luna all thought him dead and he hadn’t even asked how they were. The thought that he would be going to Hogwarts tomorrow consoled him. He wondered if he should perhaps tell Luna now… Eileen and Snape had believed him… perhaps others would. He could trust Luna with his life, but to be sure he should perhaps get an oath from her first.

Severus looked down on the fourteen year old and noticed he looked very innocent and childish lying like that. When he was awake and aware, he had this presence around him that showed he had seen too much. Which when you think about it shouldn’t be possible, but it was and he was going to help him in any way he could. He needed all the help he could get, Severus couldn’t help but think perhaps even Dumbledore wouldn’t believe him should he tell him Harry was the boy who lived. He had invested too much in Nick Potter, ignored Harry Potter too much to ever want to admit it even to himself.

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“I should have guessed… he seemed so bitter towards his brother every time he was in the paper…
not bitter but disgusted and let down maybe?” mused Eileen, she had a glass of sherry in her hand. Severus had a whisky they were both just sitting there stunned with this new information they had digested.

“I always knew Pot…Nick didn’t defeat the troll I kept my silence…I knew it had been my spell used. Which means Harry Potter has been using the Half Blood Prince Book.” said Severus shaking his head wryly.

“You didn’t start that until your sixth year…” frowned Eileen confused.

“I know he must be able to create sixth year potions by now I’d imagine. He recognized the dreamless sleeping potion if that’s any indication.” smirked Severus in bitter amusement. He wondered what James Potter thought of his son liking potions that much it turned into a grimace when he realized the bastard didn’t care. Nor did the boy’s own godfather come to that, Black he could understand he was a fame magnet always sucking up to the most popular boy even as a kid. Anything popular and light he attached himself to as if he was scared he was accused of being… dark. Lupin though had always been the smart one, or he had thought so until that very moment the teenager had told him about being ignored by the werewolf.

“Severus…I can’t let you teach him if all you see is a way for the Dark Lord to be defeated.” said Eileen putting her foot down. Her obsidian eyes glaring determinedly at her son as if daring him to declare otherwise.

“I am not Dumbledore, I’m not just doing it to that end, and I want the teen to survive. He will need training when the time comes, if he doesn’t plan on telling anyone any time soon then it’s a good thing. It will give him the element of surprise, and ensure his survival. I also want to teach him Potions, I’ve never seen anyone with the same aptitude as Harry in Potions.” confessed Severus.

“Good,” sighed Eileen gratefully. “Apprenticeship?” she then questioned.

“I think so; it’s probably the best way to go about it. When he passes his mastery even earlier than I did he will have a lot of options.” said Severus.

“Good I will feel better he isn’t at that awful school with that nasty brat.” said Eileen. It was probably the nastiest thing Severus had heard her utter in years, ever since Tobias really. His mother didn’t like bad language at all, which was why he tried and failed not to curse or snarl things in front of her.

“Harry has something planned for tomorrow night…I could see it in his eyes.” said Severus.

“Then we shall accompany him…I do not want his mother or father to harm him.” said Eileen she might not have much magic but she had enough - she was a witch for a reason. Lily Potter would regret it if she even attempted to hurt Harry verbally or physically.

Severus Snape couldn’t help but wish James Potter would try something. Under the law he had the ability to protect his apprentice from harm. Even from his or her own parents, it had been that way since Merlin time. Legend suggested he had taken an apprentice under his wing, against the wishes of the parents and made the law. The best thing about Merlin laws - they couldn’t be changed they were the very foundation of magic.

“Do you think he will accept an apprentice? He seems to like Hogwarts now that he has friends and a boyfriend” said Eileen.

“I do not know, I suppose I could accept my post at Hogwarts again and teach him there. It will
make everything more complicated but life is, I could ask Dumbledore to keep Reese on.” said Snape.

“He hates Harry! I’ve gotten a few letters about him Harry’s grades are suffering because of it. He has told me he fears he won’t be able to get an apprenticeship because of it. I hadn’t realized it was Potions he was talking about. It could have been any of the teachers at Hogwarts…I don’t keep up with the teachers…I know about Filius, Minerva and Dumbledore only because you mentioned them from time to time.” said Eileen.

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Harry had accepted his apprenticeship almost straight away, when Severus had brought it up. He hadn’t even needed to think for a few minutes, if that was any indication of his dedication to Potions then it was immense. Severus would of course give him a choice of whether he wanted to go back to Hogwarts or not during the summer. Dumbledore could wait on his answer until then, Harry needed time to himself. To come to terms with what had happened, what was going to happen and then decide. It wasn’t something to be taken lightly attending the same school as his twin who had essentially left him for dead. Then took credit for kills that weren’t his own, just like the other times he had done so.

Harry looked much better now; he could walk without stumbling or shaking. He was healed, and his blood was back to normal after the amount he had lost. His ribs were healed and cuts and bruises were almost completely gone. There was nothing to suggest he had been hurt apart from the scars on his chest and yellowing bruises on his face.

It was indeed the leaving feast tonight and they were leaving together - Harry had protested that Eileen didn’t need to come. However, she only proved that she had given her son his stubbornness. Inwardly though Harry was warmed with the worry she displayed for him. He wasn’t used to it; any fourteen year old would have been embarrassed. Having looked after himself for so long now - it was nice to not have to do everything himself.

Both Eileen and Harry were side along apparated by Severus, before long their trek led them along the gravelled path to Hogwarts entrance. The doors were open, so they passed without problem. The doors to the Great Hall were open; it didn’t take them any time at all to get to them. Eileen and Severus slid in and watched Harry approach the Gryffindor table. Nick was sitting beside Ronald Weasley again, whether they were friends or not again remained to be seen.

Harry tapped his brother on the shoulder, who turned around frowning at the impertinence of someone. Nick took one look at him and paled drastically, he looked ready to be sick. Everyone was frowning, wondering who it was that made Nick look so worried. Lily, James, Minerva and Dumbledore were making there way down to the Gryffindor benches worried about Nick and who the cloaked stranger was.

Harry had his entire face and body covered by a thick cloak; nobody could possibly guess who he was.

He lowered his hood and the entire Great Hall breathed as one shocked to their cores. Their eyes were almost popping out of their sockets; several cries were head from the Ravenclaw table, as Fleur and Luna rushed from the Ravenclaw take to get to him. Viktor was more composed as he just smiled in relief - he knew something was going to happen and remained seated for the show.

Eileen and Severus came forward enjoying the look of bewilderment, shock and much to their disgust sadness in Lily and James Potter’s eyes that Harry Potter their son was still alive. Severus had his wand already in his hand, watching the proceedings, Dumbledore much to Severus’
surprise - his eyes were twinkling brightly as if he was relieved to see Harry alive and well. Perhaps Dumbledore had truly been regretful at Harry Potter’s death after all.

The shock lasted even longer when Harry drew his hand back and smacked his fist right into his twin’s nose. With a sickening crunch Nick began scream, cry his eyes out as blood gushed out of the wound. Spraying several close people with droplets of his blood, making them blanch in disgust.
Invisible

Chapter 16

Summer Trials

Lily and James raised their wands as if to curse their son, Severus had his wand pointed straight at James’ forehead before he could blink. Eileen much to Severus’ amusement had Lily disarmed and her wand pointed straight at the red heads heart. Her face though was extremely bitter and angry as she glared at the emerald eyes woman. Fury still coursed through her when she thought of everything Harry had been through because of this woman.

“That was for leaving me at the graveyard to face Voldemort alone after I got us untied!” snarled Harry furiously, his magic swirling around him cloaking him in awesome magic. Nobody could say Harry Potter wasn’t powerful, not anymore as he stood proud and tall glaring at his brother ferociously.

“Now…calm down let’s take this elsewhere” soothed Dumbledore watching everything wide eyed. His own wand in his hand, trying to get people calmed down and away from the students before something happened. He didn’t like to think that Harry Potter was telling the truth, that Nick truly left his own brother for dead. The hall was deadly silent everyone staring at Nick in shocked bafflement. Minerva stood beside him and nodded in grim agreement, her own wand of course at the ready.

Fleur and Luna were standing behind Dumbledore, Lily and James looking at Harry cautiously. They weren’t scared of him by any stretch of imagination; Luna had expected this for a long time…Fleur on the other hand just looked shocked now. She believed that Nick would leave her own brother; he was just that kind of person. Spoiled, cowardly, without a backbone boy who had gotten everything handed to him on a silver platter.

Harry drew back his foot and kicked Nick straight in the balls; Nick was now singing a soprano instead of sobbing and whimpering. Every male including Dumbledore winced in sympathy for Nick. “That was for taking credit for something I did again!” hissed Harry.

“What the bloody hell are you talking about?” hissed Nick his brown eyes flashing furiously behind his eyes though lay true panic.

“Harry stop it at once” snapped James. They were surrounded by people and he didn’t like what Harry had just implicated - especially in front of everyone.

Harry glared at his father in disgust “It was me that defeated that snake and Pettigrew” spat Harry. “Not only that but I defeated the Troll, I was the one seen flying, I was the one who stunned Quirrell to stop Voldemort…I was the one that did all those things and I don’t care if you don’t believe me” he finally screamed at the top of his lungs.

Severus didn’t make any attempts to stop him if anything it had been a long time coming. Harry needed to get this off his chest whether people believed him or not, he had remained silent for far too long. No doubt Harry would feel much better when all was said and done.

“Right” scoffed James screwing his face up in disgust.
“It’s true, the spell used to take down the troll was one of my own making,” said Severus his voice grave and sneering. “I could recognize the signature…hence why I asked Potter if he had a new Potions book that day Albus. My spells had been in my old Potions book which Harry took.”

“Nick did it, I don’t care what you say the world knows the truth.” said Lily calming down looking benevolent like the Headmaster when dealing with first year children.

“We lied; we never did go after the troll we were only trying to get ourselves out of trouble. We hadn’t gone back to our common rooms like we were told, I didn’t want to be expelled or accused of anything.” said Ron his face as red as his hair.

“Just when we thought you were cool…” tutted Fred.

“You turn out not to be little brother” sighed George.

“But you are…” said Fred

“Still our brother…and we” said George gesturing between himself and his identical twin in every way.

“Are proud of you” grinned Fred wickedly.

A few people twittered but mostly it remained stunned silent.

“If you don’t stop these lies I’m going to disown you!” snapped James furious that Harry was ruining his son’s reputation. He knew Nick had done all those things after all he had done magic first, he had defeated Voldemort, and he was the prophecy child. No other child would be able to do all those things otherwise, he was sure of it.

The hall gasped as one unable to believe what they were hearing, they knew they didn’t seem that bothered their son had died but this…disowning someone wasn’t done often. Not for telling the truth…even if it was lies Harry didn’t deserve to be treated like that.

“Now James…let’s not say things we don’t mean” soothed Dumbledore trying to get back in control.

“I do mean it!” snarled James angrily.

“I hope you do it anyway! He better not get away with this!” hissed Nick who was on the floor clutching his ‘manhood’ through his trousers if one could call it that. He couldn’t see properly through all the tears and blood crusting and still gushing down his face.

“He won’t, you are coming home for the entire summer and you are grounded.” said Lily her hands on her hips looking at Harry in disappointment as if he had only just lied and not embarrassed the family name.

Severus snorted not if he had anything to say about it, Harry was now under his protection as an apprentice. His parents now no longer had a say in his life, Harry had after all signed the contract. Until he passed his mastery he was now under Severus Snape’s care and instruction as his master.

They were confused when Harry burst out laughing then proceeded to grinned ferally at them.

“That won’t be happening either.” said Harry smugly.

Severus was under the impression he was about to tell them about his newly apprenticed status.
When his jaw dropped incredulity sweeping through him, also pride at Harry’s Slytherin ability despite being a Ravenclaw.

“Not on your life.” said Eileen grimly.

“You have no say in this!” hissed Lily; she knew who Eileen was probably only one of the few who actually did. Severus narrowed his eyes dangerously at Lily, ex-best friend or not no one spoke to his mother like that - except him.

“You will find that I am legally emancipated.” smirked Harry.

“Impossible! I’d have known I’m the head of the Potter family.” snapped James thinking Harry was bluffing.

“Not when I declared myself Lord Peverell, you might recognize it as the top of the family tree.” grinned Harry in amusement he had been waiting for this day for so long.

“No” gasped James wide eyed, he knew what that meant, he couldn’t contest it, he knew half the Potter money was already in the boy’s hands and what’s worse all heir looms were Harry’s too.

“Yes” said Harry excitement thrumming through him like never before. Oh he had waited so long for this. To tell them what he thought of them and throw something back in their faces.

“Good at least he’s not a Potter anymore.” huffed Nick.

The students just continued looking at one another utterly stunned, too stunned to talk among themselves. They were now looking at Nick with openly hostile and disgusted looks which he didn’t see still unable to see.

“That’s shocking, my mother would never do that and I wouldn’t do that to any of my brothers. Even if they do prank me all the time…one day you will regret it and I hope I live to see It.” this statement was made by surprisingly - Ronald Weasley much to the surprise of everyone.

That started everyone talking; the hall was loud with questions being shouted. Muggle born’s were asking why it was so bad, pureblood’s were hissing at James Potter and the half bloods were just disgusted.

“SILENCEEEEEEEE!!!!!” boomed Dumbledore’s voice it vibrating around the room. Students nearer to Dumbledore winced at the sudden loud voice, even if everyone had been talking.

“Prefects take your students back to their common rooms immediately!” snapped Minerva crisply.

They did as they were told, in a line they walked back to their common rooms. The prefects made no move to stop them gossiping! But only because they wanted to join in. they had the grace to wait until they were actually in their common room. Hell even the head boy and head girl joined in, one in Ravenclaw tower and one in Huffelpuff common rooms.

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“Poppy please see to Nick, Severus, Eileen lower your wands” said Dumbledore demandingly he was getting things under control right now if it killed him. Severus pulled his wand away from James but didn’t put it away. Eileen did the same thing snorting in disgust not as composed as her son.

“Now Harry why would you want to disown yourself?” asked Dumbledore softly. Looking away
from where Poppy was healing Nick, who was looking much like his normal self already. Although his nose wasn’t sitting quite the same was as before, magic wasn’t a miracle worker unfortunately.

“You are joking right?” said Harry choking back a laugh of pure astonishment nearly slipping past his lips. Dumbledore was stupid, hadn’t he listened to a word he had just said? And that’s exactly what Harry asked him next.

“Of course I heard, I just think there’s been a big mistake,” sighed Dumbledore “Family if family at the end of the day.”

“If you want them then have them, I don’t want them,” snapped Harry an ugly sneer on his face. “I shan’t need them, ever, haven’t done since I was one years old.”

“Now Harry no one year old can take care of themselves” said Dumbledore patiently a condescending note in his voice.

“I did, I had to I’ve fed myself, dressed myself, I even had to learn to read and write myself.” hissed Harry furiously.

James and Lily blanched their faces going white in shock.

“What?” cried various voices simultaneously in shock. Meanwhile James and Lily seemed to slump onto the Huffelpuff bench in defeat.

Dumbledore had frozen in shock, McGonagall looked stunned, Severus looked at Lily as if he hadn’t seen her before Nick just pouted. Eileen looked mutinous, her hand clenching into a fist as fury bubbled under the surface.

Harry looked taken aback by his own words, as if he hadn’t actually meant to say it out loud. He had avoided thinking about it for years; the only remembrance was in his little diary Remus gave him when he was a little boy. It was probably until now the thing that had ashamed him the most. Made him realize his parents truly didn’t care or want him in their lives.

“What do you mean by that Harry?” asked Eileen going over and hugging him, her restraint completely broken. She had wanted to hug him for days now, after everything he had been through. Harry leaned into Eileen’s affection completely unused to it, affection from a lover yes but not this. Not someone selflessly giving him affection with nothing wanted in return.

“Nothing can I go home now?” asked Harry his voice sounding tired and impossibly young.

“No, I demand an answer.” said Severus adamantly.

Harry swallowed sharply, the pain was coming back his chest and head was beginning to hurt. He had slammed his head repeatedly under the Cruciatus curse bouts very hard so it didn’t surprise him that it was sore.

“Nick got private tutoring, I didn’t I snuck in on his lessons and copied the books…just so I could learn then Roxy’s too.” sighed Harry sadly.

Lily and James flushed in humiliation they had never in a million years expected that to get out.

“You denied your own son an education?” asked Dumbledore his jaw on the floor a very unusual look for him.
“Just so you know the Ministry will know what happened…I’m bringing the Death Eaters up on charges.” said Harry before he began walking out of the Great Hall Eileen followed him keeping an eye on the boy’s back.

“Oh no you won’t!” snarled James raising his wand.

Before he could even think of getting a word out, Severus followed Harry’s lead he punched James Potter in the face. What could never be denied was the supreme satisfaction on one Severus Snape’s face.

“I’ll have you for this Snape” snarled James; unlike his son he didn’t start crying. However his nose was undeniably broken. No one other than Lily seemed to care; Poppy had left without a backwards glance. The information she had learned tonight had shocked her, no one noticed the black beetle flying from Poppy’s hair when she left to settle on the window sill.

“No you won’t, you tried to harm my apprentice it’s within my rights to protect look up Merlin’s law if you don’t believe me,” sneered Severus grinning wickedly. He too turned to leave, following Harry and his mother. “Oh and Albus, I won’t be returning I’m afraid I have an apprentice to teach.” before even the headmaster could protest they were gone just as quickly as they had come.

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“Albus wants to talk to me, no surprise there.” said Severus as he ate his toast. It was early in the morning but he was up nonetheless, he was a morning man despite what his personality might say.

“Stupid old fool.” said Eileen as she smeared butter over his scone. Freshly baked by Harry none the less.

Severus had stayed once more at Eileen’s flat; he was there more often than not these days. He couldn’t help but think it was a good job he had an accumulated amount of potions lying around. Even if he wasn’t brewing potions, people were still demanding them. He always cast very strong preservation spells on his potions so they lasted so much longer than normal. It was something he had advised Poppy to do, but she just didn’t have the time to do everything. The thing was the preservation charm had to be cast within a day of the potions being created.

“Old fool he may be mother, but he isn’t stupid…just blind.” sighed Severus pushing the rest of his breakfast away.

Eileen never responded.

Both of them had been utterly surprised at what they had learned last night. Harry emancipating himself and becoming the Peverell heir a Lord at that. At such a young age and Severus knew it couldn’t be contested no matter what James might try. The fact they had denied Harry his education had shaken them badly. They hadn’t realized just how badly the abuse was. That was what it was, psychological and emotional abuse at its finest. What better way to tell a child that they don’t care than by not giving him an education and ignoring his very existence.

Just then the boy they were both thinking about entered in pyjamas that were getting to small for him.

“Morning” said Harry, sitting down at the table feeling awkward for the first time since he had known Eileen.

“Why didn’t you tell me everything?” asked Eileen more hurt than angry.
“I guess I just got so used to keeping secrets that I don’t realize I’m doing it.” confessed Harry his green eyes full of sadness and pain.

“Oh Harry, you don’t need to go through everything on your own anymore, I’m here and everything will be fine I promise.” said Eileen softly.

“I’ll try” swore Harry feeling a warm glow settle into his heart. He began eating his breakfast feeling famished. He felt better today a lot better than he had ever felt before in his life.

“Good” sighed Eileen smiling softly.

“We are going shopping today Mr. Peverell” smirked Severus in bitter amusement just saying that name. Then they would go to the Headmaster’s office, get it over with the old fool was probably going to try and talk him into going back.

“We? Why?” asked Harry curiously, grinning a little bit at his new last name.

“I’ll be right back dear, that’s the Portkey with the papers” said Eileen patting both Harry and Severus on the shoulder before leaving.

“You need clothes that will reflect your status as my apprentice also a status fit for a Lord” said Severus smoothly.

Harry looked like he wanted to argue, but he just bit his lip and asked his question “Am I not supposed to pay you?” asked Harry curiously.

“No, it’s up to myself whether I take on an apprentice and it’s my decision regarding money. You have already signed the document and become my apprentice, no money will ever change hands.” explained Severus.

“Don’t all Masters do that? I read a book…about it it’s why I’ve saved so hard over the years. So I could get myself a flat and pay for an apprenticeship when I left school…Professor Reese doesn’t like me much and she keeps grading me a T” replied Harry shrugging his shoulders. He was used to people being horrible now; it didn’t seem to matter much to him anymore. Or that is what he liked to tell himself.

“I know I saw your grades, which I know are graded unfairly, Potter keeps getting Exceeded Expectation…I’ll believe that when I see a blue moon” scoffed Severus.

Harry sniggered softly, drinking the rest of his milk.

“Well it looks like the proverbial cat is out of the bag” said Eileen putting the newspaper down on the table between them.

Harry practically gaped at it. Bold letters kept changing the headlines there were lots of them. Rita Skeeter had indeed been busy, and for once she seemed to write truthfully.

Boy-Who-Lived-To-Be-A-Coward - Leaves His Own Brother To Save His Own Skin!!

Boy Who Lived Took Credit Not His Own! Brother Killed Voldemort’s Snake And The Most Wanted Wizard Peter Pettigrew

Potter’s Neglect Their Own Son - Harry James Potter!

Harry James Potter - No Longer A Potter James And Lily Disown Their Fourteen Year Old Son? -
No Harry Did It Himself Before They Had the Chance - New Name Harry Peverell!

Just What Other Credits Has Nick Potter Taken?

“Oh Merlin, how did they find out so soon?” whispered Harry staring down at the paper. A picture of him in the tournament was in front of him, or rather he knew he was there. The picture of him kept trying to hide, just like he had tried to hide when the picture was taken.

“Calm down, they don’t know the most important bit that’s all that should concern you” said Severus cautiously. Calming the teenager down, breathing deeply Harry agreed with that information.

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True to Severus’ word later that day he did indeed take Harry shopping, they spent hours and hundreds of galleons buying things. Journals, inks, Quills, quill sharpeners (knife), parchment, folders. Then to the potion shop, vials, travel potion kit, stirrers, rods, cauldrons, professional scales that would last years. Then the actual potion bag you could carry around, obviously with a higher capacity to expand than the travel kit. Severus got some ingredients while he was there and also glass jars for ingredients he needed to harvest. You could of course conjure a glass jar but it didn’t last forever, it could stop working any time. Then you would have a spilled wasted ingredient to deal with, so Severus never did anything like that. Then it was for the clothes shop, much to Harry’s embarrassment Severus bought him absolutely everything he’d ever need. Severus had noticed how much Harry had liked his (Severus’) cloak, the one he had worn to go to Hogwarts, probably how it had concealed him, cloaked him in the shadows. So Severus had gotten him two, one black the other dark blue. One was cotton the other was silk two different, one for winter one for summer.

They then entered the bookshop, got every single book Harry would need during his apprenticeship. They left with about fifty seven books, thank goodness for shrinking charms. Severus decided at the last minute to get Harry a new trunk even if his name was still HJP ironically enough. The one Harry had was just normal, practical but sturdy trunk and also very cheap. Severus rectified that and got him a compartmentalized trunk for everything he needed.

He paid for absolutely everything he wouldn’t hear of Harry paying. Despite the fact he was a Lord, it wasn’t Harry’s place he shouldn’t have to. It was the duty of the ‘Master’ to look after the ‘apprentice’ no matter their age. It’s probably why not many people took apprentices on these days, most Potions Masters preferred their silence and solitude. There were of course Potions Masters that did take others on, make no mistake but the Potion industry was a dying art.

Not only wasn’t it Harry’s place - he was only fourteen year old he shouldn’t be bloody paying for his own clothes. He almost wished Potter would try something so he could do what he wished to do.

“Is there anything else you’d like?” asked Severus biting back his sardonic tone; he didn’t want Harry to think he regretted buying it. No doubt the child probably had big confidence issues, ones he would address in time.

“No sir,” said Harry his eyes wide he hadn’t expected any of this at all. He had been buying his own things for the longest time it was … weird having someone buy his things for him now.

“Good, then let us floo to Hogsmeade, and make our way up to Hogwarts” said Severus smoothly.

“Yes sir” said Harry eagerly.
Before long they had shot out of the floo and making their way through Hogsmeade.

“When you told Potter that you were going to the Ministry did you mean it?” asked Severus as they stalked along.

“Yes, I’m going to give Madam Bones copies of my memories and a signed statement…I have sent her a letter. Malfoy goes to the Ministry and I don’t want to go there yet.” said Harry.

“Good idea is there anything else you’d like to do today?” asked Severus.

“Have the students from Beauxbaton and Drumstrang left yet?” asked Harry curiously.

“No one has yet Mr. Peverell, the train will depart in two hours and fifteen minutes” said Severus looking down at his watch.

“And the others?” asked Harry.

“At the same time I’d imagine.” said Severus. He wasn’t a teacher now he didn’t know for sure, for all he knew they could already be gone.

“May I go and see them? I’ve not even had the chance to write to any of them!” sighed Harry guiltily.

“After everything you have been through Harry, you are entitled to be a little disoriented for a few weeks.” said Severus soothingly.

“Thank you, Sir.” said Harry smiling slightly.

Severus just nodded curtly. “So when is Madam Bones coming?” asked Severus.

“I don’t know if she will sir, I’ve only asked her to meet with me but I think she will…she will realize it’s me who’s Lord Peverell and I know the name means a lot in the wizarding world.” said Harry.

“It does indeed, they are one of the first lines in existence descendants from the founders.” explained Severus. Gaunt was a descendant from that line, which essentially meant Tom Riddle was related to the Potter’s distantly. It’s always been said that the Potter line was actually a Gryffindor line as well. Gaunt was a Slytherin line, so the lines had mixed with the founders descendants. The other Peverell brother had died before siring any children the one who had at one point owned the Elder wand.
Chapter 17

Invisible

Chapter 17

Meetings Arrests and Dreams

Once Severus and Harry were at Hogwarts they parted ways temporarily. Severus had told Harry to be back within two hours, no longer than that because he didn’t want to hang around. He knew no doubt that Dumbledore would spend an hour beating around the bush, and then talking about the real deal for the next hour. He knew his employer far too well now after spending all those years with him. Now Severus found himself stalking up the moving gargoyle stairs being told to ‘come in Severus’ before he could knock. He remembered a time when it had annoyed him to no end that, not even being given a chance to knock properly. Such trivial things had stopped annoying him as the war progressed, and he was under even more pressure from the Dark Lord.

“Severus it’s good to see you!” beamed Dumbledore, his usual twinkle was noticeably absent today. He had small bags under his eyes, as if he had, had trouble sleeping. He wondered briefly why Dumbledore hadn’t taken a pepper up potion. It’s what he (Severus) always done when he didn’t have much sleep. It gave him energy and the bags under his eyes disappeared along with the tiredness. Although he had used it a lot and built up immunity to the full affects. Hence why he didn’t use it as much but Dumbledore didn’t have such problems.

“Indeed.” said Severus taking a seat; he saw Dumbledore’s eyes widened. He presumed it was because of what he was wearing. Instead of his stiff teaching robes he had a pair of black jogging bottoms on and a white t-shirt on under his cloak. Really, Dumbledore honestly didn’t think he wore his stiff teaching robes all the time surely? He might not like colour but it didn’t mean he didn’t wear decent clothes or comfortably closed when he wasn’t near potions.

“Thank you for coming Severus, I am really grateful you could spare the time.” said Dumbledore gratefully his twinkle coming back as he regained his composure after seeing Severus the boy he thought of as a son dressed so casually.

“Mr. Peverell wanted to see his friends before summer began.” said Severus flippantly enjoying the twinkle-less eyes staring at him put out. Dumbledore did not like being reminded that the carpet had been pulled from under his feet thank you very much.

“I see” said Dumbledore sadly “Coffee? Lemon drop? Cake? Biscuit?” he gestured to the large tray on his table, the pots spelled to stay warm and food fresh. Which only lasted around five hours before it wore off and couldn’t be applied again.

“I shall” said Severus smoothly, taking a mug of strong black coffee. Jamaican blend he loved it more than any others, he also picked up a few chocolate digestives. He then proceeded to relax back, if he was going to be here he might as well get comfortable. Although he was a tad worried about his mother, being alone in that flat by herself. There were Death Eaters roaming around freely now, trying to impress the Dark Lord once more. He didn’t want them to stumble upon his mother; it would be hard pressed to deny that she wasn’t his mother if they saw her. Severus had known from a young age that he got his looks from his mother, especially the undeniably pale skin which irritated him to no end.

“Did you know what he was going to say last night?” asked Dumbledore quietly, after swallowing
his lemon tart. He was undeniably fond of anything to do with lemon; he specially loved those Muggle sweets called Lemon Drops and skittles. Thankfully most packets seemed to have more lemon than any other kind which delighted the old man to no end.

“Some of it.” admitted Severus drinking his coffee, one it was down near the bottom he dipped in his chocolate digestive and ate a bit. Repeating it a few times then wiping the crumbs away as he watched Dumbledore emotionless.

“Why did you let it come out like that?” asked Dumbledore, he hadn’t meant to whine really, he hadn’t but damn it he had. Didn’t Severus realize Nick was important in the future, not only would he defeat Voldemort but he would also give hope to millions of people in those dark times. Not only that but with Nick by his side, him guiding the boy more Order members would join and they would actually have a chance to defeat Voldemort. He had to get Severus to see that, unfortunately the damage had been done and he didn’t think there was anything he could do. He had seen the paper this morning, everything, every word that had been said was reported - even after he had sent the students away. It baffled him, he knew his staff would not have told, or at least he assumed so.

“Harry needed it; he’s kept it in for so long it was going to come out explosively one way or another. I wanted it somewhere I could keep an eye on him and make sure nothing went to far.” explained Severus refilling his cup and sitting back watching Dumbledore contemplate that.

“I had to stop Nick from trying to press charges.” sighed Dumbledore.

Severus snorted in amusement “Doesn’t the boy realize what hold Harry has over them?” asked Severus incredulously.

“He does now.” said Dumbledore cautiously.

“And his reaction?” asked Severus genuine curiosity splashed across his face.

“He stomped out the room screaming!” chimed in Phineas Nigellus Black a former Headmaster of Hogwarts.

Severus quickly smothered his amusement at Dumbledore’s cross look.

“He was understandably upset!” hissed Dumbledore at the portrait.

“Indeed the knowledge that Harry can leave them moneyless and nameless must have left a foul taste in his mouth.” the sour man was grinning behind his cup. Harry was the Peverell heir; the Potter’s were Peverell’s under a different name. It was their direct descendants, basically what he was - was the heir to the Potters his own parents and siblings. Potter really should have kept a closer eye on his vaults and properties, also making sure the goblin assigned to your accounts liked you helped too. If they had liked James they would have been ‘obliged’ to inform him. As it stood the goblin hadn’t told them, which told Severus he didn’t care about the goblins. Severus had a good relationship with his goblin, and that’s the way it would remain. Not that he would have to ever worry about anyone doing that to him, he was essentially the last of his line. His mother had been cut off, she didn’t have a vault, and she hadn’t received anything from her parents. The Prince’s hadn’t forgiven her for leaving, but they were willing to give it to their half blood grandson, which Severus had believed it more to do with not wanting the Ministry to get it or some really distant relative. Of course he ensured his mother had enjoy money to do her, he had told her to buy something out a house, manor whatever she wanted. She had picked a two bedroom flat with a shop to boot, and she had adamantly made her own money.

“Can you ensure that doesn’t happen?” asked Dumbledore quietly. Not only that but he wanted to
ask Severus why he hadn’t told him he knew Harry. Why had he kept it secret from him all this
time? Was that where Harry had been going? To Severus’ it did make sense really because Harry
was admittedly good at Potions despite his grades.

“Harry Peverell is an emancipated fourteen year old, who will be fifteen in a matter of months. He
is as independent as they come; no doubt you realized the extent last night. If I tell the boy not to
he would go and do it just to spite them. Not that I ever would because I do not care for the Potter’s
Albus, and I never will.” said Severus honestly.

“How long have you known Harry…outside of Hogwarts I mean” clarified Dumbledore seeing
Severus frowning in confusing. Severus took a deep drink of coffee before he answered
Dumbledore.

“He came back to my mother’s flat…three days after he had been ‘killed’” sneered Severus his lips
curled up in disgust at the thought of Nick Potter. Dumbledore flinched as if he had been struck; he
seemed to shrink in on himself it was almost like something had just occurred to the older man.
“Tortured, bleeding and half dead, I spent the night healing him, he’s just gotten better.”

Dumbledore looked queasy, torture never had sat well with Albus Dumbledore he didn’t like
hearing about it. It was his option that he didn’t like hearing about it because he is allowing it.
Dumbledore no doubt felt like he was letting it happen for ‘The Greater Good’ as he liked to
sprout. Well it wasn’t Dumbledore that actually had to do any dirty work it had been him. He was
just grateful his trial had been too public, or he would have had to return once more.

“He was tortured?” gasped Dumbledore his face pale, he looked a little sick if Severus was honest.

“Indeed, even now he still shakes a little he had been under the Cruciatus curse for a long time.”
said Severus as if they were discussing the weather. He wasn’t about to censor himself, and let
Dumbledore feel all uppity. He was telling Dumbledore the facts and hoping he would give Harry
a break. He had noticed that it was Harry this Harry that since he had arrived in this office. He
knew Harry wouldn’t be surprised; nothing seemed to truly surprise the teenager anymore.

“I see” said Dumbledore swallowing thickly. He put down the cake he had been holding on to and
pushed his plate away. He suddenly didn’t want to eat anyone as the true implications on what
Harry went through for three days were brought to light.

“Mmmhmm” said Severus finishing his cup and putting it down he wasn’t hungry himself
anymore.

“Was it true about the apprenticeship?” asked Dumbledore his voice strained.

“Yes, your teachers are pathetic; I won’t let Harry suffer because one of his teachers had a vendetta
against him. You will notice that ironically enough Nick gets Exceeded Expectation in all potion
assessments whereas Harry gets Troll…in first year it was the other way around. Just remember
when it comes to Nick Potters’ O.W.L.s do not be surprised or shocked to find he does
inadequately.” scorned Severus. He had a reason for loathing Nick, he was absolutely dreadful in
potions, had blown enough of them up.

“Now Severus…there’s no need to insult him.” soothed Dumbledore.

“No? He left his own brother to die…who by the way was only three feet from him. You cannot
say it’s a lie he was looking practically straight at you and James Potter when he confessed. Even if
it wasn’t the case he was looking me in the eye when he told me what happened.” said Severus
abruptly angry deep in his voice.

"We need him Severus don't you agree?" asked Dumbledore his eyes wide again.

“No? He’s a coward and if the world relies on this boy then god help us we are screwed. He left his own brother just to save his own neck! His own bloody brother! You think he won’t do it again and again?” scoffed Severus grimacing in disgust at just the thought of Nick bloody Potter. He truly loathed the loathsome, disgusting cowardly little cockroach and was glad to knowing that… the idiot wasn’t responsible for the wizarding world. He had meant every word he said to Dumbledore, being misleading but telling the truth nonetheless. He had promised Harry he wouldn’t tell, and until the child is ready it was a promise he was willing to keep. It would keep Harry safe until it was time; no one cares if Harry gets trained so he could train him in whatever he liked. Without people watching like hawks no doubt that’s what was going to happen to Nick Potter now.

“How are you going to cope with an apprentice and teaching Nick?” asked Dumbledore.

“What?” asked Severus choking on his own air and spit utterly shocked. After everything he had just said Dumbledore had turned around and asked him that. He sometimes wondered if Dumbledore was all there, and right now he was beginning to believe he wasn’t.

“Nick will be getting trained for this war…during the summer here at Hogwarts. Filius and Minerva have already agreed. No one is better at Defence than you, he might also need taught about counter charms on true Dark Arts” said Dumbledore, he didn’t realize Severus didn’t want to do this, not now not anymore. He was just about to be turned down again within a matter of days, and he wasn’t going to be happy about it at all.

“I’m sorry Albus but what does that have to do with me?” asked Severus incredulously.

“You promised to help…you made a vow” said Dumbledore taken aback.

“I did, to help in any way I can to protect the boy who lived even if it meant my death. Something I am willing to do but I cannot teach the boy, it would interfere with my vow because I’d want to kill the brat!” sneered Severus. No names had been mentioned, so without even knowing he had been violating the vow. Nick wasn’t the savior; he wasn’t supposed to be protecting him it was Harry he was supposed to be protecting. Which made everything all the easier for him, it was just making sure that Dumbledore didn't learn the truth in the progress.

“Kill? You don’t feel that negatively about him surely?” spluttered Dumbledore his half moon glasses were perched dangerously low on his nose. He didn’t even think about pushing them up he was too busy just wondering what on earth had happened to the world.

“Albus…aren’t you listening to a damn word I have to say?” sighed Severus in exasperation.

“Well…yes.” admitted Dumbledore slumping in defeat, he would just have to teach Nick himself then.

“Good, then we are finished, yes I will be taking Harry on as an apprentice, and no I won’t be teaching Nick Potter. I will help keep the boy alive, nothing more nothing less; the boy who lived won’t perish. Now if you will excuse me I believe my apprentice will be waiting on me.” said Severus standing up wrapping his cloak tightly around him before stalking out.

As Severus walked out, he passed the Great Hall as all people would; much to his amusement James Potters supported a black nose still bruised. He wondered why Poppy had felt the need to
continue his punishment. Judging by his sour mood and the look of the hose it had been healed the crude Muggle way, or er, rather pushed back into place. A sadistic smirk broke out across his features as he walked away, James did see him as his face twisted in shock, anger and disgust.

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Later that night Harry lay in his bed mulling over that days events, Fleur as soon as she had seen him had reverted to apologizing in both English and French. It was a good twenty minutes before he managed to reassure her he didn’t blame her. Asking if he could keep in touch with her had calmed her down and finally reassured her he truly didn’t hold her to blame. Luna had hugged him for half an hour, just about choking him to start with until Viktor pulled her off eventually. Once the ‘I’m glad you didn’t die’ speeches were done with they had all sat at the lake and he had told them his story minus the boy who lived stuff. Harry had been speechless to learn that Karkaroff had disappeared suddenly from the radar. It was a good job one of the Drumstrang students knew how to control the boat so they could get home.

Viktor’s goodbye had been bittersweet, as much as he would have liked to have stayed with Harry he couldn’t. He had a Quidditch career which didn’t see him in any place long enough. He travelled all over the world, and it was only going to get more hectic now that he had finished school. When he wasn’t playing he confessed that he wanted to spend some time with his family. He did promise to keep in touch and gave him a two way book, so no owls would be killed (by exhaustion) flying to and from England and Bulgaria. They had known it was going to be this way from the beginning, but Viktor had promised to visit. He had told Harry not to wait, to find someone who could be with him properly the way he needed. Viktor had been happy for Harry when he said he had become an apprentice anyway and they wouldn’t have seen each other much.

Harry wanted to concentrate on his apprenticeship anyway, he had plenty of time to settle down once he passed it…or at least he hoped so. If that prophecy was anything it seemed like he was the one that was going to have to defeat Voldemort. It wasn’t a comforting thought by far, having people in his life that he loved - ignoring the prophecy wasn’t an option.

Once they were back ‘home’ he had put his stuff away, Harry was completely chuffed to bits with his new trunk. His owl hooted from the corner of his room, and Harry smiled softly. There were few people he loved, his beloved owl was one of them, Eileen was another, Luna, Cedric, Fleur and Viktor were the others. Severus was growing on him fast, but only because he always said what he thought and because he reminded Harry of Eileen.

Harry’s thoughts as he slipped into bed were about the trial; Madam Bones had come to visit him. Eileen had been with him, Severus had left half an hour before she came. He had left with a bunch of letters, claiming he had potions to send out. Harry was thankful Eileen was there, Madam Bones seemed very stern and a no nonsense sort of woman. Not that he was particularly intimidated, or felt the need to rely on someone he was very independent but it wasn’t a tea party. He was sharing memories with her, and showing her what happened to him during his captivity.

Madam Bones had looked sick and shaken with what she had seen, Macnair was a Ministry employee. Lucius Malfoy was on the board of governors a very influential man, who wouldn’t get out of this. She knew good and well people couldn’t display emotion under the imperious curse. Sure it left no residue that it had been applied, but there were ways especially viewing it through a pensieve. Since Harry was very willing to do so she was going to see a trial set forth immediately.

Harry had been ecstatic with that news.

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“Alastor!” shouted Madam Bones, Alastor Moody was the best Auror the Ministry had ever had. He had brought in many Death Eaters during his reign as Head of the Auror division. After being caught of guard by a Death Eater no less he had wanted back in, more to prove himself than anything else. Fudge had hired him on the spot just yesterday, and he was already back to work. He was mostly in charge of the new recruits, and training them as well for what was to come.

“Aye?” barked the man in question his eye whirling around fast. His eye was very useful to him, had been over the years too. It stopped anyone being able to spy on him, it could see through walls, doors down corridors it was very handy to have.

“I’ve got a job for you,” Madam Bones said a smirk on her face, Alastor frowned deep in thought. He had never seen Madam Bones with any sort of emotion on her face least of all a smirk. It must be big - he had no idea just how big until she said it and his mind went blank. “I want you to bring in Malfoy, Avery and Macnair for being a Death Eater and using unforgivables and the Dark Arts.”

“What?” breathed Moody stunned. He had of course tried his hardest to get scum like Malfoy off the street during the last way. He had been beyond furious that the Ministry had brought that he had been ‘Under the imperious curse’ all along. He knew some had been but the likes of Malfoy the idea was just laughable to say the least.

“You heard” she said her smirk gone her face emotionless once more.

“Do we even have the appropriate evidence? Because if he walks again…that will be it” said Moody, his face twisting at the thought of the bastard getting off once more. It would make his day to see scum like that in Azkaban; it would be well worth coming back for anyway lets just put it that way.

“Pensieve memories” said Madam Bones her lips quivering in what could only be described as excitement. Madam Bones hated Death Eaters; they had killed her entire family. Mother, father, sister, brother the only one that had survived was her niece whom she was raising as her own. She hadn’t believed that Malfoy was under the imperious any more than Alastor had.

“Brilliant!” cried the Auror making Amelia jump almost out of her skin.

“Well you have work to do, so I shall see myself out,” said Amelia Bones, handing him the paper - the permission to arrest those three on charges.

“Shacklebolt! Dawson! Smith! Get out here” barked Moody his body quivering with anticipation.

“What’s up?” asked the smooth tones of Kingsley Shacklebolt as he entered the room. He was without a doubt the tallest Auror in the division. He was also a force to be reckoned with extremely powerful.

“We have new arrests to make” said Moody handing over the three pieces of paper. It was proper paper shaped parchment.

“You are joking right?” asked Smith gawping at the paper as if he couldn’t believe his eyes.

Moody just glaring at him in distain. Smith was a good dueller but very bloody mouthy, which Moody was determined to get out of him. He had a son if Moody recalled correctly, Zacharias Smith, Huffelpuff at Hogwarts. The way Smith spoke of him no doubt he was just as bloody mouthy as his father.

“Macnair is here, it’s just getting to the other two that will be difficult” sneered Moody.
“Will I get Stutler?” asked Shacklebolt, he was a curse and ward breaker the best there was. Or rather the second best in Shacklebolt’s opinion, Bill Weasley was better but he worked for Gringotts.

“No, hopefully we won’t need him” grunted Moody.

Needless to say it wasn’t long before the three Death Eaters had been arrested, sitting uncomfortably in the cells in the Ministry of magic. Not even his contacts could help him now, not with a warrant been issued for his arrest. Not even Cornelius Fudge had the power to free him; it was down to the Wizengamont.

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Harry was having the weirdest dream of his life, he was walking past doors. One kept catching his attention, when he tried to open it he found he couldn’t. Then his thoughts would revolve around getting the door open and getting inside. Just as he woke up scar blazing with pain he saw a sphere glass looking object.

Rolling out of his bed breathing heavily, he walked out of his room rubbing his scar. He went into the fridge and got himself a glass of milk, hoping it would help soothe him. He had just placed the glass in the middle of his forehead when a voice spoke.

“Is it sore?” asked Severus watching the teenager with those obsidian eyes of his.

“Yes” sighed Harry sitting down drinking his glass of milk wincing slightly.

“What were you thinking about before it began?” asked Severus curiously, his potions journal forgotten. It was twelve o’clock at night and he had just been about to finish the article and go to bed. This potion journal was actually from the Masters at the Potions conference academy. He never visited when they were having his meeting but did buy the monthly prescription of it. It always inspired him in creating new potions, or helped him make one better at least.

“I was sleeping…” said Harry looking pensive.

“Then it began burning?” questioned Severus. There were many cursed scars but no one knew what exactly a killing curse type scar could do or would do come to that. So this was a new territory and the fact he was getting to see the affects of it was rather intriguing to say the least. Potion ideas were already beginning to emerge to stop the pain dull it to a tingle at least.

“No…it started after I began having this really weird dream,” said Harry thoughtfully “About this long corridor…just as I woke up the image of a sphere made my scar burn even more.”

“A sphere?” asked Severus his eye full of intensity his skin going pale.

“Yeah, a glass looking one” said Harry nodding his head.

“That wasn’t your dream” said Severus his eyes wide.

Harry blinked in confusion what on earth did he mean by that.

“I told you about Voldemort’s obsession with gaining the prophecy didn’t I? Well he tried many times to get his Death Eaters to enter the Ministry to retrieve it. One almost succeeded, he went insane and resides in St. Mungo’s. No one other than the person it’s for can enter the Ministry to retrieve it…Voldemort never worked up the courage to collect it. He was too terrified he would be caught I always assumed…the Ministry is very well protected. Which isn’t like him at all, he
doesn’t give us reasons as to why he did what he did” shrugged Severus helplessly.

“How do people know who it’s for?” asked Harry cautiously.

“Their names are on it” said Severus sardonically. Harry paled drastically at that, only then he thought about his own words and realized the boy had a right to be as pale as a dead corpse.

“Then he will know!” gasped Harry his green eyes wide with fear, not fear of death but ironically enough fear of discovery.

“He will” said Severus honestly.

“I can’t let that happen,” said Harry his heart hammering in his rib cage. “We must retrieve it.” it also helped that he was undeniably curious to know the actual contents of the prophecy.

“You will have the opportunity, when you go to the Ministry for the trial, we shall arrive twenty minutes earlier than anticipated. You can sneak off to retrieve it I suggest once you hear it you break it.” said Severus soothing the frazzled teenager. It was then Severus realized just how hard it was for the teenager. He didn’t seem to care about anything other than keeping the fact he was the one that defeated Voldemort a secret. He knew the boy wasn’t scared of death, he didn’t seem scared of Voldemort - he was scared of the repercussions of the news coming out. The news that he in fact had been the one to destroy Voldemort when he was one year and three months old.

“Good” sighed Harry relief flooding his emerald eyes.

“Why are you so scared about people knowing?” asked Severus asking the question that had niggled him since he had found out. Since Harry had begged him to keep quiet about it, he had been serious though if Harry hadn’t wanted to learn from him he would have told Dumbledore at least. Whether he had believed him or not the consequences would have been upon him. Thankfully he hadn’t had to take that route, he would train the true boy who lived for this upcoming battle of darkness. He would make sure he survived and lived to tell the real tale of what happened. Severus had no doubt sooner or later it would come out, people would find out. He just hoped he could get Harry used to the idea for some reason he loathed the idea of others knowing. He must after keeping it a secret for thirteen years of his life.

“Do you know I saw a Boggart in the maze before anything began happening?” said Harry, seemly out of the blue to Severus who frowned in confusion. Harry was staring at him with those eyes of his, so young and vulnerable but so damn old looking. Severus just cocked his eyebrow in curiously not blessing Harry with a verbal answer.

“I was confused at first… I only saw me…but I was grinning shouting for everyone to hear I was the boy who lived…that silly grin that my brother likes to put on when he’s getting his picture taken… it was then I realized it was a Bogart” sighed Harry warily.

Severus eyebrows had disappeared into his hair in disbelief it seemed to him to be a very childish fear. Then again it wasn’t as stupid as something like spiders or cockroaches and the likes he had seen before. He didn’t understand Harry’s fear; he truly didn’t would it be that bad if it got out? It seemed to be. Then again Voldemort was back, and if he found out his first thing would be to kill Harry. Then again he was already a target, but Severus knew better than anyone that it would turn even more vicious if he found out Harry was the one destined to bring about his downfall.

Especially considering Harry had killed Nagini and Pettigrew, apparated out of a warded manor and survived three days of torture. He had seen grown men break in less time, by any of the Death Eaters hands.
“I see, would you like another dreamless sleeping potion?” asked Severus smoothly, indicating that the conversation was over with and to get to bed without demanding or even saying.

“No thanks, I should be fine,” said Harry, getting up he washed his glass and put it back before going to bed slipping into his room with a very quiet “Goodnight sir.” and all was quiet. Severus went to his own bed wondering what was going to happen in the coming summer.

He had no plans on staying here permanently; he had his own manor, Prince Manor. One with a brilliant Potions lab, and a decent bed in it and that’s where Harry would be coming. He hoped perhaps to convince his mother to move in as well, it would be much safer than the wards on the flat. Not that the wards on the flat were by any means inadequate but the wards at Prince Manor were older and more secure.

Once summer was over he would ask the boy what he wanted to do, go to Hogwarts and work on his apprenticeship during summers or just full time apprenticeship. Severus couldn’t deny that he hoped he chose full time, Severus had a lot to teach him with Voldemort back it was obviously critical to learn everything he could. Hogwarts wasn’t going to give him that, he mind also circled over the prophecy, which kept popping up at the most annoying times. He couldn’t deny he was curious about the full contents of the Prophecy he had heard all those long years ago.

Another thing he was unable to believe - that Harry Peverell didn’t blame him for how his life had turned out. If he hadn’t overheard, the Potters wouldn’t have had to go into hiding. Pettigrew would never have had the chance to betray them and Harry would have had a normal childhood. Then again Severus should have known better than to think destiny didn’t get its own way.
Invisible

Chapter 18

Harry's Summer and Eileen Thinks on Things

They were now at Prince Manor, and Severus had been showing Harry around, ending at the room he'd decided would be the boy's. Earlier on, he had Flooed to the Manor and asked the House Elves to prepare the room, which really only meant airing it and making sure everything was there and working.

"This is your room for the duration of your stay," said Severus smoothly, opening the door and showing Harry in. The fourteen-year-old gasped, his breath catching in his throat as he walked in to a room which was easily the size of Eileen's whole flat. The room was very light and airy. Straight ahead, two sets of massive doors led out to a huge balcony, and to one side there was a door leading to a large, spacious bathroom, which was done in a very light lavender and white color. A shower was attached to the wall where the white tub with gold taps was, and the sink and toilet were the same coloring. The bedroom itself was done in neutral colors, with pale cream colored walls, a toffee colored, lush shag rug, dark wood furniture, and cream colored bedding. The furniture consisted of the bed, a nightstand, a large bookshelf, a double wardrobe, a chest of drawers with five pull-out drawers, a small cupboard for books and such, a dressing table, a study desk and chair, a couch and matching cushioned chairs, and a coffee table. On the desk was all sorts of stationary, parchment, quills, and everything he could need to start working on his Apprenticeship, and the bookshelf had plenty of space to put all his books, which pleased him greatly.

"It's beautiful!" said Harry, his green eyes sparkling with awe. Even his brother didn't have a room this good, and Nick had the biggest room in the house after making their parents swap with him. However, for some reason Potter Manor wasn't as extravagant as this place. Harry had always had the smallest room in Potter Manor, and even Roxy had been furious, even at her young age, when Nick actually managed to get his parents to swap rooms.

"I'm glad you approve," said Severus dryly, although it heartened him to see a Potter (even if he wasn't one now) so humble. Harry was different from his family and always had been, he had noticed it right from the start. He didn't know why he had given this one a chance, but he was forever grateful for it. Now he had someone to pass his potions knowledge on to, someone whom he could maybe one day see doing great things.

Harry had done well in Potions while his brother hadn't, and his teacher hadn't cared for his twin either. In Harry's young mind, it was his chance to shine even just for a brief moment. He wanted to prove he wasn't Nick and he could do well. The fact that Severus Snape hadn't been nasty caused Harry to assume he had indeed proven himself. From that point on, he'd read all the books he could, wanting to be noticed, even if it was only by Professors Snape and Flitwick, then later just Flitwick because Snape wasn't teaching anymore.
"I do! It's great, thank you, Sir!" said Harry enthusiastically.

"You are welcome. Before I forget, here is your old trunk from school," said Severus, taking out a very small, rectangular box. Setting it on the floor, he spelled it back to its normal size. He'd remembered the child not having his old Hogwarts trunk and had Flooed to Dumbledore's office, where he had requested the possessions of the now-proven-alive student, somewhat relieved the old man had sworn he hadn't read the magically locked diary. Regardless, he had used a Summoning Charm, just to make sure everything of Harry's ended up in the trunk, before leaving.

"Oh, I had forgotten about that!" said Harry almost sheepishly.

Severus smirked sardonically. "I shall leave you to get settled in, then. We aren't doing anything today, so you can spend the rest of the day getting familiar with the grounds and Manor," said the Potions Master smoothly. "If a door is locked, kindly do not go inside that room, though the rest, I have no issue with you stepping inside to examine." With that instruction, Severus knew the boy wouldn't go in his personal room, as he'd locked the door to it before fetching Harry back to Prince Manor, knowing he intended to let his new Apprentice look around mostly freely.

He had asked his mother if she wanted to move in, but unfortunately, she had adamantly refused. Too many bad memories were in this place for her to ever be comfortable. It was the reason Severus never went near Spinner's End, so he knew what she meant and dropped the subject for the time being. Instead, he had just made sure the wards were in tip-top shape and left it at that. She hadn't been happy about having to get a new assistant, but she was too happy about Harry finally being happy to truly care about losing him.

"Yes, Sir," said Harry, nodding his head. He was now officially an Apprentice and that was the appropriate response he was supposed to give. Plus, he had been his teacher during his first year, so it wasn't hard to slip into that role.

"Good," said Severus, nodding his head curtly before closing the door with a soft click as he went down to the dungeons.

Despite the fact that Reese was the Potions Master at Hogwarts, Severus still supplied Poppy with the potions needed for the Hospital Wing as she didn't trust anyone other than Severus to supply them. He got paid for it, the funds coming out of Poppy's budget for the year to run the Hospital Wing to buy potions, diagnostic wands, and other such things. Each and every potion she used, even things like torn sheets, had to be marked down so it was accounted for. The most expensive thing she had to buy was probably the Skele-Gro, as it was both hard to make and illegal for anyone but the manufacturer to produce, so she compensated by having a friend who gave her discounts provide most of the rest of the potions she needed. A Potions Apprentice could learn to make Skele-Gro, but only for personal use. Severus had already learned the process and intended on teaching Harry as well. If anything, it was more complicated than Veritaserum, which uninformed people found hard to believe.

For the moment, the man was going to brew a couple of the hardest of the Hospital Wing's potions, while Harry would start the next morning with the easiest ones. If the child could recognize Dreamless Sleep Potion, perhaps he had already made it. He would find out soon enough, though whether Harry had or not, he still had to make everything starting from the bottom and working his way to the top. Yes, he was even going to have to re-make the Potion to Cure Boils. It helped the student become more adept at it, ensuring they could brew it in any circumstances, including brewing multiple cauldrons simultaneously.
The boy had indeed spent the evening wandering around the Manor and grounds, finding a patio and yard space right outside the back, then a garden for some common potions ingredients past the yard space which was neatly tended for decorative purposes. Past the garden hedges were a storage barn for outdoor tools and extra livery gear and a stable with horses and a herd of skeletal, winged, horse-like creatures Harry knew to be Thestrals with a fenced vegetable garden between the two. Beyond those was some forested land with riding trails where more potions ingredients could be found, and grazing land for the herds.

The manor itself was beautiful. The foyer was huge with a walk-in closet on both sides to store coats, cloaks, and footwear for all weather and one main stair leading up to the second floor, which led to another stair to a third floor. The room to the left of the foyer was a combined formal dining hall and small ballroom with a small stage for social functions while down the hall from there was the entrance to there was a three story tall atrium (or a glorified greenhouse) for fresh potions ingredients used year-round and some herbs for cooking. To the right of the foyer was the conservatory sitting room, which had a Grand Piano and many other musical instruments from around the world, most of which Harry didn't recognize. Next to the conservatory was a sitting room done mostly in black and white which had a fireplace connected to the Floo Network, and at the end of the hall on that side of the manor was the smaller, family dining room. In the middle of the manor's first floor, behind the foyer stairs, was the large and functional kitchen, where House Elves were pottering around, and the servant's quarters were just past the kitchen, at the rear of the building. Of course, there was a huge potions lab and a pantry/cold room in the dungeons, across the hall from one another, and the entrance to the basement level was in the hall next to the atrium's entrance.

On the second floor, above the formal dining hall, there was a large, two story library followed by the study, and the rest of the floor on that side of the central hall was taken up by the atrium. At the far end of the hall was a locked room. Above the conservatory was a fair-sized sitting room, and there were three bedrooms on that side of the hall, one of which was now Harry's. The third floor had a general storage room between the space taken by the library and the atrium, and on the other side of the hall, there was another family sitting room followed by three bedrooms and a fourth at the end of the hall (above the locked room), all of them designed as guest rooms.

While looking around, Harry had noticed Prince Manor didn't have portraits of the relatives, like at Potter Manor. James had taken all of them down because Lily hadn't liked the way they spoke to her, making the boy wonder if his Professor had been the one to take the ones in Prince Manor down, though by the way Eileen spoke of them, it was likely he had.

It saddened him to actively realize he could see the Thestrals now, which forced him to acknowledge the fact that he'd killed someone and 'seen death' when he'd killed Nagini and Pettigrew, even if they were sorry excuses for lives. On the other hand, it didn't surprise Harry at all to see the potions lab, as his new Potions Master, Severus Snape, sure did love his potions. Eileen was pretty much the same, but couldn't hover around potions all day, being too old and frail for it now.

The next morning, Harry was up at six o'clock, which was even before Severus, and the dark clad man was an early riser. Though, he wasn't up for long before Severus joined him in the study; he had just had time to finish writing a letter to Luna and had used the journal to write to Viktor.

"Did you sleep well?" asked Severus as he took a seat across the desk from Harry. He was already dressed in black dress trousers and a black, long sleeved t-shirt. He hardly ever bared his arms, mostly because of the shame of having the Dark Mark on his left arm, so it said a lot about how
comfortable he already was with the boy.

"I did, thank you very much…It's a beautiful place," smiled Harry softly.

The bitterness Severus had seen when Harry first woke up in his mother's flat was gone. Having gotten the anger out of his system and some revenge on those who had hurt him seemed to have done wonders for his mental state. It was a rather strange to Severus, who could hold a grudge forever and a day. He knew he wouldn't have gotten over anyone leaving him to die, never mind so soon. It wasn't good holding on to grudges, but for him, it was damned hard to let go of them. He was glad Harry was mature enough to get over it, to not let it rule his life, as that path was a long and lonely road to take—he should know, he had taken it. All a person needed to do was look at his left arm to realize it.

"This is your schedule for the time being," said Severus, handing it over.

Harry looked it over and nodded his acceptance. At seven thirty in the morning, he would have breakfast, and from that time until nine he would be reading. From nine to ten, he would be quizzed on what he had read, and from ten to noon, he would be brewing before having an hour for lunch. After eating, he would continue Potions for an hour, and from two until five, he would practice Defense. From five on, he would get to spend the rest of his day doing whatever he wished. He noticed his Sundays were half days and mostly Potions, which he didn't mind at all, and the rest of the day, he was allowed to do whatever he wished as long as he informed Severus of where he was going.

"I assume that nod means it is acceptable," commented Severus, arching an eyebrow enquiringly.

"Yes, Sir," said Harry, nodding eagerly.

"Very well. It's six thirty now. Let's have breakfast and get started," said Severus.

"Great!" beamed Harry, so they headed to the dining room.

They were half way through breakfast when the owls came, delivering letters, newspapers, requests, and other such things. Surprisingly—or not so surprisingly, given the circumstances—Harry had two from the Ministry. Draining the last of his orange juice (Severus hated pumpkin juice and refused to buy it), he opened the letters as Severus did the same with his own after wiping his mouth with a napkin.

"I've got four seats on the Wizengamot, one each for the three Peverell brothers and the Potter one," said Harry in surprise, which made Severus think Harry hadn't truly understood what he was doing by disowning himself and taking up the mantle of the Peverell name.

"Did you not research everything before you did this?" asked Severus, frowning.

"I did…but I didn't realize how important the Peverells were, I just thought they were my earliest recorded ancestors. I also knew it would make me the head of my family. It helped that I was getting one over James," shrugged Harry indifferently. Severus smothered a smirk at hearing one of James Potter's own children referring to him by his given name.

"It means you can disown the Potters, it means you have a say on the Education Board, and it means you have four seats and votes on the Wizengamot. It's more glamorous than it looks being the head of the family, especially where making money is concerned," lectured Severus quietly.

"I understand, I don't think I'll have to worry about money. I want a job one day, hopefully with Potions. I've wanted this since I was eleven, which was why I got a job when you left and it was
becoming apparent Reese hated me," said Harry softly.

"Indeed," said Severus. He had been eight when he had decided he wanted to brew potions. His mother had shown him everything she had learned, mostly in Defense Against the Dark Arts and the actual Dark Arts as well as Potions. He had only ever brewed two potions before he entered Hogwarts, but knew all the Potions theory and ingredients, front to back and back to front.

Not many eleven-year-olds knew what they wanted to do; Hell, not even most fourteen-year-olds knew, which was why he didn't like the choices for classes being made at all of thirteen years old. He had always told Dumbledore that he felt it was too soon. The electives should be held when the children were older, and they should also be given help in deciding what they liked. Instead, most children just picked the ones they assumed were the easiest ones, like Divination. It didn't give them any help in the future or cause anyone to think kindly of them when they saw electives obviously randomly chosen. He himself would never take on anyone stupid enough to use Divination as one of their electives because almost no professions, and certainly not Potions, required it.

"This one's telling me the trials are from one 'til three…an hour each. Is that enough time for a trial?" asked Harry, taken aback. He had always (obviously wrongfully) assumed it would take days.

"They have the evidence and they will be using Veritaserum. They will be lucky if it takes an hour. Most of the time consists of the Wizengamot trying to decide what to do with them," explained Severus.

"Oh, I suppose so…I guess I do still have lots to learn," sighed Harry.

"You are intelligent for your age, Mr. Peverell, never forget that, or how there is always something more to learn. Even Dumbledore learns something new every day, and he is about one hundred years old," said Severus seriously.

"Thank you," whispered Harry softly, his smile back.

"When is the trial date?" questioned Severus.

"Hum…Tomorrow!" Harry almost exclaimed in disbelief—it wasn't giving anyone any time at all. How inconsiderate of the Ministry to arrange it in such a short time. He just hoped his teacher didn't blame him for his second day being interrupted.

"That's about right. I shall be accompanying you and we shall be retrieving the Prophecy, so we will be going an hour early," said Severus curtly.

Just then, another owl flew through the open window and landed on Harry's chair. It couldn't be Luna as he had just replied to her letter and hadn't even sent it off yet, and it wasn't Fleur's or Cedric's owl, either. As he took the letter with confusion on his face, Severus stopped him from opening it, then preformed a series of tests for spells attached to an object. When they all came up clear, he nodded curtly and returned the obviously unexpected letter. It was better to be safe than sorry by running the tests, even though howlers and dangerous post weren't supposed to be able to get through the wards of Prince Manor, which he was planning to officially rename Snape Manor.

"It's from Black," rasped Harry, his voice hoarse with disbelief.

"Are you alright?" asked Severus softly, wondering if Black was writing harsh things to Harry or if he was begging for forgiveness.
"He has the gall to actually think I'm going to forgive him for all he's done," said the boy, shaking his head as if he was attempting to clear away cobwebs from his mind.

"I see," said Severus, a small part of him glad the boy wasn't going to forgive Black so easily. He hated the man more than James Potter, though maybe now he hated them equally, but back then he had hated Black the most due to the Shrieking Shack incident.

Harry put the letter down and didn't even glance at it as he finished his breakfast, not caring about Black's words. Only when he was finished and had even refilled his glass did he pick the letter up again.

Dear Harry,

This is a difficult letter for me to sit here and write. I saw the Daily Prophet and I have to admit I didn't believe it...That was, until I went over to Hogwarts and spoke to Nick—I asked him a few questions and he admitted everything to be true. I couldn't believe I never realized. What kind of godfather does that make me? Not a very good one, I must say.

I am so sorry, Harry, for not being there and not seeing what you were going through. I was negligent in my duties as a godfather, and I can only hope you can forgive me and will come stay with me. I am still your godfather after all, even if you are emancipated.

Were things as bad as they say in the newspaper? Did they really deny you a chance for a proper education? If it's true, how did you know how to read and write? Some things just don't add up—don't get me wrong, I'm not saying you're lying, but I want to know how you overcame all that alone. I'm currently staying at Grimmauld Place. Please write to me soon. I need to know as soon as possible.

Sirius Black
Your godfather

When Harry finished, he laid it flat on the table, and Severus was able to read it without even picking it up. The Potions Master grimaced at what was written in the letter; it seemed more for Black's piece of mind than for Harry's. He simply wanted to know just how badly he had failed in his duties—in a way, that could be considered a good thing, since it meant he'd have no excuse for making the same mistakes again, but it wasn't good for Harry. Either that or someone had put him up to it, someone like Lupin.

"You should reply to that letter, even if it is to say you do not want to keep in touch. I'd rather not have Black writing to you every day until you respond," said Severus smoothly.

Harry grimaced in disgust at the task he was no doubt going to perform just because Severus had ordered it (Harry knew Severus wasn't asking him, he'd made a statement that basically said he wouldn't be happy if it wasn't done, which made it an order). Severus wasn't used to that type of obedience and found it rather refreshing. Not all children were dunderheads after all, although Harry couldn't exactly be classified as a child. He was soon to be a fifteen-year-old teenager—who were usually worse than children.

The rest of the day had flown by. First, Harry had sent a letter to Black, telling him bluntly that he was, under no circumstances, his godfather and how he didn't want Black in his life. He even threatened him with a Ministry magical restraining order if he didn't leave him alone from then on. After the letters to Black and Luna were sent, they had kept to the schedule Severus had created. Harry had started off his brewing with a simple Potion to Cure Boils. He had expected Harry to
complain, knowing he had and he had been nearly eighteen years old, but instead, the boy seemed quite content to be able to brew anything at all. After the potion was done, Severus had handed him a preservation-spelled bag with the words 'Harry Peverell—Mastery Potions' scrawled on it in stylized text.

Traditionally, Harry would use a preservation spell on at least one vial of every potion he brewed perfectly the first time he brewed it perfectly and put it into the bag. Severus had done the same thing; he still had his small bag with the potions he had brewed during his years as an Apprentice. They were there for novelty, really; he had never used any of them and never planned on doing so. He had also added a vial of each of the potions he had created over the years. Most people would have thought it stupid and a waste of time, but surprisingly, Harry wasn't one of them. He seemed delighted with his new gift and his first perfectly-done Potion to Cure Boils was added to the small bag.

After Potions came Defense, and Harry had surprised him with his knowledge. In all honesty, though, he shouldn't have been surprised as he knew Ravenclaws loved knowledge and books above nearly everything else. Harry was very powerful and had skill in Defense, which was a good thing, and Severus was glad for it. It meant teaching him everything he was going to would be so much easier and wind up in skilled hands. Harry had been extremely exhausted by the time Severus was through with him, so much so that he was almost falling asleep in his pudding. After smothering his amusement, Severus had sent the tired teen to bed.

"Are you ready?" asked Severus the next morning.

"Yes," said Harry. He would be testifying that day, and soon his revenge on his captors would be complete—plus, he would hear the full contents of the Prophecy and know what he was truly up against.

"Good, then we shall depart," nodded Severus.

They Apparated to an alley in the Muggle world, went inside the required telephone booth, and dialed the appropriate numbers. Soon after, they were in the Ministry's underground foyer. Their identification tags slipped through the coin trap before they left the phone booth elevator, so they put them on, reluctantly on Severus' part. The tags read 'Harry Peverell—attending a trial' and 'Severus Snape—escorting Harry Peverell'.

Severus and Harry handed in their wands for verification, then quickly slipped off for their first destination, the Department of Mysteries. When they got to the Department's entrance hall, Severus suddenly grabbed Harry back around the corner, cursing quietly. There was an Order Member guarding the door, so Severus cast a Notice-Me-Not spell on himself and Harry and sent a quick spell at the Order Member, Confounding him briefly as they slipped passed him and entered the room.

"Harry, over here," said Severus quietly, the authority still in his tone. He didn't want to alert the guard to anything, so once he was sure Harry was coming, he sent a silencing spell up.

The Prophecy was there and they had been right about his name being on it.

S.P.T to A.P.W.B.D

Dark Lord
"Why is my new…" asked Harry, bewildered.

"Perhaps it was changed when you were emancipated," suggested Severus. "That was no secret, and those working in the Department of Mysteries are not able to share what they know with others, so this could never reach the public through them."

Slowly, Harry picked up the sphere.

"You have to break it," said Severus, failing to stop sarcasm from leaking out.

Harry just rolled his eyes, obviously not upset with being spoken to in such a way. Taking a deep breath, he glanced at the door before letting the prophecy sphere drop. It made an almighty crash for such a small, glass sphere, and a voice began speaking fairly loudly. It was a good thing Severus had put up a silencing spell.

"The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches…" said the voice of Trelawney. Harry, who had never had her class, didn't realize it was very different from the cold, harsh voice which was speaking.

"Born to those who have thrice defied him…" rasped Trelawney.

Severus' heart was going a mile a minute, as after the next line, he didn't know what it said. The unknown scared and thrilled him, and he felt as if he had just successfully managed to tweak the Wolfsbane Potion all over again. He couldn't have calmed down even if he had been forced to consume a Calming Draught.

"Born as the seventh month dies…"

Nothing could be heard apart from the voice, which surprised both the man and teen. Their hearts were pounding so fast that surely others could hear them, they thought.

"And the Dark Lord shall mark him as his equal…"

Severus' eyes went straight to Harry's lightning bolt scar as Harry reached up and rubbed it. They had obviously both come to the same, and likely right, conclusion, a detail Severus found rather fascinating. Voldemort had put the prophecy in motion by misinterpreting it. Severus wondered if he would have gone after the boy if he had known the entire thing.

"But he will have power the Dark Lord knows not…"

Harry frowned, his forehead wrinkled in confusion.

"And either must die at the hand of the other…for neither can live while the other survives…"

Harry shivered, feeling chills as goosebumps spread over him and dread settled in. Apprehensive green eyes met concerned black ones. Severus had suspected it, but to hear it was another thing altogether. Perhaps it hadn't been the best thing to do, letting the teen hear it...However, he shook off those thoughts. It was best if the boy knew, and also knew what to expect and what was coming. He knew destiny couldn't be cheated, so Harry would either have to kill or be killed. Harry had already killed but this was different. He hadn't set out to kill Nagini and Pettigrew, though it had happened in self-defense. This could be considered self-defense as well, he supposed, and it was now no wonder Dumbledore was training Nick if that was what he knew.
Too bad he was training the wrong one. Severus was suddenly glad he knew what he did, more
determined than ever to ensure that Harry knew what he needed to live. Harry would kill
Voldemort, and Severus would be by his side all the way along, making sure the teenager didn't
falter, ensuring the boy knew he was doing the right thing. Harry had to be confident enough to
ensure he knew he could kill Voldemort. Suddenly, Defense seemed more important than Potions.
Perhaps he would put another hour onto the boy's schedule so he could learn a lot more—all those
extra hours would add up.

"Let's get out of here," suggested Severus, carefully guiding the stunned teenager over to the door.
Taking down the silencing spell, he looked back and saw the sphere melting into the floor, so
nobody would ever hear it again, and Voldemort wouldn't be getting his hands on it. Smug
satisfaction settled over him as he realized he had foiled yet another plan of the Dark Lord's. Using
another Notice-Me-Not and Confunding the Order Member again, they both left the Hall of
Prophecy.

They got back just in time to see everyone entering the courtroom. Severus noticed Dumbledore
was there, so Severus once again pulled Harry aside and explained something to him.

"Do not look Dumbledore in the eye, as he can read your thoughts. I shall teach you Occlumency as
well as everything else planned, just for an hour in the evening, starting with meditation before
bed," explained Severus, mentally adding yet another thing to his ever-growing list to teach Harry.

Harry nodded grimly in understanding to both the advice and the new lesson, then they entered
Courtroom Number Ten, the place where the worst trials took place. Harry saw a lone chair with
shackles attached to it in the middle of the room, seats ten feet from it, and a huge area for the
Wizengamot and 'visitors' to sit at. Dumbledore was sitting next to Madam Bones, talking to her as
Harry stood unsurely in the doorway.

"Mr. Peverell, please have a seat over there," said Minister Fudge, pointing to a seat near
Dumbledore and Madam Bones. Harry nodded curtly, and both Severus and Harry sat down.
Severus ensured he was sitting nearest to Dumbledore.

Avery was dragged in first, looking pale, frightened, and worried, as he should be—he had
expected his lord to help him, but no help had come his way. He knew Malfoy and Macnair were
in similar situations. Avery was seriously worried he would be sent to Azkaban this time. He had
gotten off before, but as soon as he saw Harry, he paled even more, knowing without a doubt that
he was caught this time—for sure. He was secured to the chair with the shackles before the Aurors
let him go.

It was time.

Chapter End Notes

Edited by Snow Leopard Pasha thanks so much for your hard work with this story :)
Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The Trials of Avery, Macnair, and Malfoy

There were around fifty wizards and witches wearing plum colored robes with the letter 'W' stitched on them, ironically enough. The 'W' was gold and didn't go at all with the plum robes—Harry didn't comment on that, though. Fudge was in the middle, Madam Bones to his left and another witch with a pink bow in her hair to his right. The teen didn't have a clue who she was, and to be honest, he didn't really care. Harry had gotten a great deal of pleasure seeing the shackles shaking ominously before wrapping around the terrified wizard. Harry sneered at the old fool, finding him very pathetic now; he wasn't so tough without his wand or two other wizards to back him up, now was he? Avery tried to sneer at Harry, causing the nearly fifteen-year-old to smirk.

"Very well," said Fudge, standing up importantly. "The accused being present let us begin. Are you ready, Percival?"

Harry heard a voice reply in the affirmative and glanced towards it, seeing red hair, freckles, and robes which weren't very good quality. It was a Weasley for sure, even if he did look like he had a banana stuck up his arse. Or was that supposed to be a superior look he sported? Harry wasn't sure, but turned away from him and focused on more important things than Weasley. Professor Snape was sitting next to him, very stiff and resolved. He noticed that Dumbledore was trying to meet both their eyes and Harry looked away, his teacher's warning ringing in his ears. Do not look Dumbledore in the eye; well, he was definitely going to follow Severus' advice. He shuddered at the thought of Dumbledore being able to read his thoughts.

"The trial of Archibald Brian Avery on the tenth of July," said Fudge in a ringing voice. Harry nearly snorted. No wonder the guy preferred being called Avery. He was irritatingly put off by the scratching of the quill Weasley was writing with, so missed the rest of it—not that he had missed much, just the offenses he had committed, when, and where.

"Interrogators: Cornelius Oswald Fudge, Minister for Magic; Amelia Susan Bones, Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement; Delores Jane Umbridge, Senior Undersecretary to the Minister. Court Scribe: Percival Ignatius Weasley. Lawyer for the Defense: Archibald Damien Avery," announced Fudge clearly. With the list done, he pulled out a scroll and cleared his throat. "So, the charges!" continued Fudge, unrolling the scroll of parchment.

"That he did knowingly accept the Dark Mark and become a traitor in the eyes of the Ministry.

"That he did knowingly cast Unforgivables on a minor, in front of two other Wizards at Malfoy Manor.

"That he did knowingly follow You-Know-Who and committed atrocious crimes to and in front of Muggles."
"That he did knowingly lie during his trial thirteen years ago, claiming to be under the Imperius Curse.

"That he did knowingly cast the Dark Arts, buy Dark Arts artifacts and objects, and use those artifacts and objects."

Harry couldn't help but blink at that one…Was it even a different crime from using the Unforgivable on him? He didn't think so, but hey, he didn't care. It would just mean the bastard who hurt him would remain imprisoned for longer. Although what could be longer than fifteen years life imprisonment? Especially with nothing but the Dementors for company?

Alastor Moody had been busy indeed, was all Madam Bones could think as the charges were read. Moody was one she would never piss off; if there was a law the man didn't know, she'd eat her monocle. He proved that by the amount of crimes Avery had been arrested on, and she wondered with some smug amusement how Avery Sr. was going to get his son out of this one. She didn't think he could.

Avery Senior was sixty years old and had gone to school with Tom Riddle. He was one of Voldemort's Death Eaters and had raised his son to follow him as well. When Voldemort had 'died', he had managed to get his son off thirteen years ago by claiming his son was under the Imperius Curse. Unfortunately, Avery Senior wasn't much use to Voldemort now, as an old man. Unlike Voldemort, he hadn't preserved himself in a diary or made himself immortal. The only way he could help his 'Lord' now was to (try to) get his son off again.

Fortunately for some and unfortunately for most back then, the potion known as Veritaserum hadn't been created. It was a brilliant potion and Bones bowed to Snape in respect for making it. It was a potion which would save everyone a lot of time and heartache. As much as she herself would have liked to have seen everyone sentenced to Azkaban who bore the Dark Mark in the past, they couldn't do that, just in case there really was someone who had been placed under the Imperius. This time, far fewer were going to either get away with their crimes or be punished unjustly, although there were laws regarding the potion's use, much to her distaste. There was enough evidence to actually use it on Avery without suffering ramifications.

"You are Archibald Brian Avery of number twenty five Newbattle Manor, Newbattle Road, Newbattle are you not?" asked Fudge, glaring at the man over his parchment.

"Yes," admitted the bound man, none of his worry showing unless a person knew what to look for.

"You did put Harry James Peverell under the Cruciatus Curse?" asked Fudge.

"Wha…no!" cried Avery adamantly.

"He think's he's still a Potter—he's obviously not been reading the paper," snorted Severus in disgusted amusement, eyes focused intently on Avery's.

Fudge decided to overlook Snape using Legillimency in his courtroom, particularly since it was only the accused he was using it on, and it saved them the time of trying to figure out why the man looked honestly confused. Snape was very intimidating, and he was just glad he knew the man had been a spy for Dumbledore. Dumbledore had proven it through Pensieve memories after Snape had been sentenced to Azkaban. There wasn't any doubt the man had been Dumbledore's spy, but unfortunately, the trial had been too public for him to return to spying on You-Know-Who.

"Harry James Peverell is better known as Harry James Potter…Do you deny these charges?" asked Fudge.
"I do," said Avery, his voice a little weak and croaking.

"Do you consent to using Veritaserum to prove your innocence beyond doubt?" demanded Fudge.

"Request denied. Despite the fact that my son has nothing to hide, the effects of Veritaserum haven't yet been fully tested for safety," said Avery Senior, stepping in.

"Then it's a good thing we have Mr. Peverell's memories, isn't it?" asked Fudge, his voice oily and extremely buttery as he enjoyed himself.

Both Averys paled drastically. Pensieve memories had been around for a very long time, so they couldn't claim any reason or way to negate their use. It was fortunate people needed permission to extract memories, and that they hadn't left anyone behind who could consent to it back in the day. Unfortunately for them, Harry had a thirst for survival which meant there was now a living witness.

"Surely there's no need for that?" asked Avery Sr., looking quite weak and defeated.

That had the Wizengamot muttering darkly, staring at Avery Senior as if they hadn't seen him before. The Pensieve memories were only played for the Wizengamot. The others in the room did not get to see them, which included Mr. Fudge, Weasley, Umbridge, and all the other wizards and witches who were watching it from the sidelines, which happened to include quite a few reporters. The Wizengamot were away for forty-five minutes, immersed in the small stone bowl while everyone waited and spoke quietly.

Madam Bones was the only other person who would ever see them, as she had watched them before getting warrants to have the men arrested. Moody had read her report and written the charges up, not only with what she had written down but what he had noticed in Avery's manor with that eye of his.

When the Wizengamot came back, they were looking sick, furious, adamant, and resolved. Most were quite old, so Harry was actually rather glad they weren't going to have to use the Pensieve again (they didn't have to, as they had seen all the memories). It had well and truly been what felt like the longest hour of his life, having everyone sitting there staring at him, sizing him up with their beady eyes. He felt as if he was on display and he wished he could just disappear. In the end, he had decided to cover himself with his cloak and put his hood up over his face. Now that the Wizengamot members were back, he could relax once more and remove his hood.

Once everyone was seated, Fudge stood up once more, his voice high and demanding as he asked, "All those in favor of clearing the accused, raise your hand!"

The silence was overwhelming to say the least. Avery was looking around the room desperately. When not even one person raised their hand, he looked at his father pleadingly. His father in turn just shrugged helplessly at his son; despite the fact that he was an evil man, he did love his son, but love or not, there was nothing Avery Sr. could do to help his son right now.

"All those in favor of conviction?" said Fudge, his voice a little lower than before after seeing not even one person raise their hand to free Archibald Avery.

This time, the movements were instantaneous—every single member raised their hand. Avery could only stare in horror, his numb mind counting every hand which was up.

"Very well. Archibald Avery, you are hereby charged with the crimes you were accused of. Each one has a minimum sentence of fifteen years, summing it up to seventy five years in Azkaban,"
"No! I didn't do it! I was forced to! I was under the Imperius Curse! He made me do it, I swear! Help please! Dad! Tell them! Tell them!" shrieked Avery as he was led away by two Aurors, Moody and Shacklebolt. Both men were trying hard not to smirk or grin. It wouldn't be very professional to do such a thing, after all. Moody and Shacklebolt took him to the Ministry's Portkey exit room, shoved a Portkey in Avery's hand, and sent him to the drop off zone across the straight from Azkaban. There, he was man-handled by more Aurors, who took him across the water on a boat and into the warded prison which would be his new home until he died.

"Are you alright?" asked Severus after a few minutes of silence. The trial had taken longer than anticipated, an hour and a half to be exact. Malfoy's and Macnair's wouldn't take as long since the memories had been reviewed already. It was just protocol now really; Malfoy and Macnair had a right to a Defense Lawyer and to defend themselves…even if they were guilty.

"I'm fine," said Harry, a sigh leaving his lips as soon as he said it. Before he could blink, a potions book was shoved into his hands. Blinking again, he looked up, but Snape was speaking quietly to Dumbledore.

"May we speak later, my boy?" asked Dumbledore. He had been in the Pensieve with all the other Wizengamot members, and to say he was let down would be an understatement. He had hoped by some miracle that Nick wasn't as close to Harry as everyone made out, but that hope had gone sailing out the Pensieve ten minutes ago. Three feet he had been from his brother, Nick had looked back, right at Harry then Voldemort, before grabbing the Portkey and going. Watching the torture Harry had gone through had stricken him to the bone. The warning Severus had given him had rung in his ears as he watched in utter disbelief. He would never have done that to his own bother, despite the fact that they had been at odds with one another the past nearly one hundred years.

"I am very busy, Albus. Also, I haven't changed my mind in regards to what we spoke about the last time," said Severus abruptly.

"Very well," sighed Dumbledore, feeling wretched. If only Nick wasn't so damn important, he wouldn't be losing the man he thought of as a son. Before long, Macnair was dragged in and his trial was on, and Dumbledore stared at the bastard in disgust.

"All those in favor of conviction?" questioned Fudge.

If anything, the hands raised faster than they had for Avery, which was saying something. Avery might have been bad, but Macnair was worse as they also had proof of his crimes against wizards and witches who had died in the last war. The knife was very distinctive and had the same magic as Harry's wounds did. Not only was he charged with Harry's torture, but with the torture and subsequent murders of over twenty wizards and witches and over a hundred Muggles. There was dark magic imbued in the knife he'd used on Harry, hence why he was scarred, and there had been similar marks on the others and they had the pictures to prove it. They had been in the unsolved murder drawers in the Auror Department. Needless to say, they were no longer unsolved murders; those who had died by his hands were finally getting justice.

"Very well. Walden Macnair you are hereby charged with the crimes set before you today. The Wizengamot has ruled that, due to the severity of your crimes, you will be sentenced to the Dementor's Kiss, which will be administered on the fifteenth of July, 1995. May Merlin have mercy on your soul," said Fudge grimly. It wasn't very often the Dementor's Kiss was administered.
Moody would have done a jig around the room if he hadn't been so composed, and so would Madam Bones, but neither did, they just sat in silence with the rest of the courtroom. Harry, though, just smirked in supreme satisfaction at having gotten his revenge on the arsehole who had hurt him and promised to do worse. Walden Macnair just snarled viciously at Harry while still bound by the chair.

"The world truly will be a safer place without him," sneered Severus, his lip curled in disgust. If anyone knew what that man was capable of, it was Severus. He had seen the man at work, and it was no wonder Voldemort liked him. Walden snarled and hissed like an animal about how his 'Lord' would get him and they would all pay, promising revenge and death on Harry Potter as he was dragged away.

Harry just raised a bored eyebrow at him as if to say 'what the Hell are you talking about?' before he went back to reading the book his teacher had given him. Really, if Voldemort had planned on getting the idiots out, he would have already done it. Voldemort had already lost Pettigrew and Crouch, as well as Nagini…and now he had lost at least two other followers, maybe even three, but he wasn't holding his breath. Malfoy was a sneaky bastard, after all.

Turned out his fears were for naught. Lucius' lawyer was good, Harry had to give him that, as the wizard insisted it was someone polyjuiced as him to get him into trouble and it hadn't been Malfoy Manor Harry had been in. Unfortunately for Lucius Malfoy, he didn't know about his unfaithful House Elf. The lawyer had insisted Lucius had been with him, when the Elf had been brought up.

The lawyer couldn't take back his word and ended up arrested for being in contempt of court, then the rest of the trial consisted of Lucius trying and failing to get them to believe he hadn't had a part in it. The fact that Lucius Malfoy said no to Veritaserum was telling enough for the Wizengamot.

Moody was rubbing his hands gleefully every time Lucius Malfoy tried to explain himself. Each and every time it was countered with something else—Harry's memories proved everything, really.

Draco looked pale and solemn as he watched his father, knowing the outcome wouldn't be good. His father had been in the Ministry holding cells for days, yet the Dark Lord, who was supposed to be really powerful and think of his father as an equal (or so he told his son) hadn't saved him? Why and was it the same for everyone? Was this what he would be faced with if he joined Voldemort? Was that what his mother had been trying to subtly telling him? He couldn't help but think so.

Narcissa sat beside her son, looking tortured and dismayed. She knew her husband wasn't going to get out of it this time. She'd told him not to do it, but what did he do? He went ahead and did it anyway. She wondered silently which House Elf it was and how to kill it.

"Those in favor of clearing the suspect?" asked Fudge.

A surprising amount of hands went up, to the disbelief of many. Severus knew those who had were being bribed; he was thankful, however, to see the amount was less than half. Unless quite a few decide to abstain from voting, Lucius Malfoy was going down.

"Those in favor of conviction?" asked Fudge.

More than half the hands went up, and despite himself, Fudge felt a whoosh of relief. It was obvious Lucius Malfoy had been a Death Eater, and he didn't care if it soiled his career. The safety of the wizards and witches in the wizarding world was more important than him being Minister. He wasn't even sure he wanted to be the Minister during the coming tough times. Voldemort was back and he wasn't sure what to do first, and everyone was looking at him to do something.
"Lucius Malfoy, you have been found guilty of the crimes you have been accused of. You are hereby sentenced to fifty years in Azkaban," said Fudge grimly. He had associated himself with this man. He had believed Lucius was a good man, and Lucius had seemed so. He would be lucky if his name survived the back lash.

Lucius Malfoy just kept his face steady, not showing any emotion as he was taken away. He was his Lord's favorite, so he would be rescued, he had to believe that. He didn't even look in his wife's or son's direction as he left with Shacklebolt and Moody.

That night, Dumbledore sat in his office, contemplating everything he had learned and seen that day. He hadn't seen hide nor hair of the Potters, and for that, he was grateful. Harry Peverell had been awarded generous sums from the accused's Vaults, enough for him to live comfortably anyway. In fact, he had gotten all of Macnair's money and what remained of the Malfoys' money. Curiously enough, Harry had asked for a House Elf in place of the Malfoy funds when Madam Bones had asked if there was anything else they could do for him.

Narcissa had been forced to summon Dobby—at the name, Dumbledore had realized it was the Elf who had helped the boy—and free him, or loose every penny of the Malfoy money, which would have left her son penniless. No House Elf was worth that. Dobby had attached himself to Harry, slobbering and blubbering his thanks. Harry in turn had been firm and fair and told the Elf to wait for his call. He was obviously smart enough not to tell everyone where he lived, which in his case was a very good thing. If Voldemort had wanted him dead before, it would be ten times worse now. That was five Death Eaters he had lost thanks to Harry Potter in a matter of weeks.

Once again, Albus popped a sweet into his mouth. The twins were so different. Nick's hair was remarkably like his father's, whereas Harry's was more like Lily's, long past his shoulders and tameable. The only likeness they had were their faces and height. Even the scars on their foreheads were different, yet Harry acted more like how he had wanted Nick raised—a hero. Harry had gotten them out of the bindings, it was Harry who hadn't been frozen with fear (Harry had been scared as well, he had just handled it a lot better than Nick), and it was Harry who had held onto his wand. It was Harry who could defeat the Imperius Curse; two years ago, it was Harry who saved the school from a Basilisk. Could the prophecy have meant both of them? Twins could be counted as one...He knew he was grasping at straws, but he had seen Nick do any. The Troll incident was far from his mind right then, or he would have grasped any thread to validate Nick as the Boy-Who-Lived.

As he popped yet another sour lemon drop into his mouth, his withered face sagged some more. If only it was easy to know for sure just what the prophecy meant. Did it truly mean both of them? Or did it truly only mean Nick? It had said 'mark HIM as his EQUAL' not 'THEM as his EQUALS'. He had to face facts. Nick was the Boy-Who-Lived, he was just anxious because Harry seemed more...heroic. Nick was under intense pressure whereas Harry wasn't. Nick was trying to live up to everyone's expectations of him, much like he himself had done after defeating Grindelwald. Perhaps some training from the Light Champion himself would make Nick more...confident.

The boy had been scared. It was very understandable when faced with death at only fourteen. He hadn't had a long life. Perhaps a conversation about how death was but the next great adventure would be good for Nick. Of course, a small part of him knew he was just making up excuses for Nick, as Harry had shared the experience—and more—with his twin and had fared far better. He had his suspicions after what had happened in the Chamber of Secrets just what Nick was going to
have to do to win the war, and had spent the past two years trying to get more information. It was coming along very slowly and he wasn't sure how much use the information he had was. The diary had been very revealing indeed, he just needed to figure the rest out and perhaps let Nick help to let him think he was getting in on the adult things.

An idea hit him like a freight train from Hell. Of course! It was simple, really. Slughorn had been the Potions Professor when Tom Riddle had been in school, and Tom had been a member of his Slug Club if Albus remembered correctly. He had been the Transfigurations Professor at the time. Slughorn had also been the Slytherin Head of House, so if anything, it would have been Slughorn Tom would have gone to. Perhaps it was time to have Professor Colin Reese quit and ask Slughorn to replace him. He needed all the help he could get to find out just what Riddle had done to himself. It had all started while he was at school, that much he knew.

What better way to get the old man drawn back than to dangle Nick Potter in his face? Another famous face to appear in his Slug Club, just like his mother before him.

He didn't stop to think about the fact that Reese had been grading Nick unfairly, or to even think about the warning Snape had given him that his O.W.L. results were going to be inadequate.

One way or another, Nick Potter wasn't going to be joining the Slug Club.

Chapter End Notes

As always a big thanks to Snow Leopard Pasha for editing this story and the time she puts into making it readable for everyone :)
Chapter 20

The prophecy was the main thought on Harry Peverell and Severus Snape's minds that night and first thing in the morning.

Severus couldn't believe it. He had been right all along, and Harry was going to have to defeat the monster known as Lord Voldemort (even if Severus insisted on calling him the Dark Lord). The contents of the prophecy circled his mind as he realized Dumbledore also knew all this—it was the reason he was so insistent on training Nick Potter. No wonder he kept trying to get Severus to help; Severus wasn't by any means a modest man and had made it clear he knew Dark Arts which would put Dumbledore to shame. That said, he hadn't been around for one hundred years, either.

Harry woke up at six AM and got dressed for the day ahead of him, in his brand new clothes. It was one thing he hadn't been deprived of by the Potters, but they hadn't exactly been to his liking. They got him whatever Nick liked and left it at that, almost as if they had bought too much for Nick so gave him the spares Nick didn't want. He loved being at Prince Manor, where he wasn't invisible...where he was wanted, not an inconvenience. Plus, he was getting to learn more magic!

Speaking of which, that was something he was going to have to ask Severus about. He quickly made his way down to the study room and found his teacher already there. "Severus, how is it that I'm able to use magic? Won't the tracer activate?" asked Harry, sitting down curiously.

"All Pureblood homes have shielding charms embedded in the wards. How else do you think Purebloods know so much about casting before going to Hogwarts?" asked Severus sarcastically.

"Then why weren't...I mean why didn't they teach Nick anything?" asked Harry cautiously.

"Nick was trained magically. I believe he began his training at the age of seven or eight," Severus informed him, watching the teenager closely.

How did the child remain calm when it was apparent he was responsible for them all, the entire wizarding world? Harry was going to have to defeat Voldemort for them, or rather it was predicted he would. He wondered silently if he would have done it, having had the life Harry had, being ignored in favor of his brother...Would he truly have wanted to save the lives of those who had basically abandoned him? It wasn't something he could truthfully answer because it hadn't happened to him. The news of the prophecy didn't seem to have affected Harry at all, but he knew it had affected him.

"I had no idea, I just thought James always took him flying or just played with him." Harry wasn't sure what to think of this latest revelation. What did it matter at the end of the day? He was ignored in all ways, so why would magical training be any different? Simply put, it wasn't.
"And his education?" Severus inquired. He couldn't say 'your' education as Harry hadn't truly had one after all. That was something else he wanted to ask the child, how he had been able to read and write if he wasn't educated.

"He did what he needed to, nothing more, from what I remember," said Harry honestly.

"I see…Might I ask how you managed to learn to read and write?" asked Severus a bit cautiously. He knew he might be treading on a sensitive subject, but he was truly curious to know. It sounded to him as though Harry had found a way to listen in, judging by his comments just now and during the confrontation at the Leaving Feast.

Harry looked down and a sigh left his lips before he answered his teacher's question. "I used to sneak in and listen to the lessons when I could. I also copied the books so I could learn on my own."

"Copy? I'm assuming you didn't do it the normal way, but with magic?" asked Severus, an eyebrow raised in curiosity.

"With magic. When Nick didn't get his way, his magic exploded…but mine didn't because I was constantly using it to learn what I could. Some of the books I've got are the ones I copied from Potter Manor. The rest are the ones from my book lists over the years. I sold the autographed Lockhart books and bought different ones, mostly on Potions and Defense," explained Harry.

"I understand that desire," nodded Severus wryly. Anyone who wanted to keep Lockhart's books for anything more than pleasure reading was either idiotic or infatuated with the wizard.

It didn't surprise him that Harry had been capable of magic at such a young age to better himself; after all, the prophecy indicated Harry was the Dark Lord's equal, and yes, he had been the Dark Lord's equal from the age of fifteen months. The Potters probably already knew the prophecy. Weren't they curious as to why neither of their children seemed to do magic worthy of being the Dark Lord's equal? Severus had no doubt the Potters hadn't seen Harry using his magic or there would have been questions raised. Controlled magic at four or five years of age to copy books just so he could learn…

He knew every Pureblood parent and grandparent out there was probably furious. Nothing was more important to them than their offspring having a decent education, even if it was just the basic education they received: Mathematics, English, History of Magic, Latin, and the like. It was the education they had of magic which mattered the most, but still. The thought of having an uneducated child was considered an embarrassment. A Pureblood would rather send their child to a Muggle school than see them without a tutor. Most Purebloods would rather die than send their child to a Muggle school, so yes, it was vital to them indeed.

"You do realize what you did is impossible for the average four-year-old?" asked Severus curiously. That is, if the Potters had begun educating Nick at the age of four, they certainly hadn't done the things most Purebloods would—like educating all their children.

"I had no choice!" protested Harry defensively.

"I am not criticizing you, Harry…I am commending you on your magical abilities and determination to learn," said the Potions Master softly, his eyes understanding.

"Oh," said the boy, looking stunned and feeling a little awkward and unsure. He had never seen himself as special, not even knowing he had been the one to defeat Voldemort at a young age. Personally, Harry thought it was a fluke. "If the situations were reversed, maybe Nick would have
done the same."

"Do you truly believe that?" asked Severus, fighting the urge to snort—he did not snort.

"I don't know," sighed Harry, his shoulders sagging as if an invisible weight was suddenly bearing down on him.

"What do you wish to do now that you know the contents of the prophecy?" asked Severus.

A House Elf blinked into the room, putting a huge platter of food and drink down before disappearing. Severus reached over and grabbed both plates, filled them up, and made himself a coffee. Giving Harry a gesture to ask if he wanted some, he was somewhat surprised when he nodded. Normal fourteen-year-olds didn't drink coffee. Perhaps it was because of his mother. Severus knew his mother's fondness for coffee and offering it to nearly everyone who stepped into her shop for more than a minute.

Harry gratefully took the coffee and looked at Severus for a few minutes, deep in thought. He had never dreamed five or six years ago that he would have someone to confide in, something other than his diary. Harry had thought he was destined to always be alone, and going to Hogwarts hadn't done much to change his assumption. Now he had Eileen, Severus, Luna, Viktor, Cedric, and Fleur. Of course, there were some he trusted more than others—Eileen, Severus, and Luna were his truly trusted, ones he would confide in about the prophecy and him being the real Boy-Who-Lived. Two already knew, so he just had to tell Luna, if she didn't already know. Luna had the bloody uncanny ability to know things others didn't, it was as if she could see things others couldn't.

"I'm not sure…I don't see why I should help them on one hand…But on the other…there have been people who have been really good to me and don't deserve to suffer because of the others' actions," admitted Harry sadly.

"I can understand where you are coming from," said Severus honestly. There had been people willing to help him despite the fact that he had been a Death Eater. Albus had been very good to him, even if he was being very annoying at the moment.

Then again, Albus felt as if it was his duty to save the world just because of what had happened with Gellert Grindelwald. He knew the Headmaster was under a lot of pressure from the wizarding world, too, which was why he was asking him to help, so he really shouldn't be so annoyed with him, but he couldn't help it. He hated the Potters and that wasn't going to change anytime soon; Albus knew how much he hated them, yet was insisting he teach the brat one-on-one. Harry was quite obviously the one exception in all this—then again, he wasn't exactly a Potter anymore, if he ever really had been.

"Somehow…I know you do, unlike others who'd insist they know, but who clearly didn't really," stated Harry, eating his breakfast slowly.

"There's also something else we have to discuss…your education at Hogwarts and whether you want to stay there to learn more or not," said Severus. "You have the entire summer to decide, so there's no need to rush."

"Do you know Ancient Runes?" asked Harry curiously.

"I only took it for two years, third and fourth year when I was there. Like you, I had pretty much decided what I wanted to do. I concentrated mostly on Defense Against the Dark Arts and Potions," stated Severus. "I do not remember much of what I was taught as it was quite a while
ago."

"I rather like it, though. Would I be able to just attend certain classes I won't be taught or can't learn here for some reason?" asked Harry before continuing, "Like Charms, Transfigurations, Ancient Runes, Arithmancy, and Care of Magical Creatures?"

"Hum... I shouldn't have a problem getting Albus to agree to those terms," said Severus, nodding thoughtfully. It would give him time to himself to brew his potions and such while the boy was safely at school. He was, after all, only teaching Harry Defense Against the Dark Arts and Potions. Those two did come first, but if he could, he would ask all the other classes to be on the same day so Harry could have the entire day away, then spend the rest of the week on his Masteries in Defense and Potions.

Harry let out a breath of relief. As much as he loved the thought of being here all the time, learning nothing but Potions and Defense would get boring sooner or later. Now, at least once a week, he could get out, learn something different, and perhaps even see Luna for a while. He couldn't imagine not being able to see her; she and Eileen had kept him sane, especially through this past year.

"Thank you," he said gratefully after a pause, then began devouring his breakfast.

"No problem. Now, as we agreed, there are a few books over there for you to read, then I will give you the first quiz. In a few months' time, I shall quiz you randomly on information you learned earlier in the year," said Severus, knowing the Ravenclaw in Harry would probably see that as a challenge, which was how Severus wanted him to see it.

"Yes, Sir!" said Harry eagerly. There was nothing Harry liked more than a challenge and a chance to prove himself.

"Good," agreed Severus.

Just then, an owl came through the window, with Hermes hot on its tail with a letter from Luna. The first was from the Ministry and it was quite heavy. Blinking in appreciation, he opened it, only for surprise to promptly show on his face. He couldn't believe he'd forgotten about that!

"Is anything the matter?" asked Severus, frowning and wondering why the Ministry was getting in touch with his Apprentice yet again.

"No, it's just that they've given me half the Triwizard winnings, five hundred galleons," said Harry, putting the sack of galleons down on the table. It was a lot of money, but considering Harry had gotten a small fortune from each of two Death Eaters... why, this was pocket change now.

"And so they should. I wonder why it took them so long to deal with that," said Severus curiously.

"Might have something to do with him being back," shrugged Harry.

"Perhaps," said Severus, drinking the rest of his coffee. He knew the boy meant the Dark Lord.

Almost as if the House Elf knew they were finished, she popped back in and took the tray away with her without a word to either of them. It was the way he preferred his House Elves—quiet and busy doing what they were told.

"Read to chapter five on each of those books, and if there is time, perhaps a chapter more on each. I shall be back in two hours. If you need me, I shall be in my lab—just knock once and I shall answer the door as soon as possible. Understood?" asked Severus curtly.
"Yes, Sir," said Harry obediently, knowing Severus was now in teacher mode and not at all confused at his suddenly abrupt manner.

"Good," said Severus. Smirking slightly, he nodded and left the room.

Severus had brewed for two hours straight, giving Harry enough time to read the chapters of the books he had requested. The quizzes he had decided on were already written out for the books he'd decided upon, so he would be fine for at least a week, then he would need to think up questions for the next quizzes. Thankfully, he wasn't going to have to read the books as he knew them all very well, from back to front. He rather hoped Harry didn't let him down, as he had added very sneaky questions in there, hoping he could answer them. What could he say? He was a Slytherin.

Spelling the potion into stasis, he stalked from the lab to the sitting room where he knew Harry was. He found the teenager engrossed in one book, so walked over unheard and looked over his shoulder. Harry had gotten up to chapter seven, which was actually really good considering the books were all text and no pictures or lists. The question was, though, how much of the information did he remember from those chapters?

"Read the rest of the chapter, then put the book down," said Severus. He noticed the other books had been bookmarked, so Harry must have really gotten into this book to continue on after chapter five.

Harry jumped in fright. Breathing heavily, he cursed himself for not being more aware of his surroundings—then again, he was more used to reading and studying alone in his room with no one caring enough to bother him. He nodded regardless, not blaming or glaring at Severus for his oversight. Severus nodded in approval at Harry's actions, having seen the self-disgruntlement on the child's face. He wasn't blaming Severus for sneaking up on him—no, he blamed himself for not being more aware. This boy didn't act at all like normal fourteen-year-olds. Just what had the Potters done to him? He was far too mature. Perhaps he had done the wrong thing in taking him on as his Apprentice so early. He deserved a childhood or what he could get of one. Being stuck here with Severus wasn't exactly what he deserved, but perhaps it was already too late. Perhaps Harry truly didn't know or understand the meaning of the word 'fun', or had a completely different definition of it from his peers due to his life to date.

Harry only took five more minutes to read the rest of the chapter, then marked the page with another bookmark and put it down on the table beside his other books. He turned to face his teacher, a curious look on his face. Those potions sounded interesting indeed.

"How did you find the book?" asked Severus, sitting down across from his Apprentice.

"Brilliant! I can't wait to make the potions they mentioned! They sound so fascinating, and I've never seen or done those ones before!" said Harry enthusiastically, almost looking…hyper. Maybe Harry did know the meaning of the word 'fun' and of being happy—his definition of it was definitely not a normal form, but…If this was what made Harry happy and hyper, then it probably hadn't been a mistake after all.

"It will be a while before you make any of them, you understand, don't you? You have twenty-one potions to brew and perfect before you reach such an advanced stage…and that's once you have re-done every potion you've done in class," said Severus calmly.

"I know, and I understand why," said Harry, his green eyes gazing at Severus' solemnly. "It doesn't mean I can't be exited about what's to come." He had his hair tied back today in a loose ponytail.
Severus was once again struck by the fact that Harry had missed out on all the typical Potter looks. The only thing Harry had gotten from his parents, Severus would say, were his eyes and his hair color.

He was so different from James and Nick Potter that it was easy to forget this child was biologically a Potter.

"Good. I'm very pleased you do. Now, quiz time. Just do the questions for the chapters you have read for each book, which should take you to about question twenty on each," instructed Severus, handing the quiz papers over. He took his potions journal from his desk and sat down while Harry began writing. The scratching of the quill was the only thing heard for the next hour.

Chapter End Notes

Edited by Snow Leopard Pasha on 5/03/16 thank you for all the work you're putting into making it a more enjoyable read!
Chapter 21

Invisible

Chapter 21

Writing Viktor, Eileen Visits and the Potter’s Reactions

Harry woke up extremely early, it was five o’clock in the morning, and the sun wasn’t even up yet. Harry sat outside on the balcony admiring the beautiful land over Prince Manor. He had yet to see the horses or truly explore the grounds. He decided that today he would, it was his day off, Sunday, and every Sunday was his to do as he wished. He had been here for almost a week now, the schedule was busy as anything and Harry loved it. A slight pinging noise had him going over to the bedside cabinet. He grinned slightly picking it up and a quill and made his way over to the balcony once more.

Morning Harry, I know it’s early and you probably won’t get this for a few more hours. We’ve just Portkey’d to Paris it’s beautiful at this time of year. We are going to be playing against the Wimblewasps. They are a good team but their keeper isn’t the best. So what are you going to be doing today?

Harry shook his head in amusement; the majority of their conversations were centred on Quidditch. As fun as their relationship had been it would never have worked. Sure Harry liked Quidditch but he wasn’t a fanatic like Viktor was. Plus Harry wanted a constant in his life, not someone would be away the majority of the time. He had been abandoned by his parents so much that the thought of a relationship like that made him shudder. No Harry wanted someone who would be there for him, not taking off every week for Quidditch - especially not Quidditch. Harry knew he would rather be alone than put up with such a relationship. It had been hard for Harry, to remember that Viktor would leave, because most of that year had been almost perfect. Apart from being added into the goddamned tournament then left for dead by his brother.

Hey, Paris? Wow is it sunny? I hope so nothing worse than attending a Quidditch game in the pouring rain! It’s Sunday so I’ve got the day to myself, I think I’ll go see the horses in the Prince stable. Good luck with the game!

Yes it is very hot! Be careful horses are very temperamental creatures and can sense any fear. How are you though Harry? Honestly! Just because we cannot be with one another it doesn’t mean you cannot talk to me. I’ll always be here for you just remember that how’s the Apprenticeship coming along?

Harry stared at the page deep in thought before replying three minutes later.

I’m alright all things considered; I’ve just realized what I’ve taken on being the main head of house. Plus with how the Potter’s treated me coming out…my godfather - Sirius Black got in touch with me and I’ve only just sent a reply. I wanted to tell him what I thought but I decided just to send him a polite reply. At least someone regrets it my parents though probably care about the loss of money more than anything else! I got my half of the Tri-Wizard winnings so that’s probably made Nick even angrier. It feels good to finally get one over them you know?

Yes I can understand how you would feel good getting one over them. As I’ve said before Harry they deserve everything they get. What they did to you was wrong, you know that especially considering how they even treated your own sister better. You are different from them all and that I
consider a very good thing! You don’t really have to worry about the head of house until you are seventeen. Even if you truly were the last head of the family it would be the same. If you need help I will do so, I am now the head of my family but I have given over the duties to my father until he dies or I finish my Quidditch career. I’ve had three years of lessons for what was expected off me, it took three years mostly because of my Quidditch lessons. I have to go my manager is here time to train talk soon.

Sighing softly Harry closed the book; he knew the Bulgarians did things differently. Getting written lessons about their government wouldn’t help him any, but it was nice of him to offer. He wasn’t about to ask Severus for any more lessons, the man was sacrificing his entire week for him as it was. Perhaps he could just read some books, on proper wizarding customs. That decided he put the two way diary back in the drawer and got dressed. The house was silent as he walked towards the library; then again it was always quiet really. When he opened the door the fire on the far side of the library away from the books and beside a selection of high back armchairs and tables flared to life. Instantly warming the room and making the room glow a soft amber colour.

He spent the next ten minutes browsing the books, finding the section he needed he read the backs of them to find the one most suited for him. He didn’t plan on reading it yet; just make sure it was there for when he did read it. He wasn’t going to spend his free days reading that book each and every one of them was quite thick in size. It would take him about a week he reckoned to read it. Finally he found the one most suited to him, he went over to the table and wrote down the book he was taking. It hadn’t been used in years by the look of it, but Harry was a guest here and he would do things properly. That done he took himself and the book back to his bedroom, placing it on his table beside a long line of others.

“Breakfast is ready Mister Peverell,” said a house elf popping into Harry’s room.

Harry looked at the clock in surprise “I’ll be down in a minute, thank you.” said Harry smiling softly at the house elf.

“Dobby?” shouted Harry for the first time since the trial.

“Yes Master Peverell?” squeaked Dobby his eyes wide and full of adoration.

“What have you been up to?” asked Harry curiously.

“Awaiting your call Master Peverell!” said Dobby adamantly.

“Have you been eating?” asked Harry alarmed.

“Yes sir,” said Dobby his huge head bobbing up and down quickly.

“This is where I will be staying Dobby; if none of the other house elves mind would you stay here? Just until I have a home of my own that you can live in?” asked Harry. He wondered really if he should be telling Severus. It was his house after all…but he somehow doubted Severus cared about house elves as long as they kept his home clean. At leas he didn’t treat them like Malfoy did; he still had that disgusting soiled pillow case on as well. Yes, he would need to speak to Severus, as soon as possible.

“I shall ask the head of the Prince elves,” said Dobby bowling low before leaving.

Harry nodded grimly to himself before he went in search of Severus and breakfast.

“Good morning,” said Severus arching an eyebrow questioningly, Harry had never been late to breakfast before. Then again it was Sunday and the boy might have preferred sleeping in. Severus
doubted it; Harry was always awake before he was supposed to be something he had noticed two days into the apprenticeship.

“Severus…is it ok if Dobby stays here?” asked Harry curiously sitting down.

“Of course as long as he knows not to speak of anything” said Severus waving his hand dismissively. He knew who Dobby was, he had been at the trial, and Lucius Malfoy would have gotten off if it hadn’t been for the little thing. Insisting it was someone under Poly juice had been a good idea, having a disobedient house elf wasn’t. No Lucius Malfoy’s luck and run out and he was in Azkaban for that.

“Thank you,” said Harry that was one less thing to worry about. He felt he owed the House elf a great deal. Not just by appearing and helping him, well it was mostly for that but also for ensuring Lucius Malfoy went down. He would have gotten off it Dobby hadn’t chosen to help him that day he was sure of it.

“No problem,” said Severus smoothly.

“I heard from Dumbledore about a potion you created for the second task?” questioned Severus curiously, ever since he had remembered he had been curious. It was only right now they hadn’t been too busy that they hadn’t remembered and decided to say something.

“Oh that yeah I did,” said Harry smothering a smirk remembering the look Nick Potter supported. He had looked back briefly when people had began laughing, to see his …brother standing there looking like a spare end. He had school uniform on as well; he wondered briefly what Lily and James had thought then. Then again nothing was ever Nick’s fault; they’d rather blame someone else. Like him for showing Nick up, anything but be embarrassed for or about Nick. It had always been that way; thankfully they hadn’t seen half the things he had done over the years. He hadn’t realized just how…odd it was to be able to copy books especially at the age of four years of age. Not until Severus had said anything, he was most thankful that neither James nor Lily had ever discovered that.

“May I?” asked Severus, requesting permission to see Harry’s work or hear it from his lips.

“Sure,” shrugged Harry “Accio Potions Journal.”

Harry caught it as it flew through the air and passed it over to Severus - all his potions ideas and nobody other than his ‘Master’ had seen them and who better really?

“We should go to a conference and you really should publish this potion,” suggested Severus smoothly. To create a potion at fifteen it was a good accomplishment, then again he had created spells at that age. He had perfected potions he had worked on at school but never created one from scratch at that point. He only ever attempted his own after gaining his mastery at twenty years of age. It had taken him two and a half years to gain it, he was the youngest Potions Master but that title was definitely going to be taken by Harry. He didn’t grudge it, especially considering he was doing the teaching. He was just glad he had been the one to find him, or rather he had been found at all. He knew most Potion’s Masters would have taken a look at his Hogwarts scores and laughed at him. He would have done exactly the same thing, but that wouldn’t happen now.

“Why?” Harry asked surprised, his eyes slightly wider than normal.

“Because this potion deserves to be known…there’s only ever been one thing to help breathe under water. That was an herb, and it couldn’t be used long term this can and it will also bring you a decent income.” said Severus; he knew Harry didn’t want to touch the Potter money despite the
fact that a third of it was meant to be his. He had two different set of vaults, the Potter vaults and his own personal ones that nobody could get into. The ones he had spent years filling, from the paper jobs he had taken on and now the money from Macnair. He was genuinely surprised the Potters’ hadn’t tried to take any money out yet…and wondered if they even could.

“Why would anyone want to buy it?” asked Harry utterly bewildered at the thought of someone actually wanting to buy such a simple potion.

“Swimmers, people with a fear of drowning that want to take up lessons, you would be surprised at how many people will want the potion.” explained Severus patiently.

“Why a conference?” asked Harry uneasily knowing a lot of people attend those kind of things.

“To advertise the potion, get recognition for it, it would be put into potion weekly and monthly. Apothecary’s will stock up on them and people will buy them, Potions Masters will also want to brew them for themselves.” said Severus. “It’s the best way to go about it, I did the same with the Veritaserum and Wolfsbane potion.” he didn’t attend them when he wasn’t advertising a potion but read all the magazines.

“If you think people will want it then I guess so,” said Harry still surprised and baffled.

“I don’t think, I know.” said Severus with great certainty.

“Alright,” said Harry nodding amicably in agreement.

“Good,” said Severus finishing his breakfast.

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Sirius was currently in Grimmauld Place, it was deserted and very dirty - Sirius had never lived there he hated it. The house elf didn’t do anything unless it was told, and usually muttered under its breath the entire time. So Sirius hated the thing being anywhere near him, he didn’t speak to it unless he absolutely had to. He was currently there looking for letters and pictures. He had to know if what the papers were saying was true, so he was currently on the hunt for old letters and things.

Finally he found a chest full of old things after half an hour of hunting. He found it in his room, the one he always stayed in when he was there. He didn’t trust any of the other one not to be cursed or the bedding and curtains full of Doxy’s or whatnot. Horrid creatures, their venom was dangerous if it stayed in the bloodstream long enough. They usually lived in abandoned dirty homes and that was certainly what Grimmauld Place was. He began pulling out old things; the room was a mess by the time the chest was emptied. He finally ‘haha’d!’ in triumph when he found the red and gold bound album.

The laughter died on his lips as he flipped through the pages, his movements becoming harsher every page that was turned. He was fanatically looking for even one picture of Harry, but found not a single picture in the hundred pictures he flipped through. He found baby pictures of Nick and Roxy but not a single one of Harry after her reached one year and three months old. There were even pictures of James, Lily, Roxy and Nick together, still none of Harry.

Sirius fell to his knees the album falling from his numb fingers, shock spread through him like wildfire. He refused to give in, he began reading through the letters, spending hours just reading through letters he had received from Lily and James. His blue eyes filled with sadness and tears that refused to fall. All the letters mentioned Nick and how he was doing, his accidental magic, his school work - nothing of Harry at all. He stopped reading once he got to a letter on how Roxy was
doing, according to the date Roxy was five in that one. He scrunched it up and with a scream of fury he chucked it across the room so utterly devastated.

He had asked Nick a few questions, but even at that he had refused to believe it despite the letter he had written to Harry. He assumed it had all been exaggerated, like the Prophet was so prone to doing. It wasn’t, they had forgotten about Harry completely, not even educated him like he deserved. It wasn’t like the Potter’s had been strapped for cash, for goodness sake they had more money than they could spend in one lifetime. I mean how did you forget to bloody educate one of your children? Why hadn’t he noticed before.

“Oh Harry,” whispered Sirius in devastation.

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“James is what the Prophet saying true?” asked Remus coming up beside his best friend. It was two days until the full moon; he could smell his friend anywhere in the castle. He was standing outside the lake, and he quickly joined him wanting answers. He was asked to Hogwarts to help train Nick - more than they had done last year. Despite all they had done Nick hadn’t competed in the tournament very well according to Dumbledore and James anyway. Which contradicted what Lily had been telling him, so he was deadly confused.

“Which part?” asked James dully.

“Everything,” said Remus his amber eyes solemn.

“Yes Harry has taken over the head of house, he’s officially in control of the vaults, the seats and votes.” said James bitterness almost crawling up his throat almost making him sick.

“I meant about his education and the allegations James…” Remus trailed off.

“Everything’s bloody exaggerated,” hissed James angrily.

Remus was about to buy the explanation when he smelt the lie practically dripping from James. He was very good at detecting liars, very near to the full moon that was his sense of smell heightened very much. Remus’ eyes widened when he realized the implications dawned on him.

“You didn’t get someone to educate your own son! Do you know what people are saying about you?” asked Remus weakly.

James scowled darkly “It was an honest mistake!” he cried after a few seconds.

“Two or three days then finding someone is an honest mistake…not finding a tutor at all it a disgrace…and that’s what you are in all pureblood circles!” said Remus shaking his head as if trying to dislodge cobwebs.

“Like I care about what they think,” said James hotly.

“It’s a good thing Harry took over the vaults…I head talk about them buying out your shares forcefully.” replied Remus his voice flat. If someone had the majority shares they could buy the rest of it, from the other shareholders. The Potter’s had a lot of fingers in many pies; it could have all gone to hell if not for Harry taking over the Peverell name. The things he had been hearing about James, about his best friend defending him against the words they spoke - he only wanted to swallow his own words. His friend had changed…what other lies had he been told.

“Remus! You’re here good I was worried you wouldn’t make it. Will you be alright to start on
Thursday?” Lily shouted loud enough for both Remus and James to hear, she also knew the full moon was soon so he would be ill for a few days.

“Know I’m doing this for Nick not you either of you,” said Remus his amber eyes full of anger and misery.

“What’s going on?” asked Lily looking and feeling bewildered had James and Remus had an argument? That was strange itself they had never had an argument never mind a falling out.

“The worst of it is…I’m as much to blame as you both…I never bloody asked him how he was!” snarled Remus angrily, “If this is how I feel I best go and see to Sirius…I’ve not seen him since the news got out to the Daily Prophet.”

“He came to see Nick a few days ago…he left before I could catch up and tell him.” said James numbly. He was loosing his best friend, it hadn’t dawned on him that Remus would be angry or that anyone else would be. If Remus was how was Sirius going to act? James felt numb everything was going to hell. He was loosing his friends, he had lost his money his status as head of the Potter family and he dreaded how people were going to react. The public was very fickle; this was going to reflect badly on Nick…and all over some silly Latin lessons.

Remus hissed angrily before stomping off without saying anything to either of his so called friends. As angry as he was, he felt guilt simmering under the surface, trying to think about the last time he had truly spoken to Harry. The fact he had spent the entire last year with Nick not spending a minute with Harry made everything worse. He felt like punching something so badly, but he had to find Sirius before he did something he regretted.

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Remus entered Grimmauld Place; it was the only other place he could think to look for Sirius. He had been to his old flat, the Leaky Cauldron and Hogshead to see if he was drinking. He was nowhere to be seen, as soon as he entered Grimmauld Place, he caught the smell of Sirius’ fresh scent. He was here or at least he had been here very recently, he followed it up to his old room. He found Sirius surrounded by robes, letters scrunched, folded and ripped up and an open album lying spread eagle on the floor. There was one scrunched in his hand a look of devastation on his face.

“Sirius?” asked Remus quietly slipping over to his friend worry shining though his amber eyes.

“He hates me Remy.” whimpered Sirius.

“I’m sure that’s not true,” said Remus lying through his teeth. He wouldn’t blame Harry if he did hate them, but he could only hope the fifteen year old would forgive them.

“I went to see Nick a few days ago, he basically admitted everything the paper already told us.” said Sirius his voice hoarse and thick with emotion.

“I know I’ve just been to see James…” Remus trailed off unable to say anything else.

“I wrote to Harry…I just got his reply.” whispered Sirius his posture was one of defeat.

“What did he say?” asked Remus dread filled his voice.

Sirius handed the note over.

Mr. Black,
My name is not Harry James Potter - its Harry Peverell please use it.

Difficult for you to write? Well this is even more difficult for me to reply to. I care little about what you believe or disbelieve, I’m sorry but you are nothing to me. I’ve received nothing from you since I was a little boy, three or four years old. I have to admit you lasted longer than my own parents that something I suppose. In the end you did forget, if this hadn’t gotten out you would never have known or cared still.

Regardless of my personal feelings towards you or lack of them I shall answer your questions; they weren’t as bad they were worse than described in the papers. Yes, they did indeed deny me the chance of an education, I had to sneak into the lessons Nick had or I would have gone to Hogwarts completely uneducated. Add up? They don’t add up? Well I hope they add up for you now. I wish you the best in your life Mr. Black my life is finally worth living for. I am currently serving under Severus Snape to gain my Mastery and that’s where I shall remain. Even if I didn’t have a place to stay I wouldn’t be coming with you to help ease your own guilty conscience. My advice to you is move on with your life I’ve never been part of it you cannot miss something you haven’t had.

Mr. Harry Peverell.

Remus winced reading it, yes, Sirius was right Harry truly hated them the guilt seemed to expand even further. He remembered the last thing he had ever bought Harry, the journal, a small diary he had gotten the same thing for Nick. The next year he hadn’t been able to afford it he had asked Sirius to buy something for them both. The year after that he had bought Nick a book on Latin and the correct phraseology’s and Roxy a child’s toy.

“We must honour Harry’s wish Sirius…” said Remus helping his best friend up, he guided him towards the kitchen and poured them both a fire whiskey.

“How can we give up?!” Sirius practically squawked.

“Because we brought this on ourselves, we didn’t care, we forgot and we have to live with that. We are as much to blame as Lily and James, and Harry has basically expressed his wishes to be left alone.” said Remus sadly, “He’s getting on with his life, he’s fifteen years old soon and it’s up to him.”

“I have to do something,” whined Sirius.

“Harry doesn’t want you to Sirius, just do the one thing he wants…maybe if we do that he will come around some day.” said Remus more hopeful than anything.

“Fine.” said Sirius letting out a huge sigh in defeat.

“Do you want to help train Nick? I’ve told Lily and James I want nothing to do with them. That I’m only going to help Nick, I’m not loosing them both I just can’t they are my cubs.” said Remus sadly.

“I don’t want to be anywhere near any of them right now,” said Sirius angrily, gulping back the drink as if it was water before filling it again. He had just realized he had lost one of his godchildren, one of his godsons. The worst of it was that he knew damn well he had brought it on himself. He had the gall to think badly of James for not educating Harry when he hadn’t sent his own godson a present for years.

They had all failed him.

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“Hello? Severus? Harry?” cried the voice of a woman, whom they both knew to be Eileen Snape.

“Mother what are you doing here?” asked Severus surprised indeed coming into the room.

“I’ve just come to see how you both are doing!” smiled Eileen although it was dimmer than usual both Severus and Harry noticed. She truly hated being here, the place where she had been brought up in.

“It’s good to see you!” beamed Harry happily giving the woman he thought of as a mother - more than his own one for sure.

“You as well…how’s it going?” asked Eileen spelling away the soot from her clothes. She was a Prince by blood so she was accepted into the house even without the passwords.

“I have to leave for half an hour; I’m going to Hogwarts I must speak with Dumbledore regarding Harry’s education.” said Severus “Why don’t you keep Harry Company until I come back? Or better yet have dinner with us?”

“I’d love to Severus,” said Eileen.

Severus was surprised; she must really miss them to accept dinner here at Prince Manor. A small twitch of his lips showed how pleased Severus was, he nodded his head before stepping into the floo. He shouted out the Headmaster’s office before he disappeared from view.

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“Severus it’s good to see you!” exclaimed Albus Dumbledore in surprised delight.

“Albus, I’m here on official reason.” said Severus still not happy with the Headmaster.

“What is it?” asked Albus looking worried now, he had hoped Severus had reconsidered and wanted to teach Nick. The teachers were being…rather cool towards Nick, James and Lily. Not that the family seemed to notice, no they were stuck in their own world. Although James and Lily had been quieter than normal today, for reasons unknown to him as of yet.

He didn’t realize it was only going to get worse.

“You know Harry is my apprentice, but he also wants to continue with his normal education. As you know I do not care for magic other than defence, some charms and Potions. I do not remember enough about Ancient Runes to teach It.” said Severus.

“He wants to do both?” asked Dumbledore his eyes wide with wonder.

“Indeed he does, he wants to continue with his Ancient Runes, Care Of Magical Creatures, Charms, Transfiguration and Arithmancy. If you can ensure they are perhaps all on the same day I’d appreciate it. I’m asking this for everything I’ve done for you Albus.” said Severus.

“He wants to do both?” asked Dumbledore his eyes wide with wonder.

“Three or four of those subjects are doubled each week Severus…it would require a day and a half at least…” Albus trailed off not even considering denying Severus.

“Hm…true enough.” said Severus he knew Ancient Runes, Charms, Arithmancy and sometimes Transfiguration was double periods because they could be hard.

“I need to wait and see what they are doing this year…before I can tell you for certain how long he would come to Hogwarts. I shall do my best to get them all in the same day, I know Care of
Magical creatures has been settled and its only an hour so if any other one of them is a single period then I can squeeze them into the one day.” said Dumbledore, dipping a elegant golden quill into an golden inkpot. He wrote subjects in big swirly letters so he didn’t forget. Hopefully now Severus would at least be on his way to forgiving him for being such a fool.

“Thank you Albus.” said Severus.

“How is Harry?” asked Dumbledore attentively.

“He’s doing very well all things considered,” said Severus, Harry’s education had turned out to be quite important who would have thought. It was more important than anyone else’s, now that Voldemort was back once more. He unfortunately knew that all too well, considering he felt the mark burning every now and again. Thankfully a new numbing potion he had created stopped it hurting or even itching. Harry didn’t want people knowing and Severus really understood why now. He didn’t want to be used, Dumbledore would do everything in his power to get Harry to Hogwarts and get him ‘properly educated and trained’ just like they were doing with Nick. Harry being emancipated made that practically impossible, and they had yet to find out anyhow.

Sure he knew Dumbledore was doing what he thought best, or rather, er, the greater good best. Dumbledore was a man just like every other, and he too had expectations heaped upon him. It didn’t excuse him for what he was doing to Nick Potter or what he would do to Harry Potter if he found out.

“Yes…yes I do suppose you are correct.” nodded Dumbledore.

“I must be going, my mother isn’t too fond of Prince Manor and I don’t want to leave her and Harry too long.” said Severus using the first excuse that came to mind. Not wanting Dumbledore to begin speaking about Nick. For once though Severus was wrong, because Dumbledore himself was busy.

“Of course, please give my best to both of them!” cried Dumbledore cheerfully.

“Thank you,” said Severus smoothly arching an eyebrow before leaving through the floo wondering at Dumbledore’s cheerful attitude.

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“Ah, Roxy, how are you?” said Dumbledore beaming happily down at the eleven year old.

“Bored,” she said truthfully.

“Well there is a library up stairs just begging to be read!” encouraged Dumbledore.

“I know there’s only so much reading one can do,” sighed Roxy, her parents had been spending so much time with Nick they didn’t have much time for her. She wasn’t used to that and she felt hurt, her mother had always favoured her. She didn’t like being here; if they were at the manor her mother would not have acted like that she was sure.

“You most certainly won’t be in Ravenclaw with a comment like that,” replied Dumbledore cheerfully.

“I’ll be in Gryffindor like mum!” said the eleven year old adamantly, she had to be perhaps then her mother would notice her for longer than a few minutes.

“I have no doubt.” said Dumbledore mock solemnly.
“Thanks sir!” the eleven year old finally beamed.

“No problem, now can you tell me where I could find your mother?” asked Dumbledore.

“She will be in the Great Hall, after lunch we are going to Diagon Alley!” Roxy said happily.

“Good,” smiled Dumbledore, finally the Great Hall came into view, entering they sat down at their appropriate seats.

“Ah, Lily, may I borrow Nick for a few hours later tonight?” asked Dumbledore.

“Why?” frowned Lily confused.

“I’m hoping Horace Slughorn would come to teach, and I want him to meet Nick he is after all one of the best potions students!” said Dumbledore cheerfully. He knew that wasn’t true he believed Severus over Reese any day. However, if it got him what he wanted with a bit of flattery then so be it.

“Oh, that’s fine! No problem at all!” beamed Lily happily.

The rest of the teachers just muttered under their breaths.

“Good,” declared Dumbledore ignoring the rest of the teachers mutterings, by the looks of it - it was something he was going to have to get use to.

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“So what else have you been doing?” asked Eileen, who had been given every detail over the past week or so. Harry’s birthday was fast approaching, and Eileen was going to ask Severus what he had planned. Even if it was a special dinner with some cake afterwards it would be better than nothing.

“That’s it, oh yeah, my potion! The potion I made for the second task Severus wants us to publish it!” said Harry his face alight with passion.

“You to publish it not us, you created it after all.” said Severus stepping through the floo and catching the sentence.

“Oh…well ok then, and we are going to a conference! All about potions it’s going to be fascinating but I’m not sure about everyone there staring!” said Harry confiding in Eileen.

“You should have told me of such worries; the conference is in America, which means the majority of the people there will be American. Of course there are others who come, they are there for the potions in the end not to stare at an apprentice.” said Severus honestly sitting down and joining them for coffee.

“America?” gasped Harry wide eyed.

“Indeed, we shall be travelling a lot over the next few years to conferences and potions gathering.” said Severus.

“Wow, I’ve never been anywhere,” said Harry wide eyed.

“That will change,” said Severus smoothly.

“So when is this conference?” asked Eileen sounding interesting.
“It’s in two days time I believe, I shall have to check the magazine again.” said Severus.

“I think I shall accompany you both,” said Eileen, she had never been to one. She had never created a potion or attended a gathering. Of course not, she had fled the Wizarding world soon after graduating. Married Tobias had Severus then things went downhill, it was only after the man died that things had looked up once more. Now though she couldn’t stand for hours on end brewing potions like she would have loved to. She didn’t have stable hands to stir for hours and with precision.

“We would like that!” grinned Harry his face just about splitting in two. “How did it go at Hogwarts?” his smile faded and he looked worried now.

“He’s doing it; it’s just a question on how many days you will be at Hogwarts. Albus is going to try and see if they can fit into one day,” said Severus smoothly.

“Brilliant! I was so worried he wouldn’t … I’m not important enough for him to make exceptions for.” he said a little bitterly but brightened up; he had gotten his way screw what Dumbledore thought or did.

So far this Sunday had turned out to be the best day he had in a long time. Eileen was here, Severus was here, he was returning to Hogwarts and he was gaining a Mastery slowly but surely. Luna was going to be happy that was one thing anyway, she hadn’t been keen on him not being at Hogwarts. Not that it mattered really, because she was going to be alone for her seventh year. He was a year older than her unfortunately, wouldn’t stop him hexing someone to hell and back if they dared hurt her.

“You are important to us!” said Eileen adamantly patting him on the knee comfortably.

“Thank you…thank you both” said Harry from the bottom of his heart.

Viktor, Luna, Eileen, and Severus - he’d die for all of them and if the prophecy was any indication he just might end up dying for them all. Right now he was no match for a man with thirty years magical experience. From what he got from Voldemort was that he had been abandoned at an Orphanage, the wizarding world didn’t have one. So he was abandoned in the Muggle world and probably found out when he was eleven. He had spent the last thirteen years as a spirit so yeah, thirty years or maybe less or more he didn’t know everything nor did he claim to.
Chapter 22

Invisible

Chapter 22

Dumbledore Slughorn and Conferences

Albus Dumbledore did borrow Nick Potter, apparating them to a small house in a Muggle
neighbourhood. Horus had been very…edgy and mysterious since he left Hogwarts. He hardly
spoke to anyone, and when he did it was short words. He had left shortly after Voldemort started
his reign of power, or rather when he had found out it was his former student killing people. Albus
hadn’t thought anything of it, but now though it was coming back to him.

“Where are we? Where is this?” asked Nick screwing his nose up in disgust.

“This is where Horus Slughorn stays, he’s a potions teacher and I’m hoping to employ him.”
explained Albus.

“What’s wrong with Professor Reese?” exclaimed Nick angrily. Reese loved him, and he was
helping him with potions even if it was turning out to be a waste of space. He was kindly ensuring
he could be an Auror when the time came - potions was important because it was one of the ways
for one to conceal themselves.

“He has decided to … move on Professor Slughorn is an admirer of people with talent and fame.
He likes to create clubs with the students and help them, he’s also an admirer of yours.” placated
Dumbledore beaming proudly.

“Oh, well I suppose that’s why you asked me to come?” smiled Nick feeling important.

“Yes indeed,” said Dumbledore for all the wrong reasons but he didn’t add that.

“Brilliant!” grinned Nick excited to meet someone new who loved him.

Dumbledore knocked the door and Nick waited impatiently.

“Coming!” yelled a voice from inside, grumbling could be heard as he opened the door the grumpy
look turned to surprise and shock. “Albus? What are you doing here?” blinked the stunned man.

“Ah, Horus, good to see you, may I introduce you to a student of mine…Nicolas Potter.” said
Dumbledore his eyes twinkling in triumph.

“Come in, come in before someone sees you,” said Horus looking decidedly more cheerful with
that information.

“It’s nice to meet you,” said Nick imperiously.

“Yes, it’s nice to meet you as well,” said Horus staring at Nick curiously, he felt the child was far
too … smug for his liking.

“I’m sure you are wondering why we are here?” asked Dumbledore turning Horus’ attention from
Nick to him.

“Yes indeed…why are you here?” asked Horus suspiciously.
“I’m hoping you will come out of retirement and teach Potions this year?!” questioned Dumbledore sounding more desperate than he would have liked.

“Oh no Albus, I’m far too old for that!” said Slughorn shaking his head.

“That’s a shame, I’m sure Nick will be disappointed your Slug club is very exclusive,” said Dumbledore persuasively.

Horus looked deeply conflicted.

“That’s my mum!” exclaimed Nick looking at his mum, she was standing next to his eyes widened. Snape? Was that Snape of all people? He shuddered at the thought, where was his dad? Wasn’t he good at potions he’s an Auror so why wasn’t he there? His dad he had to have been in it … but he was no where to be found.

“Ah, yes! She was a very good student, one of the best I’ve ever taught! Especially for a Muggle born.” said Slughorn beaming proudly.

“Where’s dad?” asked Nick frowning in dismay.

“Ah, he wasn’t interested in potions like your mother was…he preferred pranking,” explained Horus beaming proudly at all the pictures he had on his wall. Each and every one of them were famous in one form or another, none more so than Tom Riddle, Severus Snape and Lily Potter.

“Oh,” said Nick, the way his parents got at him for better grades in first and second year he thought both of them were bookworms mistakenly placed in Gryffindor.

“Just for a few years Horus as a favour to me,” said Dumbledore.

“Alright,” sighed Horus, having the chance to have Nick Potter in his Slug Club was just too much temptation. He could tell everyone in year’s time that he had taught the child, the boy who had defeated Tom.

“Brilliant!” beamed Dumbledore happier than he had gotten what he wanted.

“No longer than three years Albus,” said Slughorn, Nick Potter’s fifth, sixth and Seventh years and he was gone. Going back to living in various Muggle towns trying to drown out his guilt but unable to say what he knew - the horror of it was just too much to contemplate.

“Very well,” said Albus happy with that. If Severus was correct though it wasn’t done with. He was going to have to create a contract, ensure he couldn’t get out of it or Horus would leave if he was no good. Nick Potter after all he was the only reason Horus was coming back.

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Harry was busy speaking to a few older apprentices from America, Severus was sitting beside the ‘Master’s’ talking about potions and answering their questions. The apprentices were ranging from eighteen to twenty four and there were a few jealous ones. Harry could see the contempt and scorn in their eyes he avoided those ones when he could. Really, imagine being jealous just because he had created a potion and they hadn’t. A few of them were really nice though, thinking it was really good that he had been able to decide what he wanted to do so early in life.

“This is a good first potion to create Severus, I can see why you took him on” said Master Soren sounding deeply impressed.

Severus smirked in amusement and nodded his head curtly.
“Never though I’d see the day where you took on an apprentice, after everything we have heard you saying about children and Potter’s.” said Master Grimm coming up behind them and sitting down.

“He isn’t a Potter,” smirked Severus victoriously.

“No…no he’s not is what we are hearing over here true?” asked Master Grimm staring curiously at the fourteen year old who had created a nifty little potion. He looked back at Severus his peppery hair tied back in a ponytail his aging face showing nothing but curiosity.

“That Jacob depends on what you have heard,” said Severus seriously, regarding Grimm with a speculative look wondering what he had heard.

“It’s been said he denied his son an education for one,” said Master Grimm looking utterly disgusted.

Severus checked on his apprentice, making sure he was well enough away from the conversation. No doubt Harry wanted to avoid this, the constant staring and talking about him, he had been wrong after all. It wasn’t all about Potions, and somehow people over hear had heard about what the Potter’s have done. When he turned back he had five Potion Masters staring intently at him, waiting on him telling them if it was true or not.

“That is true, fortunately Harry was smart enough to find a way to learn himself,” said Severus not divulging just how he had done such a thing and having no intentions on doing so.

“Unbelievable!” cried Master Russell, “Poppycock! How could they do such a thing?”

“No doubt you have heard of Nicolas Potter,” said Severus his lip curling in disgust at just the mere mention of him.

“Of course,” scoffed Master Soren, who hadn’t? It doesn’t matter where you are in the world everyone had heard about Nicolas Potter. You would have had to have been under a rock for the past decade and more to not have heard. Many scholars had tried to understand just how Nick Potter had survived but no reason had come forth yet. It was a miracle most people called it, and they adored him for it. Although a lot of people, didn’t care about it, some people were happy it happened and getting on with their lives. Everyone in the UK though couldn’t get enough of their little celebrity Severus being one of the many exceptions. Severus wasn’t one to hold his tongue and especially with like minded people such as himself. Or rather people that weren’t from the United Kingdom who couldn’t care about Nick Potter either.

“Well Harry is his twin brother, in age and hair colour only that’s where their likeness ends. I’m afraid they forgot about him in their quest to make their beloved Boy Who Lived happy.” said Severus scorn and disgust apparent for all to hear.

“They have another sprog don’t they?” asked Master Damon cautiously.

“Indeed they do, Roxanne starting Hogwarts this year if I heard correct,” said Severus emotionlessly.

“And her education?” asked Master Soren curiously.

“As far as I am aware it’s just Harry they neglected,” said Severus bitterly.

“I think they may have neglected the best of the lot, that boy’s going to go places and do great things.” said Master Russell.
“No doubt I shall ensure he expands his full potential.” said Severus grim determination on his face.

“No doubt Severus, if anyone can do it its you.” said Master Grimm passionately.

“If it’s the last thing I do I shall do it,” said Severus, his face showing his seriousness.

“Well Severus, here you go for your apprentice, his potion has been added to the potions made this decade,” said Master James. Handing over the book, for Severus to see for himself the good thing with magic they could add newly created potions to the book and it would appear in them all. Every Potion Master and Potion enthusiastic had this book and never let it out of their sight. It cost a lot of money, but was well worth it no doubt the Potions Weekly already had it and it would be added to the Potions Monthly too. This was being awarded to Harry for creating the potion and for his dedication to the arts of brewing.

“Thank you,” said Severus curtly.

“No problem!” said Master James walking away back to his table.

“Severus you coming for a drink?” asked Master Soren.

“Actually not this year, unfortunately my apprentice is under age, plus I have my mother with me this year as you know. I best go and see to her, ensure she’s not bought the entire store,” smirked Severus. When he did go to these conferences he did indeed go out and have a drink with these Master Potion makers. The excuse he had given was very much true, he wasn’t about to leave Harry here with these people. He as well had seen a few of the envious looks a few jealous idiots were giving him. In fact he had seen it yesterday before Harry had spoken to anyone, when Harry had taken the stage to tell them about the potion and how he created it the faces of a few showed anger and jealously. Harry had been very uncomfortable about some of the questions that had been asked. Severus had stood up and walked over to his apprentice and stood by his side staring coolly at them. Daring them to start asking questions that had nothing to do with the potion again. One of the questions had basically accused him of finding it somewhere or stealing it from someone.

Conferences lasted three days and were for most parts boring, but if you wanted your potions advertised then needs a must.

“Very well Severus, perhaps tomorrow then!” grinned Master Damon.

“Perhaps,” nodded Severus smirking slightly his own version of a grin.

Severus got up, nodding at them all in turn before he went off to find his apprentice. If he hadn’t such good eyesight it would have been very difficult indeed, Harry was the smallest, as tall as he was for his age he was nothing on older people. He made his way making sure not to touch people, until finally he was standing in front of Harry.

“Harry…ready to go?” asked Severus smoothly.

“Yes sir!” said Harry looking greatly relieved.

“Then come,” said Severus, “Let’s go and see to mother before she’s bought the entire shop.”

Harry snickered nodding in agreement they both went down the stairs to the potions stop that had been temporary set up. Not only normal every day ingredients were on sale, but difficult to find ingredients were on auction. Which included some Basilisk ingredients; it was a good job Harry already knew Dumbledore had given him the Basilisk. He had disapproved of the fact Dumbledore
had used Fawkes to get the Basilisk to give it away. It had technically speaking been his, he had
defeated it after all not that he had known that at the time. His money worries would have been
over if he had known, now though it was impossible to do what he wished with it. Severus hadn’t
truly thought about it from Harry’s point of view until he had told the teenager. A good portion of
the money had been put into Harry’s private vault since then, and he had also been given some of
the basilisk to use as he pleased.

“Ah, Mother, I’m glad to see you haven’t bought everything in sight,” said Severus smirking
slightly. She was sitting talking to someone, with a nice cup of tea in her hand. She had a small bag
on the table, it being the only potions she had bought. Ingredients shouldn’t be shrunk it wasn’t
good for them, magic shouldn’t be performed around potion ingredients them being magical
themselves.

“Severus! Harry! Is the conference done already?” asked Eileen surprised to see them, she looked
at her pocket watch curiously and saw three hours had indeed passed. “My goodness! Time has
flown!”

“It’s of no consequence pick what you like, we will leave in approximately an hour” said Severus
smoothly waving his wand flippantly. Harry had his own potions kit, and Severus had encouraged
him to expand it more than just the normal ingredients one has in their kit. You never knew when it
came in handy, especially during experiments.

“I didn’t bring money with me…” said Harry he had been unaware that he could buy ingredients or
do anything while at the conference. Next time he was bringing money with him, they had seen
quite a few places in America and he loved it. It wasn’t just a conference; Severus had taken him to
hunt for ingredients. He had insisted that there was no point in paying for ingredients you could get
yourself. They had eaten out every night, eating food he had never tasted before, Muggle food! He
had loved the hamberger or was it hamburger either way it had been delicious. The ice cream was
very different; he had gotten a crunchie or crunchy McFlurry. It was nice just not the same as
Fortescue’s not that he had been allowed a lot of it. He had never been allowed out with his family
often, so he had been about nine or ten before he had tasted one.

“I’m going to have a look around, I shall leave you to it, we will go have something to eat then get
back to the hotel.” said Severus smoothly.

Eileen smiled and nodded; not at all shocked at her son’s demands he had been like that for many
years. She was the mother not the child, but she wasn’t about to argue her feet were sore with all
the walking she had done. They had been broken too many times to ever be comfortable walking
long. Tobias knowing she could use magic to fix herself had made him all the more vicious and
leaving her in a pool of blood. She had lost count after the first three times he had broken her legs
in various places. Unfortunately magic wasn’t a miracle worker, despite the fact they were healed
they had been re-healed many times and they were just weak no matter what she did.

“I think I’ll have to buy a bigger pouch!” commented Harry from where he sat on the floor added
his ingredients to their jars. Once in the jars they went into the pouches, the pouches were
magically enhanced to fit big jars into them. With little magic as possible so not to contaminate the
They had just been to a restaurant to have a very fancy dinner, dressed in Muggle clothes. It was odd for Harry who had never truly been in the Muggle world, but to Severus and Eileen it was something they were used to. Odd but fun, Harry loved it, he loved everything about the trip. Harry had a steak, rare, baby potatoes, and peas with a crème caramel and an ice cream Ben and Jerry’s it had been called.

“Then we shall get one while we are here, I think you are better of with a dragon hide one,” said Severus smoothly from where he sat potion journal in hand. He had given Harry his book and he had exclaimed excitedly over it. It looked so profession, his potion now written in the book different from his writing on his personal potion journal.

Eileen was sitting on the couch near the fire just positively beaming over her son and the boy she loved like one. She had been the first one to buy Harry’s potion, just like she had been the first to buy Severus’ via owl post. She could have got it for free but she wanted to buy it - be the first one to do so at that.

“The magical shopping area here is three times the size of Diagon Alley and Hogsmeade together.” said Eileen; she had been there just yesterday for a few hours, mostly sitting down enjoying a cuppa with Elizabeth the same woman she had sat with today. She was a Potions Mistress; her son was following in her footsteps, apprenticed to Master Soren. She attended every potions conference she could, with her getting old herself it was hard to do so she had found a friend in Eileen.

“Really? Wow I can only imagine!” gasped Harry wide eyed.

Eileen just smiled kindly in turn.

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When Albus Dumbledore opened his newspaper across the water the headline surprised him. Not just him but everyone, the Potters’ though looked at the paper as if it had a foul smell to it. They weren’t happy with Harry right now, especially with all the press surrounding him. He was killing Nick’s limelight and his chances to shine; it was after all Nick that was better at everything. Everyone knew that the Potter’s didn’t understand why they were so fascinated by their unimportant child.

Harry Peverell - Youngest ever recorded Potions creator

“Excuse me Albus…who is Harry Peverell?” asked Slughorn he hadn’t been reading the newspapers.

“Haven’t you been reading the Prophet?” chimed in Sprout quickly before anyone else could.

“No, I do not read Wizarding papers I haven’t done for weeks,” said Slughorn confusion evident in his voice. Since Voldemort had come back to be exact.

“The Potter’s didn’t educate their son, Nick Potter’s twin - his name was Harry Potter. He got himself emancipated and became the Peverell heir the head of the Potter family.” said Spout looking very disgusted and openly showing it despite the fact that the Potter’s were sitting in front of her.

“Didn’t educate?” spluttered Slughorn.
“No, they neglected him also ever since the night You-Know-Who was destroyed.” said Sprout with no small amount of disgust.

“No, they neglected him also ever since the night You-Know-Who was destroyed.” said Sprout with no small amount of disgust.

“Neglect?” said Slughorn spluttering even worse - in fact he looked ready to suffer from apoplexy.

“Indeed,” said Poppy her face closed off.

“I’d say Harry’s doing very well for himself, he has incapacitated or kill four Death Eater.” said Flitwick proudly.

Slughorn’s eyes were almost popping out of his head “How on earth did that happen?”

“He was kidnapped; Nick left his brother in Voldemort’s clutches and got a Portkey back here. He was three feet from him, three feet it wouldn’t have taken him a few seconds to grab him and get them both to safety.” said Flitwick disdainfully.

“Now, now he’s only fourteen years old and he was very scared!” said Dumbledore soothingly trying to get it into his teachers to behave.

“His own brother saved his life! Both their lives and that’s how he repays him?” argued Sprout the head of Huffelpuff house - loyalty meant everything to the short plump woman.

“SHUT UP! SHUT UP SHUT UP!” yelled Nick furiously. He did feel slightly guilty that he had left him, but only because he had managed to get away and ruin his reputation. He had gone to Diagon Alley on Sunday afternoon and it couldn’t have gone worse. People were staring at him as if he was a Slytherin, as if he had done something horrid. Nobody was asking for his autograph and nobody was giving him anything for free or with discounts because he was famous Nick Potter. Nobody wanted his picture anymore and he did not like it at all. Nobody had cared about Harry before; he just couldn’t understand why everyone did now.

“Excuse me? Twenty points from Gryffindor the second Hogwarts starts back up!” gasped Professor Flitwick angrily.

“Come, Nick we know when we aren’t wanted,” sniffed Lily quickly gathering her husband and son together. Nick stomped off away from both his parents, tears making their way down his face, life was becoming unbarable. He wasn’t used to people being horrid with him, he just wished life could go back to the way it was. It was impossible though, there was nothing he could do now.

“I’ll say! What’s been going on.” said Slughorn utterly baffled, wishing now he had been reading the newspapers.

“A lot happened since Harry managed to get out of You-Know-Who’s clutches,” said admitted Minerva.

“How did he manage that?” gaped Slughorn.

“He apparated,” sighed Dumbledore eventually seeing everyone looking at him.

“At fourteen? Where was he?” asked Slughorn impressed.

“Malfoy Manor,” said Flitwick.

“A warded manor? At fourteen? He’s very powerful indeed…and he’s created his own potion? Well he’s going places for sure!” said Slughorn very proud indeed.
“He killed Peter Pettigrew, the man who betrayed his…well family a basting curse to the chest.” said Minerva proud as well.

“The other three?” asked Slughorn.

“He went straight to the Ministry and reported them; Macnair was sentenced to the Dementors kiss. Avery and Malfoy were sentenced to Azkaban, both receiving more than one life sentence.” said Minerva.

“He also destroyed Voldemort’s snake, Nagini.” said Dumbledore eventually putting his own piece of information in. he was impressed too; he just hated the fact that it was Harry and not Nick once more. Nick was supposed to be the Boy who Lived, the Hero instead it seemed Harry was playing the hero.

“That’s nothing, he destroyed a Basilisk,” scoffed Poppy, she was one of the first people to hear.

“Basilisk?” stuttered Slughorn feeling faint.

“Oh yes, at the age of twelve,” said Poppy smiling proudly that the child had managed to actually defeat it.

“Oh, I need a drink,” exclaimed Slughorn. “I shall look forward to teaching him!”

“You won’t be he’s apprenticed to Severus Snape,” smiled Filius knowing without a doubt the boy would flourish under the wings of Severus Snape. Not that he wasn’t doing well before then he had done very well for himself before becoming an apprentice. The youngest apprentice, the youngest potions creator, the youngest boy to actually survive a duel with Lord Voldemort (Nick wasn’t included it wasn’t a duel). Going places indeed.

“Well I cannot blame him…” sighed Slughorn sighing in disappointment.

“He will be at Hogwarts, he’s taking a few classes just not Defence and Potions, no doubt he’s learning those from Severus.” explained Minerva. She had been approached by Dumbledore to split her fifth year transfiguration class for the Gryffindor and Ravenclaw’s into hours. Making the Monday the actual transfiguring work and the Friday the reading day. She had of course agreed someone was learning something they loved and wanted to learn his normal education to and he had her respect. Tam-o’-shanter® off to him.


“I believe it was Mr. Peverell’s choice,” said Dumbledore in defence of the man he loved like a son.

“I see, well I only wish most children took their education as serious as him, good on him!” said Slughorn happily.

“Indeed,” smiled Dumbledore.

“I do not believe Lily could do such a thing…she used to be such a sweet girl! Sure she had a temper on her that could knock you back but…” said Slughorn loss for words.

“Oh I know believe me I couldn’t believe it when I read the papers but he couldn’t have lied with Severus and got away with it.” said Minerva knowing good and well Severus could sense liars and so could Dumbledore come to that. Plus James’ reaction had basically told her everything she
wanted to know.

"Look Remus," sighed Sirius handing over the paper a tortured proud look in his eyes. He had been thinking about Harry constantly, reading his letter and wondering what he should do. Wondering if it was best to back off like Harry asked or try and get to know him, break him down or risk alienating him further.

Remus had decided only to go to Hogwarts when he would be teaching Nick, he would be working along beside Albus in teaching Nick Defence. The first thing Remus was going to teach him was the Patronus charm, the Dementors would soon join Voldemort, and they always did in the end. It was best if they knew the Patronus charm, he could only hope whoever the new defence teacher was the same. He didn’t want to see the Potter’s anymore than he needed to, he could only hope Nick could understand.

Taking the newspaper a sad smile worked its way onto his face, Harry had created a potion. It seemed the apprenticeship had been a good thing after all, and then again he shouldn’t have doubted Snape. Severus Snape hated potions students who didn’t know what they were doing. To take on Harry he must be very good indeed, especially since it was a Potter…well Peverell now really.

"Well done Harry," sighed Remus sadly putting the paper down.

"He really doesn’t care about us.” said Sirius out of the blue.

"Why should he? We didn’t care about him.” said Remus it was hard for him to say, even harder for him to admit but it was nevertheless true.

"Don’t Remus,” grimaced Sirius his blue eyes were tired and suddenly agony filled.

"Sirius…you have to do what he asks,” sighed Remus sadly, he knew his friend had been moping about trying to decide what to do he wasn’t stupid. He had known Sirius for too long to not know what was wrong.

"I can’t…he’s my godson…” choked Sirius.

"Yes, he’s always been your godson, Harry’s right you wouldn’t care if you don’t know.” sighed Remus his heart twisting with every word he said - mostly because they were true.

"I know,” rasped Sirius dryly.

"Just write him a letter tell him you will keep your distance, but ask if you can at least keep in touch…ask him if you can at least know he’s alright every month…it might turn into more.” said Remus softly.

"I guess,” said Sirius reluctantly, but he knew deep down it was the best option for him.

"Perhaps give it to him on his birthday with a present, let him know you haven’t forgotten this one at least. Be honest with him you never know it might just work in your favour.” said Remus he was desperate to just pull Harry into a hug and never let him go. However, he knew it wouldn’t go well; Harry had made it perfectly clear he wanted nothing to do with them. If there was even a chance that Sirius could keep in touch Remus had to help him.

“I suppose so,” sighed Sirius, “Will I get Nick something?”
“It’s not him you are mad at!” snapped Remus sternly.

“Oh ho I am, he thinks how his father and mother treated his twin is perfectly normal!” snapped Sirius angrily.

Remus stopped stunned his mouth open in mid way seemingly shocked by what had just come out of his best friend’s mouth.

“What?” asked Remus shaking his head as if to re-arrange the words and make them make sense.

“That’s right Remus…he boasted about it…I think he took Harry’s presents” said Sirius.

“What…now you aren’t going to tell Harry lies!” snapped Remus.

“No listen, Harry’s letter said three or four years old…it’s not true I gave him presents until he was seven years old at least. I remember going to get two seven year old cards from the shop and two presents. I remember I stopped when I didn’t hear back from Harry for years. He never wrote to me…not even to say thank you for the presents and I just…forget him over time.” explained Sirius.

“They wouldn’t,” rasped Remus his entire world collapsing alarmingly.

Sirius just stared at his friend in misery.

* - Tam-o’-shanter - a hat (Scottish)
Chapter 23

Potter Humiliation and Patronus'

Albus and Remus were standing in the defence classroom waiting on Nick Potter appearing. Neither spoke, it seemed there was nothing to be said which was strange really. Remus was actually a pretty good man, despite the fact he was a werewolf and always took the time to speak to others. Remus looked at the clock once more wondering where on earth Nick was. He was ten minutes late, he was just about to ask Albus when he heard soft patters of footsteps. His hearing was brilliant, especially just before and after the full moon just like his counterparts (moony).

“Hi Uncle Remus!” grinned Nick looking extremely pleased to see him.

“Hello Nick, why are you late?” asked Remus his amber eyes regarding Nick solemnly.

“It’s only a few minutes,” protested Nick taken aback. He had been late before last summer and Remus hadn’t minded then what was wrong with everyone.

“Ten minutes actually, but never mind let’s get this lesson on with I have paperwork to get on with.” said Dumbledore. He had, had a long conversation with Cornelius Fudge; having to make sure the silly man knew that he had no intentions of running as Minister. Fudge seemed terrified that he wanted to take over, after swearing the oath he didn’t intent to take over minister while he (Fudge) was Minister he was finally able to speak to him. Now as they speak a few Wizards with Hagrid as a guide were tracking down the Giants to see if they would join the war.

After the summer holidays Remus was going to hunt for werewolf’s and convince them to join their cause. Unfortunately he believed it was for nothing, they hadn’t joined the last time and with Umbridge’s law he doubted they’d side with them now even more. He was going to try and get the law abolished before Remus approached them hence the paperwork he had in his office. It was too bad Fudge was actually fond of the toad woman, who was currently his undersecretary. He wasn’t sure why she hated werewolf’s so much but he had a feeling she had, had a bad encounter with them.

For now they had a boy to train for the up coming war and that was the first thing they had to get done.

“Nick do you know the Patronus Charm?” asked Remus sitting down gesturing for the boy to do the same. If he was doing this he might as well get comfortable, his body ached something fierce for some reason.

“Yeah,” said Nick.

“Do you know the incantation?” asked Albus joining in the conversation.

“Yes, Expecto Patronum.” said Nick.

“Do you know what you need to do to make the spell work?” asked Remus once he was sure Albus wasn’t about to speak again.
“Happy memories,” sighed Nick looking bored.

“Then give it a try point your wand straight ahead and say the spell,” said Remus standing up when Nick did. The tables and Chairs were all against the side, leaving the entire room basically empty. There was more than enough room to move around right now, both amber eyes and blue twinkling eyes watched in anticipation to see if Nick would manage the spell. He was Voldemort’s equal or so they believed, he must be able to do the spell.

“Expecto Patronum!” yelled Nick pointing his wand forward, mist erupted from his wand.

“Good result for a first try, tell me Nick what were you thinking off?” asked Dumbledore.

“Getting the new broomstick that’s on the market,” said Nick grinning wickedly.

“No Nicolas, that isn’t how it’s supposed to work, think of the happiest memory you have and let it consume you. Do not make memories up they need to be real and they need to have very positive emotions.” Albus lectured.

“Alright,” said Nick his bottom lip jutting out feeling very petulant.

“Again,” said Remus nodding encouragingly.

“Expecto Patronum!” chanted Nick his wand out in front of him.

Again the same amount of mist came out.

“Again,” said Albus they couldn’t perform the spell for him he had to do it on his own. That spell was very handy especially now, the Dementors almost joined Voldemort’s side the last time. It was only a matter of time before he approached them again, so it was one of the most important spells he had to learn right now.

“Expecto Patronum!” cried Nick desperately.

Less smoke appeared.

“I don’t know what’s wrong!” he whined pitifully.

“Try a different memory Nicolas,” soothed Dumbledore kindly.

“The one you are using wasn’t strong enough,” Remus chimed in.

Nick nodded grimly closing his eyes he tried to think of a genuinely very happy memory. Obviously the ones where he got lots of presents weren’t good enough, but they were to him deep in thought he couldn’t say he genuinely had a very happy memory not the way the Patronus required it. That was just silly, he thought to himself any happy memory must be good enough. Perhaps one without his brother last summer maybe? Before everything had gone wrong spending his summer with his family. The outing to the beach everyone together without his stupid brother. Thinking on that memory with all his might he raised his wand once more and yelled the spell again.

“Expecto Patronum!”

Again smoke billowed out not even a distinctive shape forming.

The same words continued to fill the classroom for what seemed like forever.
“This is going nowhere,” sighed Albus, they had been at it for three hours now. Nick was getting exhausted, smoke wasn’t even coming out of the wand anymore, and the boy looked ready to collapse. It was a hard spell to master, Albus knew he was being hard on the boy but needs a must.

“No, it’s not perhaps next time,” sighed Remus running his hand through his messy sandy hair.

Suddenly the door to the classroom opened and James entered along with Lily. Remus refused to even look at them; he suddenly found the back of the classroom rather fascinating. All he could hear was the words Sirius uttered just last night that he had sent Harry presents until he was seven years old at least. Nick couldn’t have been bad at that age, James and Lily must have given them both to Nick. He felt very disgusted with them and he was afraid if he looked at them he would lose the little self control he had left.

“Are you finished? We are taking Nick to get his school things,” enquired James.

“What? Do I have to?” asked Nick looking extremely put out. He did not want to have to go to Diagon Alley or even Hogsmeade. Not with how people were being with him, it hurt to see so many people being nasty to him. Glaring at him and treating him like a leper after everything he had done for them. He was the one who had saved them from Voldemort nearly at the price of his own life. It was by his doing they had been freed from the evil that was Lord Voldemort. Yet because of one mistake everything was going to hell and Nick didn’t know how to deal with it.

“We are going to get you your new broom,” said James hoping that would cheer his son up.

“Really?” asked Nick instantly perking up.

“Yes, perhaps that will ensure you will beat Malfoy and win Gryffindor the House cup,” grinned James happily. He couldn’t help but admit he was disappointed his son hadn’t won his team the house cup. He had when he was in Hogwarts, the cup still remained in Hogwarts in one of the many cabinets he was sure.

“So let’s get going!” said Lily adamantly.

“Let’s go then!” grinned Nick eager now to go and receive the newest broom on the market.

“We shall see you late Albus,” said Lily.

“Remus do you want to come?” asked James hesitantly.

“No thank you,” said Remus his voice was different from how he had been speaking earlier. He sounded angry, he growled out the words as if they pained him. James sighed in defeat; nodding his head warily he left the room followed by his wife and son.

“You should not be too hard on them, we all made the same mistake.” said Dumbledore looking at Remus reproachfully.

“We weren’t there, what we did wasn’t half as bad as what they did. It wasn’t bad enough they forgot their son, denied him an education they also gave Nick Harry’s presents. Now Nick is under the impression how they treated Harry was normal.” said Remus grinding his teeth in frustration. He wanted nothing more than to hunt Harry down and get on his knees and beg for forgiveness. Much like Sirius, but he knew it wouldn’t do any good he was the level headed one he knew what he would do if the situation was reversed.

“Now that cannot be true,” protested Albus his eyes wider than normal and his customary twinkle was missing.
“I’m afraid it is, goodbye Albus,” said Remus swiftly leaving the defence classroom leaving one very stunned old wizard staring at the door as if he hadn’t seen it before.

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“No leave it to cool and let’s get on with defence,” said Severus smoothly.

“Alright,” said Harry putting the fire under his cauldron out and levitating it over to the stands to cool.

“The next spell I want you to learn is an important one, soon the Dark Lord will be gathering the dark forces to join him. The first no doubt to join will be the Dementors, they are the easiest swayed beasts. The promise of fresh innocent souls to eat upon has them easily controllable. So I want you to learn the Patronus Charm have you heard of it?” asked Severus not expecting Harry to have as it was a passed Hogwarts spell.

“I’ve heard of it, vaguely…it’s a charm that drives away Dementors taking the form of something close to you. The spell is Expecto Patronum isn’t it?” asked Harry thoughtfully. Trying to remember everything he had read upon the charm, he could swear it was in one of the books he had copied from the Potter library. The thing was he hadn’t read them in years, too fascinated by newer books he had. He promised himself to go back and re-read everything he had when he could.

“Exactly, now this spell isn’t something that was taught at Hogwarts it’s far to advanced. You need strong emotion and memories to perform this spell, happy memories strong enough to fight the affects of Dementors. Now do not be disappointed should nothing happen at first it takes time to perfect this spell.” said Severus in warning.

“I understand,” nodded Harry hesitantly. He didn’t want to let Severus down by failing this spell. So far every spell he had learned he had managed to get before they stopped practising which was one or two hours. From what Severus was saying he wasn’t going to be able to perfect the spell.

“Think of the happiest memory you have, remember it, live it, feel the emotions again then cast the spell - Expecto Patronum.” explained Severus watching Harry. He was undeniably proud of the young man there was no denying that. Harry had worked hard for him, and it was for him he could tell he had been reading people for a long time.

“Okay,” said Harry breathing deeply, thinking of the happiest memory he had. Closing his eyes he thought about the day Eileen let him live with her. The knowledge he didn’t have to go back to the Potters at all that summer. Making his own money and having someone that seemed to care about him for once. Remembering it, reliving it and remembering the rush of emotions he had felt he raised his wand eyes still closed he yelled the words “Expecto Patronum!”

Mist shot from the wand almost taking shape before the mist spread in a circular motion. It took the face of an animal of some kind, could be a tiger, panther or some other creature such as that.

“Very well done Harry, that was magnificent for a first try,” said Severus proudly his onyx eyes almost glittering in anticipation and admiration. Here stood a fourteen year old nearly fifteen with promise he had never seen before in his life. Even he hadn’t gotten any more than a soft wisp of mist on his first try. Nobody could say that Severus Snape wasn’t powerful, because he was very much so. Voldemort wouldn’t have wasted his time on anyone that wasn’t powerful, even if he was good at potions - potions only did so much. It was fighters he wanted, powerful wizards at his call to fight for him and his cause. Severus had been more powerful than most seventh years when he started at Hogwarts, also knew more spells than most Seventh years could dream about. He had taught some of that to Lily Evans before she had turned into a fame and money seeking woman he
saw today. It wasn’t surprising that her son was powerful, it helped he had been marked as Voldemort’s equal. He was Voldemort’s equal no denying that; he knew the teenager could speak Parseltongue. It made him wonder just how blinded Albus was, by Nick’s supposed ‘boy who lived’ title. Surely Albus could see that Harry being able to speak Parseltongue and the fact Nick couldn’t was a dead give away to the contents of the prophecy. Unless…Fawkes hadn’t told Dumbledore which seemed unlikely but if Fawkes came to Harry’s aid that meant Fawkes was as loyal to Harry as he was to Dumbledore. So perhaps Fawkes did indeed keep Harry’s secret and only told Dumbledore what he needed. No it was impossible, he had to know you needed to speak the snake tongue to get into the chamber Dumbledore had to know that at least…or at least suspect it.

“Thank you!” grinned Harry happily. He had been scared nothing would come out and that he would disappoint Severus. He had never done the spell before he hadn’t been sure what to expect. However, the spell was easy enough to cast, he hoped he could actually see what it would take soon.

“Give it another go,” said Severus smoothly, casting a tempus spell he realized they only had half an hour left before the potion could be poured into vials. They couldn’t leave it too late or the potion would turn hard and essentially ruin it.

“Expecto Patronum!” shouted Harry confidently. Thinking on the same memory this time his eyes was open so he could try and make out the shape his Patronus was taking. Unfortunately he couldn’t make it out any better than the last time, he wasn’t disheartened though because Severus said most seventh years couldn’t do it so he was proud of himself.

“Do not be dejected it can take a while for a fully fledged Patronus to form. The fact you can make a shape appear is promising indeed. Not many children or adults can produce a fully fledged Patronus just remember that.” said Severus smoothly.

“Really?” replied Harry his green eyes wide and full of wonder.

“Really” smirked Severus sardonically.

“Brilliant!” grinned Harry wickedly.

“Indeed,” was all Severus said in reply.

“Are we going to bottle the potion now?” asked Harry curiously.

“Indeed we must, let us go.” said Severus shaking himself off his thoughts and together they walked back into Prince Manor. They had their defence lessons out in the garden, too many precious artefacts to be broken inside. Plus they spent a lot of time down in the dungeons and it was nice yes even for Severus Snape to get outside into the sunshine for a few hours.

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“Can we get the broom first? Dad please!” pleaded Nicolas Potter as he walked with his mother, father and sister. They walked from Hogwarts to Hogsmeade then floo’ed to the Leaky Cauldron and they were now in Diagon Alley walking passed shops.

“Oh alright,” sighed James in fake dismay.

“YES!” whooped Nick grinning widely, things were finally looking back up for him. He couldn’t care about anyone else; he was going to have the newest broom available when he went back to Hogwarts. So he didn’t notice the scorn filled looks he received as he went by. He had no idea that
with or without the best broom on the market - he wasn’t going to be on the Quidditch team this year the Gryffindor’s had finally come to their senses.

“Mum can I get a new book? The new fashion book that’s just come out please?” asked Roxy.

“Of course you can,” said Lily smiling widely she loved her daughter and was so glad she had her. She was also glad her daughter was like her; Roxy loved her books and loved to learn. It was too bad Lily hadn’t taken one look at her other son and saw what the world did. Because Harry was actually more like her than any of the other children were. Harry was studious and had a thirst for knowledge that even surpassed Lily at any time in her life.

“Yes!” cried Roxy beaming brightly up at her mother. It was hard to believe that Roxy was only eleven years old, but to James and Lily they couldn’t believe their little girl was joining Hogwarts this year.

James smiled indulgently at his little girl wondering where all the years had gone not even sparing a thought for his other son.

That would change quickly.

They entered Quality Quidditch Supplies which was as usual crowded, even more so than usual because of the release of a new broom. Many were crowding around it gasping and awing at the beautiful broom. Exclaiming loudly and reading the written words below the broom.

“Hello, how can I help you?” asked Horvath, who was currently cleaning a broomstick with the best polish he had to offer in his shop. There was a tag on the broom, it was there for professional cleaning and it wasn’t for sale.

“I’d like to buy one of the new brooms,” said James smiling brightly his hand resting on his sons.

“The new one? I’m afraid they have sold out Mr. Potter” said Horvath.

“There’s one still on display, surely you can wrap that for us?” asked James taken aback he had always gotten on well with the owner of Quality Quidditch Supplies even as a small child. His father had brought him in for many of the newest broomsticks available.

“I like to keep that up so people can look…” said Horvath looking conflicted.

“But I want it!” demanded Nick angrily “Dad please!”

“I will pay ten more galleons for it.” suggested James hoping the man would give in he didn’t want to disappoint his son.

The prospect of ten more galleons hit home, he agreed walking over to the display cabinet he took it out. Wrapped it up and asked for the new total for the broomstick feeling quite happy with himself.

James handed over the key; the beauty of the keys was they could deposit the amount straight into the cash register. However something was horribly wrong, Horvath said the spell twice to transfer the money - nothing happened he seemed confused.

“I am sorry…you have insufficient funds in that account,” said Horvath handing it over waiting expectantly for another key.

James just stood there stunned, Lily stared at James wondering what was wrong, Nick and Roxy
just frowned not understanding what was going on. “But that’s the main Potter vault!” cried James alarmed.

“I see, give it here,” sighed Horvath inserting the key once more, he tried three times before he gave in. there was something wrong, there had to be insufficient funds in the account there was nothing wrong with his cash register thank you very much. He had just used it not ten minutes ago when someone paid for the full Quidditch gear.

“This cannot be happening,” said James white faced eyes wide and full of worry.

“What’s wrong?” whispered Lily her face bright red in humiliation especially for the way the shop keeper was looking at them.

“There’s no money.” stated James taking the key back and walking from the shop not even registering his son’s whining.

“That’s impossible!” snapped Lily wide eyed.

“I need to get to Gringotts,” said James his face still ashen but his cheeks were flushed red in utter embarrassment.

“Let’s get going then,” said Lily adamantly utterly furious with the Goblins for she was sure it was their fault their mistake.

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“I’d like to speak to Griphook please,” said James grimly.

“Very well,” grunted the teller yelling in his own tongue for Griphook.

Five minutes later Griphook finally made his appearance.

“I demand to know what’s wrong with my key! It’s not working!” said James quietly but his voice full of anger. He didn’t want to make a scene in front of all those Wizards and Witches but damn it he was angry.

“You are not the head of the family it’s not your place to ask such questions,” said Griphook withholding a feral smirk. It made his day seeing James Potter taken down a peg or rather five pegs but that was beside the point. He never thought he’d say the day where James Potter wasn’t a smug bastard. His father hadn’t been half as bad as him; at least Harold Nicolas Potter had respect for Goblins. James Potter didn’t respect anything, so yes, seeing him so angry was a blessing really. There was one Potter or er, rather Peverell he was fond off - Harry.

“It’s my money!” cried James unable to help himself.

“James calm down!” said Lily trying to get James to quieten down this was just so embarrassing.

“Calm down? We have no money Lily!” screeched James.

“People are looking,” said Lily her voice curt and demanding.

James looked around and saw she was right, they looked away when he looked at them but they were listening. Damn it everything was screwed up, he listened to his wife speaking.

“So what do we need to do to withdraw money?” asked Lily quietly.
“Ask Lord Peverell for an allowance,” grunted Griphook.

“I see, and there’s no other way?” she asked.

“Take money out of your son’s trust fund if there’s anything left,” said Griphook. However, he knew just how greedy Nick was, and knew he had more or less spent seven years worth of money in four years.

“It’s my money! It was left to me by my father Harold Nicolas Potter!” whined James sounding very much like his petulant son at that moment.

“The best you can do is contact your son,” said Griphook loving every minute of this.

“What does it mean dad?” asked Nick angrily.

“Nothing, nothing Nick, we are going back to Hogwarts and going to get this sorted. Let’s go we shall have to buy you the broom another day.” said Lily soothingly.

“But why?” moaned Nick.

“What about my book?” demanded Roxy crossing her arms and stomping her foot.

Lily just looked pleadingly at James to get them out of this situation quickly. They didn’t want any more dignity taken away from them than that was already taken. James closed his eyes and took a deep breath, before saying “Quiet both of you now; we will discuss this at Hogwarts. Let’s go we are holding everyone up,” said James quickly and both children groaned but did as they were bid.

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“What do we do James?” whimpered Lily, it was ten o’clock at night, and both their children were sleeping. Lily and James had been fretting for hours unable to say anything as their children had been there. It wasn’t a discussion you could have in the presence of their son and daughter.

“I don’t know,” said James weakly feeling like a failure as a husband and father. He gulped down the fire whiskey like it was juice temporarily making things seem less troubling.

“We are going to have to ask him aren’t we?” sighed Lily looking at the fire.

“No,” said James adamantly under no circumstances were they asking HIM for anything.

“But Roxy needs books! We need things James! We won’t be living at Hogwarts after the summer we need food…clothes!” said Lily wide eyed.

“You forget I’m going back to work after the summer is up, we will have our money then do not panic. Roxy can just have Nick’s old things I am not asking HIM for anything Lily.” slurred James looking more than a little tipsy.

“That’s not fair on Roxy!” snapped Lily.

“If you want to ask HIM for money go ahead,” said James.

Lily looked taken aback at the suggestion; she realized quite suddenly she wasn’t any more willing to beg their …flesh and blood for money any more than James was. She didn’t want to ask the boy she had given birth to for anything, boy she had given birth to she couldn’t even bring herself to say son. She couldn’t believe how suddenly things had twisted in on itself.
“What about using Nick’s vault? To get Roxy’s things I mean…we can put it back once you get paid.” suggested Lily she didn’t want her daughter going to Hogwarts with second hand things. The thought of what the others would say was embarrassing enough, no she didn’t want it. Nobody could know just how badly off they were, nobody could know they were penniless.

They didn’t realize every pureblood already knew.

Or that everyone was going to know regardless as it was going to be put in tomorrow’s edition of the Prophet courtesy of Rita Skeeter.

The Potter’s Penniless! No allowance for them!

Needless to say the Potter’s the four of them never showed face that day.
Invisible

Chapter 24

Letters, apologies and contemplation

True to his word Sirius Black had written a letter to Harry, promising to leave him alone as long as he wished it. Surprisingly or not so surprisingly (for those that truly knew him) it was the hardest letter he had ever had to write. He was an Auror and he had written his share of hard letters to write. Informing people who had lost loved ones during the war with Voldemort and other examples like that. Sirius had hated writing them out, he hated giving bad news to people. He knew just because he had hated his family, it didn’t mean all families hated one another. Remus had given Sirius the comfort and strength needed to write the letter. At the end of the day Sirius could only hope Harry came around one day and forgave him for his idiocy.

Sirius watched with wistful sadness as the black owl carrying the heartfelt letter to Harry. He looked at the framed newspaper clipping of Harry and smiled sadly. Nobody could take the credit for how well Harry was doing, he felt so proud and it made his heart ache. How could he have forgotten about him? His own godson, a boy he had sworn to protect against all odds when Voldemort targeted them. Maybe if he had been around more often he would have seen what James was doing. That hadn’t been the case; he had led the investigation into Peter Pettigrew, who ironically enough had been killed by Harry a few months ago.

One less villain they had to worry about, even worse it had come to light that Percy Weasley had, had a pet rat for years. Too many years for the rat to have been normal, it had to have been Pettigrew. Percy had stopped his parents from giving the rat to Ron, who in Percy’s option wouldn’t have cared for the ‘old rat properly’ so he had ended up with an owl and a rat. That’s where the bastard had been hiding out, and even worse the Weasley’s had been a constant in the Potter’s house and life for many years. Nick and Ron had been once best friends, not any more according to one of the letters he received from Nick. He was taking everything the fourteen year old said with a pinch of salt now of days, Ron being jealous might have been fabricated now that he knew Nick properly. His godson wasn’t as good and light as he had once assumed, he was very jealous, conceded and a brat. He hated saying it but it was true, and the worst was that Nick thought it was alright how they treated Harry.

Just as he was leaving the room he looked back and noticed James’ owl was making its way over. Gritting his teeth he ignored it and quickly headed down to the kitchen, Sirius had gotten all kinds of help to get the house into living order. Even allowing Kreacher to keep a few Black trinkets for his services and if he kept his mouth shut. Sirius almost smiled upon remembering the shock on the old house elves face. He had been stunned there was no doubt about it, and the most shocking thing of all - Kreacher had kept his mouth shut! No more back talking for him. Sirius had even managed to remove the portrait of his mother and the place was slowly beginning to take shape. It was far from over but at least all the vile things were gone - Boggarts, Doxys and silver instruments that tried to bite you if you touched it.

“A letter has just come from James, aren’t you going to open it?” asked Remus coming into the kitchen a pointed look on his face. Which basically said stop being immature about this and get it over with because you know you will read it in the end.

“Why should I?” asked Sirius a sulky look around him.
“Because it would be the mature thing to do, do not start being like James now.” said Remus patiently his amber eyes admonishing Sirius without saying anything.

“Give it here,” sniped Sirius grabbing the letter and opening it hastily. It only took him a few seconds before he burst into rancorous laughter. Remus’ eyes widened, and he tried and failed to pry the letter from Sirius’ grip to see where the bitter laughter had come from.

“Give me it,” said Remus not wanting to rip it but wanting to know what it said.

“Now now Remus be an adult about this.” chided Sirius watching Remus’ cheeks go red in embarrassment.

“What does it say?” asked Remus flicking his wand heating up the coffee pot and making them both a coffee and sitting down. Despite the fact he wanted nothing more than to rip the letter from Sirius’ hands still.

“He wants money,” said Sirius bitterly.

“What?!” Remus practically squawked the word out it was the last thing he expected.

“He doesn’t want to have to ask Harry,” sighed Sirius as he brought the warm mug into his hands heating them up.

“Does Harry realize he’s supposed to give them money now being the head of the fortune?” asked Remus speaking out loud more than to Sirius.

“I doubt it, he’s only fourteen years old Remus, he’s educated himself his entire life he wont realize he has cut them off entirely.” said Sirius, having no idea he had hit the nail on the head.

“Jesus this is so screwed up,” sighed Remus, five months ago everything had been alright. He had been training Nick, best friends with Sirius, James, Lily and getting to know Roxy more. Alright instead of perfect, he had after all not even thought of Harry, even when he was educating them. He had been too busy getting to know Nick, he had failed Harry too even more than Sirius had because he had seen Harry all his third year and ignored him like his parents had done.

“Tell me about it,” said Sirius sadly looking into the coloured water of his coffee feeling utterly disheartened.

“I have to go in half an hour,” said Remus looking at the clock ticking away on the kitchen wall.

“Again?” asked Sirius he had assumed Remus was only going to be at Hogwarts a few times a week not every day.

“Albus wants Nick to perfect the Patronus Charm by the end of the week,” said Remus as his excuse.

“Do you think he can?” asked Sirius for once speaking of Nick without scorn since he had spoken to the teenager about Harry.

“I don’t know, we spent hours trying to get it but nothing appeared no hint of an animal,” confided Remus. “We are asking a lot of him I know, but Albus thinks he can do it so I guess he must be able to.”

“I wouldn’t take anything Albus says to you to heart; I don’t think he has the best interest in Nick. Dumbledore saw the Potter’s a lot more than we did; he’s bound to have realized something was
wrong. But as long as he had his hero I doubt he cared very much, Harry didn’t deserve this.” said Sirius grinding his teeth in frustration. How he wished he could go back in time and change things, raise Harry himself but he knew nobody could tamper with time. It was just too dangerous; there was nothing they could do that could make Sirius go back to when Harry was two years old anyway just in hours.

Remus didn’t reply he didn’t believe what Sirius was saying, Dumbledore did care about everyone. He mustn’t have known or he would have done something for Harry, anything at the end of the day. That’s what Remus believed but he as usual didn’t want to fight his friend - especially the only friend he had left. He wasn’t friends with Lily and James anymore; he couldn’t be no after learning what he did. Nick he was half in half on, he loved the boy he had thought Nick was…now he wasn’t sure. Nick had left his brother for dead and it wasn’t something Remus would do to a friend never mind a sibling.

It was silent as both men drank their coffees before Remus eventually had to leave for Hogwarts. It was time for another round with Nick Potter and the mist part two.

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Harry had just finished writing out his quiz; no doubt Severus would be up in five minutes. It was freaky how it happened; he was always finished for five minutes exactly before Severus came back up from finishing his potions. Once again he would be doing practical defence before lunch then potions. Most people his age would be furious with having to get up so early, even more so having to learn all summer. However, as most could see Harry was no ordinary teenager. Harry realized what was at stake if he didn’t learn, didn’t get taught all he could.

True he didn’t care about his family; he didn’t care about most of the wizarding world. Why should he? After all they didn’t care about him all they cared about was Nick Potter. Or so he thought, Harry had no idea about the world wide respect he was getting from everyone. Not often could a fourteen year old create a potion, nor did they do good enough to become an apprentice never mind to one such as Severus Snape. Who was also widely known and everyone knew he wouldn’t just take an apprentice on - they had realized quite quickly Harry must be really good.

There were few people who Harry trusted, and he could tick them off on a single hand. Luna, Cedric, Viktor, Severus and Eileen. Although there was a limit he would ever trust them, three he’d trust with who he truly was. Two of those already knew anyway, Luna he would have to tell soon.

Just as he pushed his papers to the side and put his quill away an owl came through the open window and onto the table. He recognised the owl, it was Sirius black’s, not just from the letter he got days ago but because the owl was very frequent at the Potter’s. A sad sigh left his lips, why wouldn’t they leave him alone? That’s all he had asked for. They had never spoken to him for years why did it matter now? Well he’d be damned if he helped them feel less guilty over what they did.

Opening the letter he quickly began reading it - the quicker the better in his opinion.

Harry

I know you wanted me to leave you alone, and after this letter I will do as you wish. I want you to know I did love you, no matter how unlikely it seems to you. I know I let you down and all I can say is I am so sorry about that. I am not trying to pass the blame when I tell you this; I stopped giving you presents when you were seven years old, not four. I stopped because I never got a thank you card from you, when I got one from both Nick and Roxy. I don’t know what happened to them, but I am assuming with everything else that came to light Nick got them instead.
If there is even a small hope of reconciliation I will take it, even if it takes years. Will you at least write to me every few weeks to let me know how you are doing? I know I have no right to ask this considering my actions over the years. But I am asking I do want to make up for how much I wronged you over these past seven years. Congratulations on your apprenticeship, I am so proud of you and I wish you the best.

Keep safe

Sirius Black
Padfoot

Harry didn’t know what the hell to think; on one hand he was the only one writing, attempting to right a wrong. On the other he still felt very angry towards them all, his parents, the world, his godfather his ‘Uncle Moony’ and most of all Nick. He placed the letter on the table and shooed the owl away and just sat there. He didn’t even hear Severus coming, which of course he wouldn’t. Severus was like a panther silent, deadly and ready to strike mostly because of his spying duties.

“Everything alright?” asked Severus, seeing his apprentice obviously distracted. He could see the letter on the table, and most of all saw the signature on the bottom. He wasn’t a nosy person by far or gossipy he just noticed things it was part of who he was. Assessing a room when he entered keeping his eyes open and aware of everything at all times.

“Just Black again,” sighed Harry in half exasperation half anger.

“Ready to try again?” said Severus, Harry had been looking forward to trying his Patronus again. Unbeknown to Severus, Harry had been practicing at night and he knew what his Patronus was. He knew what it was but it had yet to be fully formed yet, he just couldn’t seem to get it right.

“Yes!” grinned Harry immediately excited Black obviously pushed to the back of the boy’s mind.

Severus just smirked in amusement at how easy it was to please the fourteen year old.

“Then let’s go,” said Severus smoothly, as they both ventured outside in the sunshine to once again learn the Patronus charm. Severus was as usual dressed in black from head to toe with a long black billowing cloak to add the finish touch. Harry had a pair of black denim jeans and a blue t-shirt on and a long sleeved summer cloak which he promptly removed once they were in position as the heat proved too much. Wand ready he didn’t need Severus to tell him anything as he already knew.

Regardless Severus began speaking, seeing the look of concentration on his apprentices face.

“Breathe deeply, keep your eyes closed…feel your magic, bring it forth gather it together. Now think of the memory, feel the emotions as if it was happening in front of you. Mingle it with your magic; feel them both now say the words.”

“EXPECTO PATRONUM!” shouted Harry with all his might.

It was a good thing he had his eyes closed, as blinding white light erupted from his wand. Even Severus had to close his eyes against the blinding white light, it was no surprise it could drive a Dementor away. Severus’ eyes almost popped out of their sockets when he finally saw what was prancing around his garden.

It was his animagus form.

It was a panther.

His panther.
He didn’t know what stunned him more, that Harry had produced it or the fact Harry trusted him - saw him as a guardian (a form of protection). Patronus forms were important it’s what the person saw as significant and safe in their lives. Sometimes it even copied the significant others animagus form.

“I did it!” crowed Harry utterly astonished and happy.

“Interesting choice,” said Severus smoothly hiding his astonishment.

“Sir?” asked Harry cocking his head to the side in confusion.

“Your Patronus is the same as my animagus form.” stated Severus, the only person who knew beside Severus himself. Not even Albus Dumbledore knew of Severus’ accomplishment. Even now he could remember looking up panthers and laughing in incredulity at the description.

Panther Animagus

The panther is a very powerful and ancient animal. It is generally associated with a particular species of leopard or jaguar although the cougar is also referred to as panther. As with most of the large cats, the panther is a symbol of ferocity and valour. It embodies aggressiveness and power, though without the solar significance. In the case of the Black Panther, there is definitely a lunar significance. The panther has over 500 voluntary muscles that they are capable of using at will. This reflects a great deal about an individual who has such animal. It reflects an ability to do a variety of tasks as he or she wills. It is simply a matter of deciding and putting to use those particular “muscles,” be they physical, mental, psychic, or spiritual. As a whole panthers are loners (solitary) although they do associate with others, they are most comfortable by themselves or within their own marked territory. They are drawn to those individuals who are likewise often solitary. (This couldn’t have described Severus any better; it was as if this page had been written by someone who knew him)

Panther is secretive, silent, and graceful in her every move. She is solitary by choice, she tells little though listens much. She is careful not to share too much information, only enough to ease curious minds. (This was the part that Severus had found utterly amusing; it was as if his panther animagus was truly meant for him and him alone).

Of all the panthers, probably the Black Panther has the greatest mysticism associated with it. It is the symbol of the feminine, the dark mother, the dark of the moon. It is the symbol for the life and power of the night. It is a symbol of the feminine energies manifest upon the earth. It is often a symbol of darkness, death, and rebirth from out of it. There still exists in humanity a primitive fear of the dark and of death.

The Black Panther helps you to understand the dark and death and the inherent powers of them; and thus by acknowledging them, eliminate your fears and learn to use the powers. In China there were five mythic cats, sometimes painted like tigers or leopards. The black reigns in the north with winter as its season of power, and water its most effective element. This is the element of the feminine. This is the totem of greater assertion of feminine in all her aspects: child, virgin, seductress, mother, warrioress, seeress, and the old wise woman.

When the Black Panther enters your life it awakens the inner passions. This is capable of manifesting in unbridled expressions of baser powers and instincts. It is also capable reflecting an awakening of the kundalini, signaling a time of not just coming into one’s own power. More so, the keynote of the Black Panther is reclaiming One’s True Power. In mythology and scripture, the panther has been a symbol of the “Argos of a Thousand Eyes,” who guarded the heifer IO who was loved by Zeus. After his death, the eyes were transferred to the feathers of the peacock. The
panther always brings guardian energy to those to whom it comes.

The panther often signals a time of rebirth after a period of suffering and death on some level. This implies that an old issue may finally begin to be resolved, or even that old longstanding wounds will finally begin to heal, and with the healing will come a reclaiming of power that was lost at the time of wounding. Also, the Black Panther is very mystical; she finds the most power in darkness. Black Panther understands death and teaches people not to fear it, for out of death comes rebirth.

To the Native peoples of North and South America, the jaguar especially in the form of the Black Panther, was endowed with great magic and power. The jaguar panther climbs, runs, and swims, even superior to that of the tiger. For the reason that it is capable of functioning so well in so many areas, it became the symbol of mastery over all dimensions. To the Tucano Indians of the Amazon, the roar of the jaguar was the roar of thunder. Thus the Black Panther was the god of darkness and was capable of causing eclipses by swallowing the sun. This reflects the tremendous power inherent within the feminine forces. To those with the panther the power will increasingly be experienced.

Nietzsche once said, “That which does not kill us makes us stronger.” It is this same idea that is awakened in the lives of those who open to the power of the panther. The panther marks a new turn in the heroic path of those to whom it comes. It truly reflects more than just coming into one’s own power. Rather it reflects a reclaiming of that which was lost and an intimate connection with the great archetypal force behind it. It gives an ability to go beyond what has been imagined, with opportunity to do so with discipline and control. It is the spirit of imminent rebirth.”

Panther people have a broader vision. Panther medicine gives them a deeper insight, both spiritually and psychically. Their enhanced perspective lets them see things in close detail or from a distance. Panthers enter the world enlightened whereas others have to work to achieve that.

“Really? You’re a panther?” gasped Harry awe crossing his features.

“Indeed,” said Severus nodding his head curtly.

“Would you teach me?” asked Harry hesitantly.

“Perhaps next summer, depending on how far along we get, your OWLS will be this year and they are more important than animagus training. However such a talent might come in handy should anything happen. Perhaps we can make the animagus potion and see which animals are available to you. With the promise you will not try and shift alone its very dangerous.” said Severus sternly. He meant every word, if he found his apprentice trying Severus would be furious with him and that’s putting it lightly.

“Yes sir!” said Harry immediately nodding solemnly.

“Good,” said Severus satisfied he trusted his apprentice not to lie to him until he proved it otherwise he would continue to do so.

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“How did it go?” asked Sirius three hours later when Remus was finally back in Grimmauld Place once more.

“Terrible, Albus looked ready to burst a vein in his temple,” sighed Remus in agitation.

“How come?” asked Sirius his eyes narrowed at the mention of Dumbledore.

“He’s expecting too much of Nick, he looked as if he was going to burst into tears,” sighed Remus.
“Which he?” asked Sirius dryly.

“Nick, Albus kept pushing and pushing him and Nick looked as if he was going to have a panic attack.” sighed Remus.

“No matter what Nick has done he doesn’t deserve this, I thought Lily and James were against making him train?” asked Sirius, they certainly had been when Nick and Harry had first been born hence their reason for going into hiding.

“They were, unless you don’t realize it’s out of their hands Voldemort is back and he will do anything to kill Nick.” said Remus sharply.

“I know, it’s a shame he doesn’t deserve this he deserves what’s been happening in the press but this pressure of learning is bound to be hurting him.” said Sirius feeling slightly sympathetic towards his godson for the first time since he had spoken to him last week.

“As Albus says it’s either this or he dies,” sighed Remus feeling a hundred years old. He didn’t like seeing Nick trained either, but it was true if they didn’t train him to fight he would die. Voldemort was going to be after him just as soon as he was fully recovered from the ritual he used.
Chapter 25

Invisible

Chapter 25

Animagus Potion, Training and Surprises

“Albus wants to meet with me, I’m assuming it’s about the idea of you going to Hogwarts for those classes.” said Severus smoothly, staring at his apprentice. He had heard Harry up last night; he had obviously had a hard night, knowing what he did about his visions. Severus couldn’t help but wonder if he should teach Harry Occlumency. No child should be able to see what Voldemort was doing. Although Harry wasn’t a child by far anymore, he hadn’t been allowed a childhood. He was a grown young man, and sometimes Severus forgot that.

“Oh, Okay,” said Harry.

“I shall go while you are doing your quiz, so nothing will need be put on hold,” said Severus, every spell Harry learnt was important to his survival. Sure Voldemort didn’t know that Harry was the boy who lived, but he was a boy who had killed his snake and most loyal follower. He had no doubt Voldemort felt that way; coward or not Pettigrew had brought the bastard back. If the Auror’s had just done their job properly, Pettigrew wouldn’t have had this opportunity. They hadn’t even identified the body at Azkaban to make sure it was Crouch Junior. Although the man had since been fired, it didn’t help their predicament now did it.

“Yes sir,” said Harry respectfully.

“I also have a surprise for you,” said Severus smirking a little bit knowing Harry was going to like this information.

“What?” asked Harry eagerly his head cocked to the side as he stared at his teacher.

“Eileen has chosen to stay here, I convinced her to make new memories of this place.” said Severus. Finding it odd calling his mother by her first name, but he had gotten so used to everyone not knowing about her. That he still had to think before realizing Harry knew and didn’t care, wasn’t going to hurt them and was quite happy with them at that.

“New memories?” asked Harry his voice sad as he thought about it. Eileen mustn’t have had a good childhood here, which was a shame because this place was the most beautiful home he’d ever seen.

“I think you already understand without me explaining further,” sighed Severus, he had not had a decent childhood either. Being beaten by his father was hardly ideal, seeing his father battering his mother was even less than ideal.

“Yeah,” said Harry softly, feeling yet another connection between Eileen and himself.

“Now let’s have breakfast and get down to the lab,” said Severus without more ado. As if the house elf was psychic he popped in, laid the plates down and popped away once more.

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“Severus, good to see you, I had thought you weren’t going to make it,” beamed Dumbledore. As
Severus, graceful as ever stepped through the floo, wandlessly making the soot disappear from his clothes. After years of doing it Albus was used to the sight, Remus though was very impressed from where he stood.

“How’s Harry?” asked Remus Lupin who was standing at the doorway.

Severus raised an eyebrow at the man, distain clear as day on his face. “Why didn’t you ask him that during his third year?” he asked sardonically.

Pain appeared on the prematurely aged face, being a werewolf didn’t help his looks any. Especially when they got stretched and damaged, each time he turned into a werewolf. “I do not need you reminding me Snape, I know I’ve done him wrong,” the wolf replied eventually.

“Yes, can you imagine how a fourteen year old boy feels completely abandoned by everyone?” snorted Severus in derision.

“No I can’t” admitted Remus tiredly, sitting down on the unoccupied seats warily. His mother had abandoned him, but his father had remained steadily at his side. Although he had only found out about his mother as an adult. Remus’ father had always told him as a young boy she had been hurt badly and gone to heaven.

“Good,” sneered Severus his lip curled in contempt.

“Now, now this isn’t why I called you here,” said Dumbledore looking sternly at Severus.

“No, you didn’t, get on with it I have an apprentice waiting on my return,” said Severus.

“You are teaching him defence aren’t you?” asked Albus casually but his eyes gave away his probing questions.

“Yes,” answered Severus, cautiously wondering what Dumbledore was up to.

“How is he coming along with that?” asked Dumbledore calmly.

“He’s doing very well, mastering spells I did not think he would do, never mind so quickly,” admitted the man a smirk on his face. His eyes gleamed with pride and a sense of accomplishment.

“Such as?” prodded Dumbledore.

“I do not think it’s anyone’s business what I am teaching my apprentice,” said Severus, he was dying to tell them what Harry was capable. Unfortunately he couldn’t risk it; if Dumbledore joined the dots Harry would assume it was his fault. Dumbledore after all didn’t have contact with any of the others that knew the truth. Plus he was on the defensive side; Dumbledore was being rather nosy now.

“We are just curious, Nick’s learning the Patronus charm and making good progress,” said Dumbledore.

“What’s good progress?” asked Severus in genuine curiosity.

“There’s a lot of mist but no distinct shape yet,” admitted Remus when Dumbledore no doubt was about to open his mouth and lie.

Severus smirked a wicked chuckle leaving his lips, any woman or gay man in the vicinity would have shuddered. It sounded like what you could imagine to be melted chocolate.
“What?” asked Dumbledore immediately.

“You need to get the boy to focus more,” sneered Severus.

“We’ve tried everything, he just doesn’t seem to be able to create anything,” sighed Remus sadly.

“He’s a spoiled brat, promise him something he wants and he’d do it in a heartbeat,” sneered Severus.

“That idea has merit,” said Dumbledore his eyes lightening up.

“I was kidding, if you do that he won’t learn anything unless you promise him something,” grunted Severus slightly dismayed. He could only hope he hadn’t helped them spoil the little brat more.

“Severus, I must ask you something, I need you to ask Harry to allow the Potter’s an allowance,” said Dumbledore looking years older.

“Excuse me?” choked Severus in surprise.

“When Harry took over the vaults, their money was taken from them, they don’t have allowances. James asked Sirius for money, he’s too proud to ask Harry for anything never mind money.” admitted Remus.

Severus laughed, he couldn’t help himself, James Potter was truly at an all time low. He had never thought he’d love to see the day where he was penniless, friendless, hated and despised by everyone. Everyone that wasn’t Albus Dumbledore of course, unfortunately he cared too much about the so called ‘Boy Who Lived’ than anything else.

Remus just watched Severus in mute shock, wondering if there was something wrong with Snape. Albus though was despite the talk they were having, very happy to see Severus laugh. It had been a long time, since Albus had heard Severus’ laughter and it was a refreshing change from his scathing tone.

“As I’ve said before, Harry is an emancipated teenager, I’m afraid I have no control over what he chooses to do.” said Severus eventually once the laughter died down. There was no denying he was still highly entertained, his onyx eyes, which were usually dull were twinkling brightly. James Potter wasn’t getting a penny, Harry probably didn’t even realize and Severus wasn’t going to say a thing. He hoped though he was there to see the day James Potter gave in and begged Harry for money.

“To be frank Severus, I don’t think Harry even knows,” said Remus.

“If he did? Would you blame him?” snorted Severus bitterly.

“No,” conceded Remus.

“Now if you are finished, Harry is rather anxious to see what Animagus’ are open to him,” said Severus smoothly.

“You are teaching him how to be an animagus?” asked Dumbledore taken aback.

“Indeed, it might help him get out of sticky situations,” said Severus.

“Sticky situations Severus?” asked Dumbledore his eyes narrowing slightly. Suspicion blooming in him, Harry wasn’t important Nick was. Why was Snape ensuring Harry knew everything instead of
Nick?

“He did imprison two of The Dark Lord’s inner circle Death Eaters, killed two more and finished it off with killing the Dark Lord’s snake. I’d say he’s pretty high up for that alone, capping it off by actually getting away from him and being unfortunately related to the Potters.” sneered Severus rolling his eyes in agitation.

“Of course,” said Dumbledore nodding in understanding, his suspicion fading completely.

“Has he been having nightmares?” asked Remus sadly.

“He had been tortured for three days, it’s to be expected,” said Severus, he suspected Harry had been restless last night because of a nightmare. Its’ what had prompted Severus to brew the dreamless sleeping potion earlier on. Once that had been done, he instructed Harry on brewing the animagus potion; they were simply waiting on both cooling down.

Remus swallowed thickly very glad that Sirius hadn’t agreed to this.

“Albus! Nick’s refusing to come out of his room,” said Lily coming in bashing the door of the other side, it went swinging back but she managed to avoid it.

Albus looked stunned at the manner of which she had just entered his office; he had never been disrespected so much before in his life. Everyone knocked, unless he knew they were coming at a specific time. Not even when he had merely been a transfiguration teacher, had anyone acted so… ill mannered before. He had nothing to say to her as he just stared at her, surprise written across his features.

Lily didn’t seem to realize what she had done, when the three males continued to stare at her. Albus and Remus were staring surprised and horrified, Severus had the same unpleasant look on his face as always, or he had when she was near him anyway. She wondered silently why they weren’t speaking, sure she had came in a little harsher than intended. There was no reason for them to be gaping at her in surprise and horror; they acted as if Voldemort had come in.

“What’s wrong?” asked Lily looking behind her, she then realized every single one of the portraits were quiet too.

“Thank god Harry has good manners which of course she cannot take credit for, otherwise he wouldn’t have lasted long as an apprentice,” said Severus smoothly utterly shocked by Lily’s actions. If her mother was still alive she would have gone crazy at Lily for that. He hated disrespect and ill mannered children, its something he couldn’t and wouldn’t stand for. However, Harry was deeply respectful; he always knocked even before entering the library. The only time he didn’t knock was when the door was open, he was always polite spoken, respectful and never argued unless he felt, passionate about something.

“Hm, he’s useless at everything, Nick learned to do everything first, it took Harry months to follow. He crawled, walked, talked, teethed, did his first piece of accidental magic first,” said Lily triumphantly.

“Everyone’s magic is different Lily; some people are explosive with their magic. Others use their magic to do what need’s done.” said Severus his lip curling in disgust.

“I think I’d know I did have three children,” said Lily patronisingly.

“You may have brought him into the world but he doesn’t care about you, you cannot hurt him anymore Lily,” said Severus shaking his head, his best friend had changed so much.
“Hurt him? He disappointed us,” snapped Lily disgusted.

“Did he now? Why what did he do?” asked Severus incredulously.

“Nothing, that’s just exactly it, he did nothing!” said Lily.

“I think you’ll find Harry defeated a sixty foot basilisk, destroyed the Dark Lord, and let me see… saved your precious son from being killed. Only for that said son to repay the favour by leaving him for dead!” snarled Severus standing up facing Lily a look of bitter disgust so deeply on his face that Lily actually flinched. “Also created a potion, the youngest Potions creator in the world.”

“That was just chance, happenstance,” said Lily scowling darkly she hated anyone being better than her precious son.

“I have better things to do than argue with you, and by the way I know of one thing Harry has done before your precious son,” smirked Severus as he headed for the fireplace and grabbed a bundle of the floo powder.

“And that’s that?” she asked sarcastically.

Remus stared at the floor, if it hadn’t been so odd he would have laughed. They were like divorced husband and wife who each got a child, arguing who was better. Who had gotten the best child. He had to admire Snape for that though, Harry wasn’t his son but was defending him. Defending him against his own parents, mother, who seemed to hate him for no good reason. He swallowed harshly, this had been his best friend for years, and Lily had been so good to him. She hadn’t changed when she realized what he was, yet she had now…and he seriously didn’t like this new her.

“He can produce a fully fledged Patronus, and he managed to succeed in two weeks.” said Severus before he threw the floo powder in and he was gone.

Remus’ jaw was on the floor, he cringed slightly when Lily screamed like a petulant child. One that obviously hadn’t been given what she wanted, or been told what she wanted to hear. He was despite Lily’s scream undeniably proud of Harry; his heart ached for the student Harry must be. It’s all he had ever wanted, a good student, someone that wanted to learn. Its obvious Nick wasn’t it, but Harry…Harry seemed to be, he couldn’t really remember Harry in his classes. It was as if the boy had put notice me not spells around him, and he had just went on his way talking to Nick.

“Calm down Lily, now what is the problem?” bit out Dumbledore furiously, he couldn’t believe Harry was able to do it. Nick was the hero, Lily had seen it, and so why the hell was Harry always seemingly more powerful. He didn’t like it one bit, it infuriated him; Nick was definitely not getting out of the classroom until he perfected it.

“Nick won’t come out of his room,” sighed Lily “He’s locked the door.”

“Why won’t he come out?” asked Dumbledore shaking his head in agitation, Remus was just looking incredulously at Lily. She was coming screaming to Dumbledore, interrupting a meeting, which by the way could have been by far more important. Now she was calmly telling him what was wrong, expecting Dumbledore to do something about it. Remus, who wasn’t needed anymore, quietly headed for the door. He had already had enough of Lily today to last him a life time. So without more ado he shuffled out and quickly left, not wanting to be stopped by either Dumbledore or Lily.

“He says nobody likes him anymore, that he isn’t going to going to come to Hogwarts this year.
That he wants to stay at home, he doesn’t want to train anymore either, he’s exhausted.” said Lily exasperated.

“You are his mother Lily, you have to get control of him!” said Dumbledore a lot more forceful than he meant to. However, just one summer he was beginning to see why Harry had fled. He wasn’t jealous of everything Harry could do, he was proud of the teenager in his own way. If his twin wasn’t the boy who lived, and destined to defeat the greatest evil the wizarding world had ever known. He would have taken him under his own wing, and taught him everything he would need. Regardless, if and butting wasn’t going to get him anywhere, he was irritated and Lily was getting a little dose of reality because of it.

“What?” asked Lily taken aback.

“You have magic just like I do, open the door and make him come out!” said Dumbledore his patience completely evaporating.

Lily sensed Albus was in a bad mood, judging by the magic she could feel pulsing off him in waves. She shuddered slightly, he was very powerful and it was scary seeing him like this. Was that what her son was going to be like in ten years? His scary? But loved by everyone around him? She was so sure they would get over Harry, Nick was the real hero. She was a mother; she had known which one of her children had almost been murdered. Plus Voldemort had been at the foot of Nick’s side of the crib really, so it wasn’t a hard guess at all.

“Alright, thank you Albus, I’ll leave you alone now,” said Lily gulping quietly. She quickly fled down the gargoyle and made her way to her and her family’s quarters.

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Severus wished he could memorize their faces forever, in fact he could hear screaming as he was spat out of the floo. As usual, he smoothly dismounted and wandlessly, removed the soot from his clothes. Harry was sitting reading as per usual, his quiz lying beside him, unfilled out. Severus nodded his approval; at least he wasn’t even attempting to cheat.

“What happened? Is he going to let me?” asked Harry hopefully.

“Ah, that, I’m afraid I got rather sidetracked, I shall floo him later…now how about that potion? It should be cool enough now. How about we miss the quiz tonight?” asked Severus.

“That sounds great!” nodded Harry eagerly.

Severus sighed sadly, Lily had been like this, before she had become twisted and demonic, in her love for her other son. Was Harry destined to eventually go the same way? No it was impossible; he was too humble for that. Despite what he had been through Harry still had some innocence left. He had been too hurt as a child to grow up into a twisted adult.

“Let’s depart then,” said Severus as both he and his apprentice went once more that morning down to the Dungeon’s.

“This Potion, will show you all the animagus forms available to you, sometimes you are allowed to pick what you are. Other times the animagus is chosen for you regardless of the choices presented. It’s like this, there’s many facelets of someone’s personality, there’s a strong side, weak side, possessive side and even a scared side. Each of the animals will represent that, in the end the strongest personalities will win out. It’s not often you can actually choose it,” said Severus smoothly as he took the potion from the shelf.
“Have you ever thought of tweaking it? I mean the animagus potion to change you into one of your choices of animals?” asked Harry curiously.

Severus blinked, before he shook his head a thoughtful look on his face. “No, I’ve never thought of doing such a thing. I’m not sure how it would work...even if I did do it.” he replied meanwhile every potion ingredient began firing itself from his mind. As he tried to mentally brew the potion in his head, but he shook those thoughts off. Later, he would think about it later right now he was actually curious to know what kind of animal Harry could represent.

He handed the potion over, summoning the book of animal spirit/animagus information.

“Drink it and sit crossed legged on the floor, animals will appear before you, tell me what they are.” said Severus conjuring a few comfortable pillows with a few broken quills he had lying around. He did that a lot, left broken things just idly lying there, they were handy when looking for something to transfigure.

“Okay,” breathed Harry, doing as he was told, placing the glass vial on the table before the dungeons disappeared from view. Instead all he saw was smoke, like he was looking too closely into a crystal ball or something.

“What do you see?” asked Severus smoothly.

“Nothing,” murmured Harry his forehead wrinkling in confusion.

“Even now?” asked Severus cautiously, he had seen his animagus images as soon as the potion had been drank.

“Still nothing,” repeated Harry a note of question in his voice now.

“I think...perhaps animagus isn’t one of your talents,” said Severus softly, as if he didn’t want to upset the teenager.

“Well that’s disappointing, oh well,” said Harry he was just about to stand up when he gasped. Imagines were coming to him; something was coming towards him, in his mind an animal.

“A Wolf, one of them is a wolf,” said Harry breathlessly it was beautiful. He could see the scars on the wolf’s fur, from the slashes he got from the Death Eater and the lightning bolt.

Severus opened the book to the appropriate page and smirked, well this was a little bit like Harry he had to admit.

Wolf Animagus/spirit guide (For those who took the Potion)

Symbolises - Teaching skill, Loyalty and independence.

Native American and Celtic custom regard Wolf as the way of find the deepest levels of self, of inner knowing and intuition. This is symbolized by the image of the wolf howling at the moon. Native Americans have long regarded wolves as teachers or pathfinders. In astrology, Wolf is represented by the Dog, Sirius, thought by many aboriginal tribes to be the home of the Ancients.

Wolves are probably the most misunderstood of all wild animals. Stories of cold-bloodedness abound, in spite of their friendly, intelligent and social traits. The wolf, once a much feared and hated animal, has lately become much more appreciated. They now stand a better chance of survival, where they haven’t been hunted to extinction, or near extinction, in some countries. In the USA this culling of wolves, who are a symbol of wildness, was down to the process of taming the
wilderness. Especially where farms were trying to be founded. They were seen as the enemy, especially when they ate farm animals! Perhaps nowadays people are becoming more aware that keeping the harmony of nature and its inhabitants intact is necessary as wolf’s are being reintroduced back into the wilderness in the USA. Of course, farmers are protesting profusely. On a deeper level our emotions toward Wolf reflect our muddled feelings of ourselves as humans. Although we consider ourselves ‘civilized’ we are still animals with our own wild spirit. Wolf reminds us of this, often uneasily.

The wolf, is a symbol of the night. This time can seem lonesome and scary to us. But it is also the time when through dreams, we may discover valuable things about ourselves. This is a lonely path. To truly come to understand yourself, you must be alone, undeterred by the beliefs, judgements and views of others. The wolf teaches us to learn about our inner self and to discover our inner power and strength. However, to achieve this, we must take risks and face our deepest fears. Wolf requires sincerity. Though demanding a lot of us, much is given in return; a spirit helper that is always there to help, giving us extraordinary powers of endurance. Learn to hear the voice within yourself, which in silence is as clear as the sound of the wolf howling in the night.

Wolf is also an extremely gregarious animal, enjoying the company of others. Wolves mate for life. The clan has a solid social structure, in which all adults participate in the upbringing of the young. Wolves are fiercely loyal to their mates, with a strong sense of family whilst upholding individualism. Though their clans are highly organised, they are truly free spirits. They seem to go out of their way to avoid a fight. A shift in posture, a growl, or a glance gets the point across quite readily without violence. We are reminded not to waste resources and to learn how to avoid trouble and confrontations. People with Wolf as power animal have the ability to make quick and firm emotional attachments. Trust your insights about these attachments, wolf will be there to guide you. Take control of your life with Wolf’s assistance and do so with harmony and discipline.

We can truly use wolf as an example in our lives. We can understand that there doesn't need to be a hard separation between the solitary and social paths. Wolf teaches you to balance between the needs your family has of you and the needs you have for yourself. Wolves are totally loyal to the pack but do not give up their identity to the pack. If wolf has come into your life you are must look at where you are being too dependent and where you may be too independent.

Wolves qualities, his medicine, are the ability to learn knew ideas and then teach them to others. Wolf is thought to be an independent explorer coming back to his pack to teach what he has discovered. We too in exploring the hidden paths of consciousness, may come across new truths to share with the rest of our clan, human beings. Wolf brings faithfulness, inner strength and intuition when he enters our lives, and also teaches us to live with ourselves.

If Wolf finds you, this may be an indication that you are a great teacher or thinker. Or if this is not so, perhaps you need to ponder whether there may be something you need to expand your mind about. Be receptive to new concepts/ideas. By doing so you can gain more wisdom. To increase your Wolf power, you can utilise your newly integrated wisdom and also share it with others. Wisdom is gained through experience, by walking the path. Another way to put it - practise what you preach.

When a lone wolf is spotted in the wilderness it embodies freedom. When seen in a pack it embodies a feel of community. If wolf appears to you alone or in a pack it is asking you to do the same within your own life.

The Wolf’s senses are highly developed. They are extremely intelligent with excellent hearing, sense of smell and strong feeling. As well as being determined animals they are also cunning. A wolfs howl is primal and penetrating. The howl is used to locate clan members or to let wolves
from outside of the pack know their territory boundaries. If you hear a wolf howl, this may be telling you to stand your ground and defend your boundaries.

Wolves express themselves a lot with body language. If angry, they may stick their ears straight up and show their teeth. A suspicious wolf pulls its ears back and squints. Fear is often indicated by flattening the ears against the head. A wolf wanting to play, dances and bows playfully. Their body language is symbolic to you. Humans also use body language to send out messages. The study of this art can increase your perception of this power animal.

Wolves hunt in packs, depending on endurance to run down weak and older animals. They have been known to cover 35 miles a day in pursuit. Wolf is a symbol of stamina and strength, teaching you to know who you are, and to develop strength and confidence in what you do.

Wolf’s medicine includes death and rebirth, facing death with dignity and courage, Spirit teaching, guidance in dreams and meditations, instinct linked with intelligence, social and family values, steadfastness, skill in protection of self and family, outwitting enemies, ability to pass unseen, taking advantage of change.

“Is anything else coming?” asked Severus when he had heard nothing from Harry since he began reading the passage.

“A skunk,” said Harry a flush paining his cheeks.

Severus smirked in amusement at the embarrassed teenager.

Skunk

Symbolises - Caution, warning and respect

Skunk, Power Animal, Symbol of Self Respect, Reputation, Sensuality, Self-Esteem

The skunk is linked with mystic and magic. Throughout history skunks have upheld a reputation that is respected, as well as feared. When a skunk feels in danger, it lifts its tail and stamps its front feet. If the 'danger' isn't scared off, it hisses, turns around, raising its tail to unleash a spray of up to 10 to 14 feet with accuracy. The eyes are irritated and the victim is temporarily blinded. If skunk is your power animal, this is your call to develop inner vision and use it to see beyond what the physical eyes perceive. A study of aromatherapy may also be beneficial to you.

They are slow moving, solitary creatures, and spend nearly all day underground. Skunks help remind us that there is a time to be with people and a time to be completely alone.

Whilst they do dig their own dens, they will also take over abandoned homes of rabbits, foxes and marmots. Skunks are self-confident; from them we can learn to develop self esteem and self respect. In general these creatures are extremely gentle, though as before mentioned when feeling threatened they give off a foul smelling chemical. This trait however, is not the skunk’s special gift/power. The skunk’s medicine is the power of respect and reputation. They are very secure, easy going and confident. As they respect themselves, so others respect them right back. Their smelly reputation - usually - keeps others from bothering them. They are given the space they need, lest they feel under attack!

Through their silence, skunks teach us not to brag for this will only push people away rather than attract them to us. People notice you without any help. Opportunities will come to bring self-esteem and respect. There will also be heightened sexuality: physically, psychically and spiritually.

If the skunk finds you, you may need to question yourself whether you have self respect. What
signals are you sending out to others? Do others respect you? If need be, learn to affirm who you are without overpowering or bullying others. Through and by the way act, you are able to show that you have self-respect and therefore respect others. This in turn will earn you respect off people too. This will also draw people into your lives who share similar interests to you - like attracts like remember - and people who don't respect you will be deterred. When we learn to completely accept ourselves, who we are, and learn to express the essence of ourselves, without ego, we will begin to attract those who share our path and repel those who don't.

Skunk teaches us to understand a warning. Our instinct often foretells trouble ahead, but often our mind gets in the way and gets in the way of this knowledge. There is much wisdom to be gleaned from skunk. You can learn how to honour the part of yourself, which like the skunk, gives you many warnings before an actual problem or disaster develops. If skunk appears in your life, it could well be your intuition sending you a signal of imminent danger or caution.

The stripe that runs from head to tail on the skunk is the outward sign of kundalini or life force. When skunk wafts into your life, your kundalini or life force activates and amplifies. You must learn to use this force effectively. When the creative life force within is fully developed, you will have the ability to direct your creative energy to manifest what you desire. If underdeveloped, you need to awaken the creative life force and look beyond the fence you have built around yourself, your beliefs.

Skunks do their thing quietly. If this is your power animal, you are advised to do the same. Unbalanced skunk people have a habit of blowing their own trumpet, looking for recognition. As skunk possesses intense energy, this can create problems in communicating with others. Those with skunk medicine are either well liked or disliked. The art of attracting and repelling are natural skills, and very beneficial when mastered effectively. Remember this - people notice you all the time, but how they notice you can be controlled by you.

If skunk is your power animal, you will find that the use of fragrances will elicit dynamic responses in the people around you. Your sexual response will be upped and you will have a better ability to attract people. You must however learn to balance the ability to draw and repel people.

“Do not feel embarrassed, the Skunk as explained in the book is from mystic and magic.” said Severus curtly.

“Yes sir,” said Harry immediately contrite.

“Those animals represent you Harry, you are essentially ashamed of a part of you,” said Severus soothingly as he realized belatedly he had hurt the teenager.

“I understand,” said Harry nodded.

“Good, now is there anything else?” asked Severus.

“A Snake,” said Harry.

“You speak Parseltongue so no doubt it represents that,” nodded Severus in immediate understanding.

Snake, Power Animal, Symbol of Death, Rebirth, Eternity, Mysteries of Life, Psychic Energy

As Snake sheds its skin so we can shed our illusions and limitations. Then we are able to use our vitality and desire to achieve wholeness.
Snakes deserve respect. Throughout history the snakes have had many legends surrounding them, linking them to creation, fertility and transformation. Nowhere are the differences between cultures and religions more sharply emphasized than in their attitudes towards Snake, differences which will also uncover different vistas on elementary aspects of being alive.

On one level, the differences relate to sexuality. We see the snake enticing Eve in the Garden of Eden, being symbolized as Vinata the Indian goddess, or shown as the legs of Cernunnos the Celtic fertility god. In Hinduism, kundalini, or serpent fire, is coiled at the base of the spine. As we mature emotionally and spiritually, the energy rises, stimulating the chakras, which are emotional, mental, and spiritual energy centres. This is also shown in the worldwide symbol of the spiral. This flow of energy is indispensable for good health, and the Greeks, in their own understanding of this, used the snake as a symbol of healing and wisdom.

In Israel the snake was regarded as the earth mother and played a role in fertility. In Egypt the cobra was known for its ability to expand the upper neck into a disc shape by spreading its ribs, symbolizing immortality. Snake was also considered to represent inner vision. Christian lore sees the snake rising from the chalice of St. John, wound around a cross sometimes portrayed with a woman's head to depict lust and temptation.

For time immemorial people have associated Snake with both male and female aspects of sexuality. In religions where sexuality, in both its physical and spiritual aspects is celebrated, Snake has been held with honour. More repressive belief systems have linked snake to evil.

The Celts sometimes called the Druids, leaders and teachers in poetry, music, the law, spiritual wisdom, and healing, adders. Sadly, the more stiff practitioners of the Judeo-Christianism seemed to fear wisdom. When St. Patrick bragged that he had driven all of the snakes out of Ireland, he meant the Druids. The apple the snake gave Eve was from the Tree of Knowledge.

This is just a start to the contradictory attitudes towards Snake. The snake also represents aliveness, as expressed in sensuality - in this case meaning feeling and responding to stimuli, and more generally, to the flow of energy which creates us and makes us alive.

When snakes shed their skin, they metamorphose into a new being. This is very significant to those with snake as power animal, symbolising our ability to shed beliefs and habits which we have outgrown, moving into higher spiritual energy. The ability to do this is wisdom.

The shedding of the skin is also associated with astral travel and out of body experiences. The eyes of a snake are always open and are protected by immobile transparent scales. Before shedding their skin the snake’s markings become obscure and the eyes appear opaque or blue, giving them a trance like appearance as if they are looking right through you. Learning how to see into the hearts of others is part of what we are taught by snake.

On the deepest level Snake's skin shedding symbolizes death and rebirth, an idea which is depicted by the image of a snake swallowing its own tail, a symbol of eternity. The Snakes medicine is not to be treated lightly. Its meaning touches on the deepest mysteries in life. If you are ready to shed your own skin, Snake is ready and waiting to guide you through the spiral path of transformation.

On a material level snake is vitality, on an emotional level ambition and dreams, on a mental level intellect and power, and on the highest level, the spiritual level wisdom, understanding and wholeness.

Snakes / serpent's power includes - Being the messenger of the Rainbow Serpent, wisdom, healing, initiation, elusiveness, manipulation of lightning, transmutation, exploration of the mysteries of life, primitive or elemental energy, protection from religious persecution, goddess energy, psychic energy, creative power, immortality and the connection to, or forming, the magic cord by which
the shaman travels to the soul world. Snake medicine is the energy of wholeness, cosmic consciousness, and the ability to experience anything willingly and without resistance. It is the knowledge that all things are equal in creation, that all is one.

Snake is a powerful animal guide, a symbol of transformation and healing. The snake is wisdom expressed through healing. This is a protector and guardian. If snake has come into your life, your creative forces are awakening. Your intuition will strengthen and be more accurate.

When on the move snakes make no noise whatsoever. They are invisible when resting and are unable to produce their own body heat, often to be seen lying in the sun. The sun's warmth together with their behaviour regulates their body temperature. They don't rely on the energy of food to generate body heat and can survive on scanty diets for long periods of time. Those with snake as power animal need very little food for energy. They are usually cold, with body temperatures below average, and prefer warmer climates.

Snakes do not have eardrums or external ear openings. Instead they have small bones in the head that conduct sound. They can hear low frequency sounds and sense vibrations that travel through the earth. This links them to the underworld where secrets are kept.

The snake depicts healing on a cellular level. With their lightweight and flexible bodies they possess extremely fast and agile. If snake enters your life, expect swift changes to sweep through your life. These changes denote death of the old and a birth into untapped power, creativity and wisdom. Snake is very powerful to have to have as a guide. It is the guardian of sacred places and the keeper of concealed knowledge.

“I think so far this is the one that fits you the best,” said Severus nodding his head as he finished finding and reading the snake part.

“An Alligator sort of creature I’ve only ever seen one in books…?” asked Harry.

“I’d like to think so too,” muttered Severus flipping to the ‘A’ section of the book and finding the animal he wanted.

Alligator / Crocodile Power Animal, Symbol of Primal Energies, Survival

Alligator/Crocodile's medicine includes maternal protection, primal energies, connection to mother earth, protection from manipulation, understanding deceit, revenge through patience, initiation, understanding weather, access to ancient knowledge, power to survive.

The Alligator/Crocodile has inhabited earth for millions of years. They bare the unstoppable, untameable creative forces of all That Is, the force and fury of primal energies. They symbolise creation and destruction and are the keepers and protectors of all knowledge. In many a myth and legend crocs/alligators are known as the keepers of ancient wisdom. When one of these creatures enters your life, look for an opportunity to touch very primal energies. There will be an opportunity for new knowledge and wisdom.

Concealing themselves in mud and water, the alligator/crocodile will wait patiently for unsuspecting prey to come by and quickly snap it up! They eat any animal they can get their snappers on, and if unable to swallow it whole, will tear it into bite size pieces. In spite of this, they don’t eat unnecessarily. Waste is not a part of their medicine. If this is your power animal, be mindful over what you consume. Don’t over eat, or under eat either. Listen to your body telling you when you are full or not. Digestive problems are not uncommon amongst those with this power animal. The alligator/croc digests its food slowly, and so must you remember to gather, absorb and digest all experiences thoroughly before moving on too quick.
The alligators/crocodiles eyes located high upon their heads, giving them the ability to stay pretty much hidden below water yet still see above it. Symbolically this suggests clairvoyant abilities. From these creatures we can learn how to be patient and appropriate timing, for the alligator/croc knows when to hide below the water, when to peak above it, or take action and snap. For croc/alligator people caring for the eyes is important.

Concealing themselves in the water links the croc/alligator to the emotional body of man. They contain the lesson of discovering and letting go of emotions hidden below the surface. In the wet season when water is high, the alligators/crocodiles dig deep burrows that in the dry season are wet alcoves to which they retreat. As well as this, the alcoves act as reservoirs from which other animals drink. Water is the giver, the blood, the nectar of life, and though the alligator/crocodiles may be regarded as fearless and fierce by most, the sharing of these reservoirs shows that the alligator/croc respect all life forms.

The alligator/croc is all about survival, an adult has no known predators apart from another adult or humans. Young alligators have many enemies. Dangers begin for them even before they hatch. E.g. animals such as raccoons and skunks steal and eat the eggs of American alligators. They wait for the mum to leave the nest to swim or feed, quickly raiding the nest. A hatchling faces many dangers. Foxes, bears, snakes, and birds of prey may snatch them up for a tasty meal. Young alligators may even have to be on the lookout for larger alligators. If alligator/croc appears in your life or when dreaming the message for you may be to look after you and secure your basic survival needs.

Alligators/crocodiles are some of the best parents in the reptile world. A female alligator builds a nest on the ground, and although she doesn’t sit on the eggs, she’s is on guard at the nest and help the eggs hatch. Sometimes both parents look after and protect the young. Around 9 weeks after laying the eggs, chirping sounds come from the nest - the babies are hatching! Whether males or females hatch depends on the temperature of the nest. If a nest is warm, males hatch. If a nest is cool, females. If the temperature is in between, both males and females hatch. Upon hearing the chirping, the mother uncovers the eggs. She picks up the babies and carries them to the water. If there are any un-hatched eggs she will roll them in her mouth till the shell cracks to help the babies hatch. They are around 23cm long and are able to swim and catch food right away. However they do still need protection, so stay close to her. They may even bask on her head or back. If in danger, the hatchling cries out bringing the mother right away. Hatchlings sometimes stay with their mothers for a year or more.

Alligators/crocs come together only to reproduce and have distinct individual personalities. Those with this power animal are generally loners and only come together in groups if they absolutely have to. However, they can also make great leaders as they know how to survive in any situation and are strong enough to hold their own. There is also the opportunity to develop new wisdom but they must be careful not to be consumed by this wisdom. Each piece of knowledge must be examined before moving onto the next. Breathing techniques like those practised in yoga are beneficial.

“A maternal protection, primal energies, connection to mother earth, protection from manipulation, understanding deceit, revenge through patience, initiation, understanding weather, access to ancient knowledge, power to survive” said Severus to himself, this part really spoke to him. Maternal protection, connection to mother earth thus magic, protection from manipulation and understanding deceit. He didn’t understand why, but it really got to him that part.

“An Owl,” said Harry.

“Just how many more are there going to be?” muttered Severus getting exasperated now.
Owl Power Animal, Symbol of Wisdom, Stealth, Secrecy, Part I

Owl's medicine includes wisdom, stealth, secrecy, silent and swift movement, seeing behind masks, seeing what truly lies below the surface, keen sight, messenger of secrets and omens, shape-shifting. The link between the dark, unseen world and the world of light. Comfort with shadow self, moon magick, freedom, deception, clairvoyance, insight, vision, omens. Owl symbolises the feminine, the moon and the night.

Owl symbolises the feminine, the moon and the night. They are the bird of magic and darkness, of prophecy and wisdom. The owl is linked to Athena. The owl is also referred to as the night eagle a messenger from the darkness and a guide through all the mysteries that it contains. They are night hunters and therefore have the ability to see what others may miss. The owl will give you the gift of seeing what is truly beneath the surface and not to be deceived by appearance.

The owl is also sometimes referred to as a cat with wings. These two creatures are linked with magic, heightened senses, intuition, and wisdom, more so than any other creature. Like the cat, the owl has keen hearing and vision in the night world - a place many fear. This fear can also make us feel uncomfortable about night creatures. The reason for this un-comfortableness is because the night is dark and symbolic of the unknown - that which we can't, or do not want to see.

Humans are able to block out that which we don’t want to remember or deal with, e.g. memories with negative emotions attached to them, traumas, and accidents etc. We deny that about ourselves which we do not wish to see. When dreaming, sometimes our unconscious mind becomes conscious. However, again these dreams are forgotten on purpose. Hiding from our selves, our feelings, emotions and thoughts means we are being deceitful - to our selves. If owl has found you - they have the ability to unmask and see what is truly beneath the surface. They pierce illusion. On the flip side, perhaps you have the ability to pierce illusions and see what is really going on behind the scenes, to see what is going on in the darkness of others souls. Perhaps you have noticed that people are a little uncomfortable around you. Use this gift carefully and compassionately. It would be good for this gift to develop in all humans, for owl teaches us to look into the darkest parts of our souls and learn from this darkness.

There are circa 135 species of Owl, 17 of which are found in North America. They come in all sizes, from a tiny miniature that lives inside the cactus in the desert, to the great horned owl - the only bird able to out-fly the golden eagle. To see a fully grown great horned is awe inspiring. They have furry talons that closely resemble the paws of a baby mountain lion with claws extended. Being meat-eaters means they are a force to be reckoned with if challenged, or if something dear to them is threatened. Their large and forward facing eyes give them a wise appearance. They have a greater range of movement in their necks than any other animal with a spinal column. Owls turn their heads, not their eyes, which are stationary.

The owl is keenly aware of its surroundings. Its night vision is so powerful that it can see prey when the light is the same as a candle burning 2500 feet away. Their extremely soft, thick wings let them fly silently to swoop down on their prey. Their ability to move unnoticed teaches us how to do the same. As well as their almost supernatural eyesight, they have supernatural hearing.

Their secretive ways, silent flight and differing calls such as whistles, shrill screeches and hoots, have made the owl symbols of superstition and even fear in some parts of the world. Some native tribes regard owl as a symbol of death, whilst others will believe that they represent the mysteries of shamanism and witchcraft. Owls are sometimes believed to visit those about to die. This doesn’t so much mean a physical death as much as it means letting go of a part of you that no longer serves
you. With their spectral senses, the owl helps guide us through the dark tunnels of fear, change and unknowing to the light at the other end.

Owl people generally are private complex people and don't like others to know what they are really thinking. Sometimes this can cause misinterpretations, especially in personal relationships. Owl people also often have clairvoyant and psychic abilities. People born with this power animal have chosen a path that implies a need to develop these gifts for the aid of others and they make excellent therapists, psychologists and counsellors.

“Anything else?” asked Severus dryly.

“Am I doing something wrong?” asked Harry pensively.

“No, usually, people only get two or three animagus choices max,” said Severus smoothly; this wasn’t Harry’s fault so he shouldn’t take it out on him.

“Oh” said Harry quietly.

“It’s going to make tough time deciding what you want to be, just remember though you might not have a choice,” said Severus “Next time you drink the potion another animal might be in the place of the owl. There might only be three that time around, the animals change with you and who you are.”

“Did it happen with you?” asked Harry quietly.

“Yes, when I was a young boy, I could have become a dog, a butterfly, or an otter. As an adult, it was a panther, bat or wolf. They grow as you grow, it’s just the way it’s always been.” said Severus.

“What if you pick something and you’re stuck with it? Like a butterfly?” asked Harry curiously.

“Nothing happens that’s exactly the point, your stuck with it so choosing is a very important process.” said Severus smoothly.

“Okay,” said Harry nodding his head his vision finally clearing the potion had worn off.

“Why don’t we go and have an early dinner? And talk through some of these animals and leave the quiz for tomorrow?” suggested Severus.

“Brilliant!” grinned Harry.

Severus didn’t know why, but he loved seeing Harry happy, it made him happy if Harry was happy. He wasn’t sure if it was because he knew Harry, had not had many opportunities to be happy or if he wanted his apprentice just to be happy. It was why he had invited his mother to stay again; Harry needed a woman in his life, a mother figure or grandmother. Something really anything, and for some reason Harry had taken to his mother. He would forever be grateful for Harry - for looking out for his mother. Severus’ mother meant everything to him, without her he would be lost. It was as if Harry, as such short time he had known her - loved her like that too.
Chapter 26

Learning and Hogwarts

Once Severus had sent Harry to bed, with a dreamless sleeping potion in his hand, he floo called Hogwarts. Very much aware that Albus would still be in his office, for an old man he did not get much sleep. Such as it is, for being a Headmaster for such a prominent school. It didn’t help that he was very well known and respected; he had people asking for his help day in and day out. The most obvious person was Cornelius Fudge, the Minister of magic. He had been one of them too, when he had spied on the Dark Lord for him. He had lost a lot of respect for Albus, for how he was being, regarding Harry. He still respected him a little; it was hard to hate him even if he was being blinded and stubborn.

“Severus, how can I help you?” asked Albus tiredly.

“I asked if Harry could return to Hogwarts some time ago, is it possible?” asked Severus getting straight to the point as per usual.

“Of course, I’ve ensured all the classes he needs are together, Monday and Tuesday.” said Albus, he had too much respect and love for Severus, as a son, to deny him the only thing he had ever asked for.

“Thank you,” said Severus.

“Your welcome Severus,” said Albus kindly “How is it that you managed to teach Harry the Patronus spell so quickly?” he then enquired.

“He’s a Ravenclaw, he wants to learn and has a drive to learn Albus, Potter doesn’t have the same drive.” said Severus honestly, “It has nothing to do with power.”

“Are you sure I cannot get you to teach Nick?” asked Dumbledore sounding desperate.

“I have too much to do Albus, my apprentice comes first, I have my own potions business to content with as well.” said Severus.

“Very well,” sighed Albus.

“Try and get some sleep Albus, goodnight,” said Severus.

“Goodnight Severus,” said Albus warily.

As soon as Severus’ head disappeared from the fire Albus did as Severus suggested and did indeed go to bed.

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Severus withdrew his head from the fire, satisfaction written on every line of his face. Walking towards his desk, he began making changes to the schedules he had set up. Monday and Tuesday got cleared out, to be replaced with Hogwarts across it. Night time he decided he would use for Occlumency lessons. Wednesday he would teach him potions all day, Thursday would be Defence
Against the Dark Arts. Friday was going to be used for actual Dark Arts. Saturday would be for various different charms and spells he knew that didn’t fit into either category/day. Sunday was his day off; Severus also decided to give him Thursday and Friday evening free time too. It was easy to forget that Harry was just fifteen years old.

Putting it aside he created another one for Harry to use, no doubt Albus would send him Harry’s timetable. He left it on the desk and sat back, waiting on the house elves sending him up his nightly coffee. They knew his preferences now, so much they didn’t even need to be called. The house elf popped in and gave him it before leaving without saying anything. Severus was too exhausted to even thank the house elf, but he did have enough energy to grab it and drink it slowly.

He was worried he was pushing Harry too hard, but if he didn’t learn what he needed to, there was going to be nothing to regret or worry about. If he didn’t learn what he needed the Dark Lord would kill him. It didn’t help Harry was having nightmares and hardly sleeping, he knew he shouldn’t resort to giving Harry dreamless sleeping potion. That potion was only supposed to be used in the events of some sort of trauma. Sleeping potion didn’t solve anything, it just suppressed it really. Severus was surprised it had taken this long for Harry to have nightmares. All he could do was be there for the teenager, if he ever wanted to talk. The thing was Harry wasn’t used to talking, or having anyone to talk to, depend on period.

Placing his empty cup on the desk, with a wary sigh he got up and went to his own bed. They had an early start tomorrow, as per usual, and Severus needed all the sleep he could get.

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Severus woke up, one hand under his pillow, clutching his wand the other limp at his side. It was something he couldn’t break; he had been doing it since he was eleven years old. Despite the fact he knew nobody could reach him here, he continued sleeping with his wand under his pillow. Looking at his alarm clock, he became alarmed when he noticed it was past seven o’clock. Swiftly rising from his bed, he made his way towards his bathroom. Quickly getting a shower, brushing his teeth, doing the toilet and all other morning rituals before getting dressed. A pair of black jeans, white t-shirt and a black long sleeved jumper. He didn’t bother with his cloak, before he made his way down the stairs.

“How did you sleep?” asked Severus, “You did take the potion?”

“I did! Thank you it was brilliant,” said Harry, who looked much better and the bags under his eyes had disappeared. He was his usual chipper self, and Severus was glad to see it back.

“Good, I’m glad to see that, what are you up to?” asked Severus.

“Just filling out my quiz,” explained Harry passing it along. It was the one they had neglected to do, choosing instead to try the animagus potion.

“Have you had anything to eat yet?” demanded Severus, already knowing the answer the boy really needed to start taking better care of himself.

“No, not yet,” admitted Harry.

“Then let’s get something to eat before we do anything further,” said Severus before they both went to the dining area.

“When’s your mum coming?” asked Harry he was dying to see her again.

“As soon as she finds a manager and two assistants for her shop,” explained Severus. The new
house elf, Dobby, popped in with their food. He didn’t display the harebrained hyperactive attitude he had before. The other house elves had obviously been working with him; either that or the gratitude he felt had been toned down with the head house elf.

“Oh, well I hope she gets them soon!” chirped Harry, gratefully eating, he was surprisingly hungry.

“I’m sure she will,” said Severus also eating, and drinking a cup of his usual dark coffee.

After breakfast was over with, Harry asked the question he always asked “What are we doing today then?”

“This morning we are going to duel with every spell you have learned, after lunch I’m going to teach you the unforgivables. After dinner is yours to do with as you wish, but I want you to read the book on meditation and occlumency and try it before you go to bed tonight.” said Severus as usual always outlining everything they were doing. Giving Harry a chance to change it, if he could add something or if there was something he wasn’t happy with. Severus always told Harry it was best if he spoke up right away, if he wasn’t happy with something rather than wait.

He had yet to complain although he had asked for one thing, the animagus potion.

“I also have good news for you,” said Severus smoothly. Without waiting on Harry asking he told him “Professor Dumbledore has made exceptions for you to go to Hogwarts. You will be there on Monday and Tuesdays at least for this term.” timetables changed every term, so the students didn’t get too used to it or bored with the classes.

“He actually said yes?” gaped Harry, surprise clearly displayed on his face. Dumbledore had never really spoken to him, well, apart from when he got back from the chamber of secrets. He had wanted to know what happened, after he found out that was it, he went back to being ignored. He didn’t like Dumbledore, didn’t trust him, there were only a few people he trusted.

“Despite what you may think…he is not the bad man here,” said Severus softly.

“Do you know what its like to be constantly ignored? I thought at Hogwarts it would be different…but I was wrong. Did you know on our first day, of Transfiguration with McGonagall. I turned my match into a needle first, but McGonagall was too into encouraging Nick to change it to even look my way. She gave him points and ignored me and Granger. She wasn’t the only one to ignore me…everyone did,” said Harry bitterness twisting his features and voice. “I was excited when I heard Lupin was going to be our teacher, well, sort of. I was going to try my best, determined to get everything done correctly the first time. Then I saw him on the school grounds talking to Nick, he didn’t even say a single thing to me.” the bitterness was replaced with a sad melancholy look.

Severus stared at the teenager, sympathy strumming through his heart. For the first time in a long time he actually confided in someone. “I know how it feels; I too, unfortunately, was a victim of this. You are aware that your father had three best friends at Hogwarts? Remus Lupin, Peter Pettigrew and Sirius Black?”

Harry blinked in confusion but nevertheless answered “I know, I er, heard James telling Nick all his stupid stories.” those times had made him cry, he had been young too young to be strong. He had sat on the floor, in the corridor listening to James telling Nick stories at bed time. Never once, not even for ten minutes had James did that with him. To Harry back then it had made his heart hurt, made it feel as though someone was squeezing it tightly. Of course even when James left, after Nick was asleep, he never spared a glance at Harry - just told him to get to bed before going to Roxy’s room to read to her. As he got older though, once he could read, he read to himself at night. Lost himself in the books, to get away from the harsh reality that his life was.
“I was bullied by them, for years; make no mistake I did get my own back most times. I was never the willing victim, until one of their pranks almost cost me my life.” explained Severus “Black lured me down to the Shrieking shack, to where a werewolf Lupin was waiting on me. Potter came down at the last minute and saved me much to my disgust. None of them were punished; instead I was warned to keep my mouth shut. Professor Dumbledore was forced to make a tough decision to keep Hogwarts’ reputation from falling apart.”

“You’re not telling me you forgave them?” asked Harry sceptically, he’d never forgive any of the others for what they did to him. If it hadn’t been for Eileen and Severus he would have left the Wizarding world to its fate. Voldemort was going to be after him; he had cost him his followers and killed his snake. Even if he hadn’t done it and hadn’t been kidnapped he was still a Potter and Voldemort wanted them all dead.

“No, I’m too Slytherin for that unfortunately, and I’m not suggesting you forgive them either. I’m just trying to let you see the enormous pressure Professor Dumbledore is under.” explained Severus wryly and he wasn’t doing a very good job at it either.

Harry stared at Severus in shock; he couldn’t believe what he was hearing. He felt undeniable betrayed, he though Severus of all people understood. Yet here he was, trying to make him forgive people who had hurt him. It’s all people did, betray him, hurt him and he was sick and fed up of it.

Severus saw he had messed it up badly, when he saw the betrayal in Harry’s green eyes. He was quickly thinking over ways to set it right, when Harry made a move to get up. Severus quickly grabbed the teenager, just in case he tried to apparate out. If he managed to get out of Malfoy Manor, he could get out of here. He knew he would never see the teenager again if he did leave. Not only would he be cursing himself, he would have his mother to deal with too.

“Listen this hasn’t gone the way I meant it, sit down, let me explain,” said Severus a sigh leaving his lips. Harry was forced back down onto the seat, for the first time reminding Severus of a teenager. Although he was right to be angry, he should never have brought it up. If someone had asked him, his own reaction would have been ten times worse than Harry’s. Yes, even if he had been asked or told as an adult, he held onto grudges like children held onto teddy bears or their favourite toy. It was just how he was.

“When Professor Dumbledore defeated Grindelwald, he was held in a very high regard by the public. It remained that way with the first uprising of the Dark Lord; they expected him to defeat the Dark Lord. Unfortunately he wasn’t powerful enough, but he did keep him back because the Dark Lord was afraid of him.” said Severus, “Despite the prophecy, people are expecting Dumbledore to lead Potter to be the hero that they all think he is. I know its no excuse for the way he has treated you, in fact I lost a lot of respect for Albus when I found out.”

“You did?” asked Harry blinking in astonishment that was the last thing he expected.

“He’s repeating his mistakes over and over again; he claims he is sorry for the way he was with me. Yet he’s making similar mistakes with you and one day he will regret that. It will be genuine but it doesn’t change anything that’s been done now does it?” said Severus grimly.

“No,” agreed Harry shaking his head to emphasize his answer.

“That was what I was trying to say, I did not mean to imply that you should forgive him. I have not forgiven him for ignoring me in favour of Potter, Black and Lupin. I put it aside when I became a spy, because my life was more important than any grudge I had. No matter how much it hurt, or
made me angry at the time.” said Severus.

Harry nodded his head in understanding, any betrayal, anger or thoughts of leaving bled away. He had overreacted slightly, but he was so very glad that Severus hadn’t been trying to tell him to forgive Dumbledore. He wouldn’t forgive anyone, not the Potter’s not Dumbledore not McGonagall or James’ friends Black or Lupin. No matter how many letters he got apologizing for what happened. He was safer that way, from being betrayed again.

“Now shall we get on with our day?” asked Severus giving himself a mental pat on the back. That had been a very close call, but it had been dealt with, and he mentally warned himself not to do something so stupid again. It certainly wasn’t like him; he said what he meant he never normally stumbled up.

“Yeah,” said Harry grateful for the change of subject.

“Good, let’s go,” said Severus back to his normal voice that the tense conversation was over.

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“Get down to the Great Hall now, eat breakfast you have a big day ahead of you,” said Lily adamantly.

“I’m not training,” yelled Nick furiously.

“Yes you are,” Lily yelled right back.

“Mum can I go to Diagon Alley today?” asked Roxy.

“No Roxy, move it Nick!” said Lily her nostrils flaring angrily.

“Why not?” asked Roxy quietly, she didn’t understand it she thought being at Hogwarts would make things better. If anything it was worse, both her parents were ignoring her in favour of Nick. She had never experienced that before; she was having a little taste of what her brother’s life had been like.

“I want my new broom,” said Nick, they had promised him it and he still didn’t have it.

“We cannot get you it Nick,” explained Lily tiredly. She hated letting her children down, but they didn’t have a Knut to their name. It was a good job their Hogwarts tuition had been paid for already. Money would start piling up again after Hogwarts started up, once James started back at work. She was worried though that it wouldn’t be enough, so she was planning on speaking to Albus before he began training Nick today. “But I promise you will get it, in a month’s time once your dad gets paid.”

“Promise?” asked Nick.

“Of course,” said Lily honestly.

“Okay mum,” grinned Nick pleased to get his own way once more.

“Let’s get going then,” said Lily exasperated.

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“Well done, you are doing extremely well Harry, you almost had me,” said Severus walking towards Harry, un-stunning him. He was sweating; he hadn’t had such a challenge in a long time.
Harry though was sweating buckets, breathing heavily, panting on the floor.

“Not good enough,” said Harry in disappointment.

“None of that! You killed a snake and Pettigrew, with a single Reducto curse, your magic is strong. Your reflexes are getting there, you just need to get a little faster.” said Severus soothingly “If you had wanted I have no doubt you could have used that curse on me, and taken me out in a single blow.”

Harry shuddered at the prospect of accidentally doing such a thing.

“I do not want you holding back, I need to know how good you are,” said Severus realizing Harry might have been holding back. Not wanting to hurt him, he should have seen it sooner.

“Okay,” breathed Harry, trying to get rid of the stitch that was permanently stuck in his side.

“Good, now why don’t you go shower, read the books I want you to read, relax and then come and have some lunch. After lunch we begin working on the unforgivables, try not to use anymore magic. To perform the unforgivables you need all the magic you can,” said Severus. Although he had no doubt Harry’s magical reserves was quite large, since he had been using complex magic since he was four or so. However, he had probably used quite a bit of it duelling him for over an hour.

“Brilliant,” grinned Harry happy with that suggestion.

“I shall be in my lab if you need me,” said Severus helping Harry up. “Do you need a potion?”

“Maybe a mild one, that tripping hex made me fall on my side, my ribs are bruised,” said Harry.

“You know where the cabinet is, take it before you shower,” said Severus as they walked back into Prince Manor.

“Yes sir,” said Harry. He walked towards the cabinet in the study where Severus kept his potions. Severus though continued on, towards his lab, he had potions to brew after all. He had slept nearly two hours longer than he had meant to this morning, for the first time in a very long time.

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“Ah Lily, good to see you all, everything well?” asked Dumbledore, the only person would speak to any of the Potters. He had been short with Lily the other day there, and he hoped it didn’t distance them from him. The world was hanging in the balance; he needed Nick to train and defeat Voldemort.

Roxy and Nick took their seats and began filling their plates, not even paying attention to the teachers. Although Nick looked slightly warily at the teachers, he knew this year was going to be hard. He hated Harry, he had to ruin everything for him, he was scared and had to have someone to blame. Harry was the prefect target; he had lost money, respect and many friends. He had written to lots of his …ex friends but no one had replied. He had even written to Ronald Weasley, only to fail with even him. Although Ron had written back with a short curt answer saying he didn’t want to be friends with him again. He ignored his mother’s conversation with Dumbledore, still in a mood - he hated training.

“Yes, it’s alright, but I have a favour to ask you,” said Lily “I was wondering if I could speak to you privately before Nick starts training today.”
“Of course, how about we go to my office now?” suggested Dumbledore, he had already finished his breakfast.

“That would be great,” said Lily relieved.

“Then lets go, I shall see you all later at the staff meeting,” said Dumbledore to the teachers.

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“Now how can I help you?” asked Dumbledore cautiously.

“I need a job,” admitted Lily her face as red as her hair at admitting this. “James’ job won’t be enough to get us by with food, essential things we need and things we want to buy Roxy and Nick.”

“Perhaps you should spend less?” suggested Dumbledore.

“We can’t,” said Lily, everyone was too used to getting everything they wanted including her. She would have to get a job for the first time in her life, she didn’t like it but she had to do it.

“What are you suggesting then?” asked Dumbledore warily what could Lily want from him now? He wasn’t a miracle worker, he couldn’t give her money. He wasn’t made of it, all the money he had made went out to finance the Order. His mother had been a half blood, who had used all her money to try and help their sister. His father had been a muggle born and sentenced to Azkaban. It had been his job to keep the family together, or should have been after Hogwarts finished. He had tried to get out of it by focusing his fascination on the Deathly Hollows with Gellert. That mistake had cost him greatly; he had lost all his family now. His father, mother, sister and at the same time younger brother. Aberforth blamed him, still blamed him for that matter. He lived so close yet so far away and Albus hated it. Unfortunately it had been one hundred and forty years ago, and nothing was going to change now. The money he made as Headmaster and head of Wizengamont had went on financing the order the first time around. The money he had away would go to financing this one he had just started.

“I heard Charity Burbage was missing, I was wondering…since I know so much about the Muggle world if I could teach it?” suggested Lily.

“She’s only just been pronounced missing,” said Dumbledore unable to believe Lily was after Charity’s job already.

“I know, but if she’s found then I’ll step down,” said Lily, hoping that she wasn’t, she really needed that job.

“If she hasn’t been found before Hogwarts starts back up then you can have the job,” sighed Dumbledore, it was one less thing for him to worry over. Starting the Order, worrying about Voldemort, training Nick, schedules, timetables, he didn’t even have time to think most days, just react. He was also worried about Charity; she had disappeared of the face of the earth. He was worried that it was Voldemort already making his move, and it looked as though it started with his staff, workers of Hogwarts.

“Thank you,” sighed Lily relieved.

“Where is James?” asked Dumbledore he hadn’t seen him this morning.

“We had a talk last night, he’s gone back to work early, working overtime double shifts,” said Lily her green eyes sad. “He must know what he’s doing to us, it was in the paper! We never meant for any of it to happen. Nick was just more important and he just doesn’t understand that!”
“Do you realize you have just called Harry ‘HE’ three times?” asked Dumbledore saddened by what had happened to this once close family.

“I cannot even bring myself to say his name,” admitted Lily “I’m so disappointed in him.”

“You neglected him,” stated Dumbledore, “Made him grow up too soon, he’s surviving how he can.” for the first time openly defending Harry, and it liberated Albus doing so.

“I didn’t neglect him, he got food, clothes, attention, just not as much as Nick,” denied Lily angrily.

“I do not want to argue with you Lily, I’d prefer if you didn’t mention Harry in front of me,” said Dumbledore.

“Okay,” said Lily agreeing to that.

“Now if you will excuse me I have your other son to train,” said Dumbledore getting up and leaving the room. He could feel Remus already waiting in the defence classroom. When the school wasn’t in session he could, thanks to the wards, tell where pretty much everyone was. When the school was in session he couldn’t tell, too many Wizards and Witches roamed the school to even hope to place anyone.

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“How are you today Remus?” asked Dumbledore cheerfully coming into the Defence classroom.

“Exhausted, Sirius is completely depressed he keeps waiting on Harry writing to him. When he’s not working of course, only to go to bed at eleven o’clock at night despondently.” sighed Remus his amber eyes full of sorrow.

“I see,” said Dumbledore sadly.

“Nothing I say makes one bit of difference, he’s kept every paper clipping when Harry’s mentioned. He’s proud of him, but he’s also hurting very badly. Unlike the Potter’s he’s accepting responsibility for his actions.” said Remus.

“Well let’s see if we can get Nick to successful cast the Patronus Hm?” suggested Dumbledore trying to get Remus’ mind off his best friends sorrow.

“Yes, I cannot help again for at least a week, the full moon is in a few days,” said Remus in agreement.

“Understood,” said Dumbledore, he knew it was the full moon, which was why he was adamant to get it done. If he did he was going to give Nick that one week break from defence at least. The rest of the others would continue training him; Albus didn’t have enough hours in the day to keep this up. He was too old to stay up at late as he had been to ensure he got everything done.

“He’s actually not late for once, and then again it might have something to do with Lily coming,” said Remus sniffing the air gently.

“Good,” said Dumbledore in satisfaction perhaps they would manage to accomplish something today.

“Hi,” said Lily gently shoving her son in before closing the door behind them leaving Nick with the two teachers.
“Sit down Nick, on the floor cross legged, close your eyes” said Remus, waiting patiently as Nick did so. “Take out your wand; leave it loosely in your hand, now I want you to think back to a memory of yours at the age of one. Your first piece of accidental magic, remember you exploded your bottle because your mother wouldn’t give you anymore?”

Nick smiled softly nodded his head he remembered that. It was as if the memory was playing across his closed eyelids. He remembered how happy he was, he also remembered the affection he held for his twin brother. His heart ached as he felt how carefree he had been at that age. Another memory flashed before his eyes, him and Harry in the play pen. Magically summoning their favourite toys from one another, giving it back when it looked as though they were going to cry.

“Think on it completely, and then say the words to the spell,” said Remus hoping that this would work - it was his last resort. He had thought about it last night, before Voldemort attacked was probably when Nick had been happiest.

“Expecto Patronum,” murmured Nick still replaying the memory and feeling the emotions completely mesmerized.

Blinding white light burst through his wand, causing Dumbledore and Remus to close their eyes. When they opened it, a beautiful white fawn was prancing around the room. Quite fitting because James had called both Nick and Harry before Voldemort’s attack - pronglet’s.

“Well done Nick, for that you can have the week of defence,” said Dumbledore staring at Nick in pride. His blue eyes twinkling brightly, he was very happy with the outcome of today’s lesson and it had only been three minutes.

“Really? So I can go! Please I want to show mum!” exclaimed Nick hyperly. The memory and emotions all but forgotten.

“Go on then,” said Dumbledore happy to let him, he had other things to do than teach him something he knew.

“Thank Merlin it worked,” said Remus “I was beginning to loose hope.” his Patronus was ironically enough a wolf too. He couldn’t produce it so close to the full moon, because the more magic he used the more painful the transformation was. He had found that out after leaving Hogwarts.

“Indeed,” said Dumbledore satisfied things were finally looking up again.

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“The Crucius curse takes a great deal of anger to enable you to cast it. I am only teaching you this in the dire need you need to use it. Do try and not use it when there is anyone around, because it can land you in Azkaban,” said Severus.

“Okay,” nodded Harry staring intently at Severus.

“You know the saying, so go ahead try it on this spider,” said Severus standing back.

Harry thought about everyone in his life, Lupin, Black, Dumbledore, and the Potters’ before he said the dreaded words. “Crucio!” the spider immediately began jerking and writhing in apparent agony.

“Well you certainly have that one down, flick your wand to stop it,” said Severus.
Harry did as he was told, already sweating profusely.

“Now this is the spell that will most likely safe you in dire circumstances, the Imperious curse, I know you can fight it off, I also realize you know the words so go on,” said Severus.

“Imperio!” said Harry but nothing happened.

“You need to want to control the spider, to make it do your bidding, will it,” said Severus calmly.

“Imperio!” shouted Harry willing the spider to simply move.

“Well done,” said Severus he was already performing two of them, it was a whole afternoons work in five minutes. “I’m proud of you.”

“Thank you!” beamed Harry; this was what he loved best about his new life. Not the best, the potions, not even the clothes and things he needed. The praise, he had never been praised before. It made his heart want to leap out of his chest and do a dance. He could never take those words for granted. It’s why he worked as hard as he did, to earn Severus’ approval and pride. It meant the world to him to hear a man who didn’t praise for nothing, tell him that. Those four words made him float on cloud nine, he was glad the way his life had turned out - just so he could savour this moment.

“Now, the last one, Avada Kedavra,” said Severus, barely suppressing the flinch at the memories those words invoked. He hadn’t always been a spy, he had killed innocent people. The spell though was the best of the three unforgivables and it’s the one he had used most as a spy. To give those who would die horrifically, pain free deaths it was the least he could do for them - put them out of their misery.

“Avada Kedavra!” said Harry, suppressing his own flinch - that one spell had ruined his life. Created a destiny that he couldn’t escape because he had gotten attached to five people he’d die to protect. Severus, Eileen, Cedric, Luna and Fleur. All of the above was still in the United Kingdom; Viktor was thankfully well away from the war that was starting up.

The green light encompassed the now dead spider before fading away.

“Congrdulations Harry Peverell,” smirked Severus “You have long ago surpassed what I thought you could do. Now unfortunately you have finished an afternoon’s work in twenty minutes. So,” Severus stopped talking for a few seconds before a small smile replaced the smirk.

Harry knew what it meant, “Eileen’s here isn’t she?” he asked.

“Indeed she is why don’t we go and greet her?” suggested Severus.

“Brilliant!” grinned Harry racing in excited to see the woman he loved like a mother. Severus and Eileen were both here for him; safely under one roof things were indeed looking up for one boy named Harry James Peverell.

Severus shook his head the small smile still not away as he walked into the house, at a more sedate pace.
Chapter 27

Invisible

Chapter 27

Presents and Conversations

Harry practically flew into the manor, eager to see Eileen once more. He had missed her so much, even though he had only got to see her during the summers while he was at school. Normally he kept in touch with her, but he had neglected to do so. He had been so busy he hadn’t even replied to Black or been talking to Viktor. Harry barely refrained from throwing himself at her, but he did hug her tightly. The normally reserved teenager, showing emotions - once more. Severus watched from the door jamb, he realized how much his mother loved Harry. No wonder she had been devastated when he told her, he had known she was fond of him, but this…this was more than he expected. He knew what she loved about him though, because he loved Harry in his own way too. He had no idea what it was going to turn into.

“It’s great to see you!” chirped Harry cheerfully, she had given him his beloved owl, he had loved her before that, but when she gave him Hermes that was him. He had named his owl after the Greek God Hermes, the messenger god.

“It’s nice to see you too son, how have you both been?” asked Eileen, speaking to both her boys, both boys meant the world to her. She was so blessed to have them both in her life. It made her regret not having more children, but she wouldn’t change Severus for anything.

“I can cast the Patronus charm!” exclaimed Harry right away, Severus came and sat down ordering food amused by Harry’s childish happiness. Given how his life had been, Severus could safely say he deserved it.

“Did you now? That’s fantastic Harry!” said Eileen pride shining in her black eyes.

“It’s a panther! The same as Severus!” said Harry his green eyes glittering brightly.

Eileen could see the changes in Harry, he was happier here, happier now. Getting emancipated seemed to have, changed the teenager, made him whole, happy and more like a teenager he should be. He didn’t have to worry about money, his apprenticeship, his disgusting family, or anyone finding out he was the true ‘Boy Who Lived’ any time soon.

“Well done Harry, I am proud of you son,” said Eileen, patting Harry absently on the hand.

“Thanks!” grinned Harry cheerfully.

“He’s also decided on a new potions project,” said Severus feeling proud as well.

“Really? What idea is this?” asked Eileen, now that’s something she could relate to them both with. Potion had been her first love, her only love, something she had passed onto her son. Another boy had come into her life, who adored potions with a passion she had only, ever seen, with her son. She knew that Severus and Harry would get on very well, especially with the love of potions they both had.

“An idea on how to ensure you have more than one animagus, unlock all you potentials instead of sticking to just the one.” said Severus smirking proudly.
“Where did this idea come from?” asked Eileen curiously.

“I took the animagus potion,” explained Harry taking a Butterbeer from the platter the house elf had just brought.

“Are you planning on becoming one?” asked Eileen astonished.

“No not yet, maybe after my owl’s,” said Harry softly.

“That’s a very good idea!” said Eileen approvingly, still stunned by Harry. He was making decisions that shouldn’t be made by teenagers, if teenagers wanted to do something, they did it. A small part of her, wished Harry would do whatever he wanted, be a child. The war was going to start soon, and he needed to be childish when he still could. Who knows when Voldemort would start his full out war against everyone. She was terrified for both her boys, Severus was wanted for being a spy, and Harry for being a Potter. There was one small piece of relief for her though, that Voldemort didn’t know that Harry was the one that truly defeated him, all those years ago. A boy that was also said, to be his downfall, someone who would defeat Voldemort once and for all. She had every confidence in Harry, and Severus, that he would be trained well enough to face the snake faced monster.

“I think he will pass them no problem, as long as the teacher teaches Ancient Runes properly,” said Severus smoothly.

“I’m sure they will,” said Eileen.

Just then an owl flew through the open window, straight for Harry. Flinging his arm out, for the owl to land on. It did, once he was sure the owl was fine, he detached the package. Then let the owl sit on the back of his seat, the barn owl hooted gratefully, then its head was round and it was sleeping soundly.

“It’s from Hogwarts,” said Harry, noticing the crest, he opened it up and took out his timetable. Looking at it curiously, his eyes narrowed when he caught sight of something.

Severus watched Harry; he knew the package was from Dumbledore. He was the only one who used the Hogwarts’ crest, not even McGonagall could use it unless it was to send out the letters, at the beginning of the year. That was only when Dumbledore was far too overworked, to do it himself. She had to go to the headmaster’s office and sign and seal them all, then get them sent off with the owls. It took a lot more time than anyone cared to realize to get them all sent out. Severus became alarmed when Harry gritted his teeth and glared at the paper, as if it had somehow offended him.

“What’s the matter?” asked Severus barely able to hide his worry.

“I’m glad I don’t need to attend Muggle studies,” sneered Harry.

Severus realized almost at once what was going on, he only sneered when his parents or Nick were mentioned or he was doing the mentioning (which wasn’t often). It didn’t take much to connect or draw the dots. Potter worked in the Ministry; it only left one person - Lily. “Lily?” guessed Severus correctly.

Harry sharply nodded his head.

“Unbelievable,” said Eileen angrily.

“But not unsurprising,” said Severus.
“Excuse me?” asked Eileen confused.

“They do not have the amount of money to spend on their…brats as they like,” sneered Severus his lip curling in disgust. “Hence Lily has been forced to take on a job. Look’s like she has gotten used to the life she was leading.” Lily’s parents would have been disappointed in their daughter, they had raised her differently. He supposed it’s difficult to raise someone who spends all their time in the Wizarding world. She had changed and it was only a few months ago, he had realized the extent of it. The Lily he had known would never have neglected her son. Hell she had put up and defended Petunia all the time and she had been one nasty little…well he would call her witch but that’s an insult, so he settled on bitch.

“He’ll still get everything he wants,” said Harry bitterly.

“It looks to be the case,” said Severus reluctantly, an Auror and a school teacher was bound to create a decent income. Although Potter probably would make the most, teachers weren’t paid what they should be. Considering what they had to put up with, he should know, he had been one.

“Speaking of Muggle, I bought you something,” said Eileen bringing out a huge gift.

“You didn’t have to,” said Harry his cheeks flushing brightly. He was extremely pleased nonetheless; he could count the amount of gifts he had ever received. They were sadly lacking, especially compared to Nick Potter.

“I wanted to,” said Eileen passing the present along, happy that Harry didn’t protest too much.

Harry unwrapped it, and cocked his head to the side; he had never seen anything like it before in his life. It was very alien to him, and he wasn’t sure what to make of it. He looked at Eileen curiously, hoping she was going to explain it to him.

“It’s a laptop Harry, it’s a muggle invention,” explained Eileen, helping Harry remove it from its box. She then proceeded to put it on; Harry’s eyes widened what kind of device was this? Just what were Muggles capable of? This was really odd, not a bad odd, a good one really.

“See this…this is a document, you can use it for your potion ideas, instead of paper it will be much easier to get into. Let’s see what me,” said Eileen, typing in the name of Harry’s just invented potion, before she typed in his new idea. Saving them she went back to the documents and said “Look here? There’s your ideas saved, and all you need to do is click on it. It’s much tidier in keeping your documents safe.”

“This lasts forever?” asked Harry curiously.

“No it doesn’t, that’s why I’ve given you this,” said Eileen passing over a small shaped item. Harry again stared at it as if it was an alien thing. “This is a storage drive; you can save all your documents onto it, so if anything happens to this device your potions are safe.”

“Won’t paper just be safer?” asked Harry cautiously.

“It could be, but you can loss books and paper as easy as a laptop,” said Eileen softly. “If it’s not something you want, its fine I just though it might be something you’d like.” explained Eileen.

“It’s great! I’ll give it a try!” said Harry immediately, not wanting Eileen to think he was being ungrateful. He wasn’t, he just wasn’t sure what to think of the Muggle contraption Eileen, had just brought him.

“That’s all I can ask,” smiled Eileen kindly, “This is for you Severus.”
Severus accepted the gift, wondering where his mother had gotten the money. He had a sneaky suspicion she had not just had someone take over her shop temporarily, but sold it. Unless she had taken to storing money away, he saw five hard to get potion ingredients; he went forward and hugged her. “Thank you mum,” said Severus. The oddest thing about this moment was the fact he wasn’t feeling awkward. This was the first time he had called her mother in company of others. Rather the first time in a very long time, since most people wrongfully assumed that his mother was dead. He didn’t deny it, or correct them as it fitted quite well into his plans.

“You’re welcome son,” beamed Eileen, her son didn’t display emotions much, and it was rarer still to receive hugs from him.

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Much later that night, they were once again all sitting in the same room again. Severus and Harry had as usual been busy training, just because he was doing everything, at a much quicker pace, than Severus thought he could. It didn’t mean he wasn’t going to cram every piece of knowledge he could, down the teenagers throat. They had mostly been brewing potions anyway, since Harry had spent a lot of his magic on the unforgivables. It wasn’t something Severus liked teaching, but he knew Voldemort wouldn’t and couldn’t be defeated, by a tickling jinx or a cutting curse. Otherwise Dumbledore would have done it by now. Dumbledore was too light to cast the Unforgivables, he hadn’t even truly killed Grindelwald, just took him down, so the Auror’s could arrest him. He was currently stuck in Prison for life.

Not many people knew that piece of information, a lot of people thought defeat, meant dead.

“Do you need a dreamless sleeping potion tonight?” asked Severus, it would be the last one he would offer the teenager. He wasn’t about to let anyone under his watch become addicted to the potion. Plus it didn’t really give him time to put up his defences. Harry really needed to learn occlumency if he wanted to stop the visions.

“No sir,” said Harry immediately, he didn’t want to rely on those potions too much.

“Good,” said Severus approval deep in his onyx eyes.

“Have you been having bad dreams Harry?” asked Eileen concerned, from where she sat, a small cover thrown over her, and a cup of hot chocolate clutched in her hand.

Severus too wanted answers to that, bad dreams of visions - he hadn’t asked.

“Just nightmares,” said Harry grimacing slightly, as he rubbed absently at his chest.

“He cannot hurt you anymore, and because of you he cannot hurt anyone else,” said Severus smoothly.

“I know, doesn’t stop the nightmares though,” said Harry haunted green eyes staring at Severus.

“I can fully understand that,” said Severus staring at Harry in compassion. He too had terrifying nightmares, things he had done, things that were, things that could have come to pass. They had started back up as well, so had the tingling and burning of the mark. Tingling he could manage, but the burn was the worst. It continued to burn for hours afterwards, although he really should be grateful that it did stop. When Voldemort came back, he had feared he would be eventually, driven insane by the burning of the mark. He had never ignored it before, and he had never known it to stop.

“Are you attending Hogwarts tomorrow Harry?” asked Eileen, wanting to talk about something
“Yes, Monday and Tuesday,” said Harry nodding his head in her direction, his emotions once again in control.

“That’s good, I’m sure Luna is looking forward to seeing you,” said Eileen, knowing Harry loved Luna and he would, be looking forward to seeing her too.

“Yeah,” grinned Harry his entire face changing; it was obvious he liked Luna a lot.

“Remember and get a lot of sleep tonight, try and occlude, you will be floo’ing to the Headmaster’s every morning. You don’t have to worry overtly much, as he will probably be at breakfast every morning when you do floo in. If not it wont happen often, the Headmaster will have just been held up. He normally has to be the first one in the great hall, for all the students. The Headmaster and the Head of Houses’ have to be.” said Severus.

“Oh that’s good,” said Harry clearly relived that he wouldn’t have to see the Headmaster all the time.

“Indeed,” said Severus dryly.

“I think I’m ready for my bed boy’s,” said Eileen, she wasn’t used to staying up this late.

“Goodnight mum,” said Severus watching his mother like a hawk. She wasn’t as fit as she used to be, and it worried Severus to no end. He didn’t know what he would do without her; she had been a constant in his life. Every weekend without fail, he had gone to see her, now she was living with him again. It made him happy but saddened to see his mother aging as she was. She should just be in her prime; she was a witch they lived up to two hundred years if they were careful. Unfortunately despite all the healed bones, it still didn’t truly erase the damage his father had done. He could see it in the way she moved, delicately as if not to cause herself unwanted pain.

“Night Eileen,” said Harry quietly, he too watched Eileen in concern. He always had, he hadn’t known her when she was young. Eileen had always been old to Harry, and delicate. Harry loved her with every ounce of his being; she had been the first breath of fresh air in Harry’s agonising life. He had written about her in his diary, sometimes he looked over his old entries so not to take everything, or rather anything for granted.

“I guess I should get going too,” said Harry once Eileen had left the room.

“Hold on a minute Harry, sit down,” said Severus, “Don’t worry it’s nothing serious.” he finished upon seeing Harry’s green eyes fill with worry.

Harry nodded his head curious now.

“If you need me, for anything at all…even just to talk, about the nightmares I am here for you. Even if you have to wake me up, I would prefer it, rather than you suffer in silence Harry. I am no therapist but I do know what you are going through.” said Severus softly, wanting and needing Harry to realize he wasn’t alone anymore.

Harry knew if anyone understood it would be this man, who had also had a tough life. Harry couldn’t imagine being a spy for Voldemort, to see that monster day in and day out. To do things that was against everything you believed in, to look the bastard in the eye and lie, it took a lot of guts. It’s why he respected his potions master. Respected, and felt the need to gain his approval. If Severus respected and approved of him, then it meant he wasn’t useless like he felt most of the time. Hearing that Severus was proud of him, made him go to cloud nine.
“Yes sir,” said Harry a small smile lingering on his face. He loved it here, he was so glad to have met Severus. Even if it meant he had to acknowledge that part of him was glad to have been kidnapped and tortured. Otherwise he might never have met Eileen’s son. Might never have become an apprentice, never got to do what he loved above all else. Never have known just why Dumbledore paid Nick so much attention. Never known why it was so important to train, never known his true destiny. Although it scared the crap out of him, the thought of having to defeat that monster. He would do it though, for Severus, for Eileen, for Luna, and most important of all - for himself. To live, to survive and to finally live without fear of being targeted. Whether by being the boy who lived or the supposed twin of the ‘supposed Boy Who Lived’. He knew deep down it would come out eventually, that day terrified him too. He rather hoped that it didn’t come out, but if it did, he hoped it was after he defeated Voldemort. That way nobody could try and force him to do something. He hated being forced to do anything, and if Dumbledore tried well there would be hell to pay.

It truly was a good thing Severus hadn’t told Dumbledore; otherwise the world would never have seen hide or hair of Harry Potter/Peverell again. Voldemort would have ruled the world, eventually with an iron fist.

Nobody would have been spared; in the end magic would have been lost to the world.

So Harry Peverell truly was a savior, a hero, a boy destined to do great things. Not just defeat Voldemort, but unfortunately for all concerned, that came first.
"Roxanne Potter!" yelled Minerva, shouting so all the first years could hear her.

Whispers started up immediately, everyone craning their neck just to get a glimpse of the only female Potter born in the family for generations. Everyone whispering, wondering how she felt about being the boy who lived's sister. Wondering how she felt about him now, that he had left his own brother to die - their brother to die.

"Well Hello," said the Hat loudly, it almost sounded as though it was speaking out loud.

"Hi," said Roxy timidly.

"You have a good mind, just like your brothers!" said the hat humming and ahhing every few seconds.

"Please put me in Gryffindor please put me in Gryffindor," repeated Roxy, it was her biggest fear. She didn’t want to disappoint her parents; she didn’t want them to hate her. She didn’t want to become an outcast like her brother. What she didn’t realize was that Harry had been an outcast since Nick had become the boy who lived. She didn’t realize it was unusual, its how her family had always been.

“You prefer books to reckless bravery…you wont fit in there…where to put you…” said the hat curiously.

“Gryffindor please! Please, please don’t put me in Ravenclaw!” she begged her eyes closed as her body burned with fear.

“You won’t fit in Gryffindor…I made that mistake once before…” said the hat still undecidedly. Thinking about a bushy haired girl by the name of Hermione Granger. New to the wizarding world, Gryffindor sounded brilliant to her and she had convinced him. It was something that hadn’t worked out - she was an outcast in her own house.

“I will, I can, please! I know people there please!” whined Roxy angry that she wasn’t getting her own way.

“Very well….better be GRYFFINDOR!” yelled the hat out loud for all to hear.

Relieved and smug, Roxy took of the hat, before joining her new house. It was worth it, when she saw the love and adoration adorning her mothers face. She had made them proud; she sat beside the other first years, grinning widely at her brother, who smiled back. Not many people paid attention to him; in fact everyone was giving him a wide berth. He had free seats at each side of him.

“Before we are fed and watered, I wish to introduce your new Potions Professor and Head of
Slytherin house…. Professor Horace Slughorn!” beamed Dumbledore as if nothing pleased him more, than to introduce the new teacher to them.

The Slytherin’s went nuts, cheering loudly, they all knew Slughorn and he favoured his Slytherins. They all knew that, from tales their parents told, or their grandparents. Not that there were many grandparents around, after the last war with Voldemort, many were imprisoned or killed. Polite cheering filled the rest of the hall from the other houses.

“Now let the feast begin!” boomed Dumbledore, his hands apart as the food popped onto the tables.

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“Hey Luna!” grinned Harry sliding into his seat next to her. She had taken Ancient Runes too, so they had at least one class together. Harry was very glad he had a friend, someone in Ravenclaw anyway - otherwise he wouldn’t probably haven’t seen her other than breaks. He had just floo’ed from the Headmaster’s office, true to Severus’ word - Headmaster Dumbledore had not been there. He always felt a rush of anger and hate, just staring at the man. There was only a few people that could do that to him, James Potter, Lily Potter and Nick Potter.

“Hi, Harry, how was your summer?” questioned Luna, sliding her seat forward and staring at her friends green eyes curiously.

“Brilliant! I’m staying at Prince Manor, Eileen moved in now too!” said Harry, the smile on his face was almost blinding. It was a smile that no one at Hogwarts had seen Harry wear. Not only Hogwarts, but Luna had never seen Harry so happy before. Luna smiled, Harry’s mood was infectious she was so pleased Harry was happy now.

“That’s great, how’s being an apprentice working out for you?” asked Luna, she wanted to work with magical animals, she had taken Magical Creatures course in hopes that it would help. She would also be taking over from her dad when he retired. She would become the editor of the quibbler.

“It’s brilliant I’m learning so much!” gushed Harry being quiet as the students milled in and sat down.

“What are you learning?” asked Luna ignoring the looks she got as always.

“Potions, defence and you know other things,” said Harry quietly.

“Good job, nobody is learning anything in Defence this year,” said Luna.

“Why’s that?” asked Harry baffled.

“Someone from the Ministry is teaching, Professor Umbridge, she’s not going to teach us much.” stated Luna grimly.

Harry blinked, Luna hadn’t had defence yet, the school had just begun. It was times like that Harry suspected she was some sort of seer, or at least had a good sense of what was going to happen.

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“What happened to your wand?” asked Luna staring at Harry’s new one, his other one had been similar but Luna could spot the differences. This one was straighter and lighter in colour and if she wasn’t mistaken smaller. Luna wasn’t Dumbledore, but she was ‘rarely wrong’ as he liked to think
of himself. Luna had been dying to ask him during the entire two hours of Ancient Runes.

They were now walking along to the lake, their hands full of food for them to feast on. Neither of them could be bothered with the blathering in the great hall. Especially Harry, everyone wanted to be his best friend all of a sudden, and Harry really couldn’t be bothered with it. He had his friends, knew who he could trust. He didn’t want his brother’s life, didn’t want half hearted friends, or talking to people who didn’t truly care about his answers. His Boggart could attest to that, his worst fear, was himself having his brother’s life.

“I had to get it replaced,” said Harry looking down at his wand deep in thought, remembering when he bought it.

---------0 FLASH BACK TO VISITING OLLIVANDERS 0--------

Harry as soon as he got better knew he would have to visit Ollivander’s. He wasn’t exactly sure what had happened to his old one, he suspected it was probably snapped and discarded off. It made him furious at the thought, of his wand being snapped by the evil bastard. It was probably for the best he got a new one really, at least this one wasn’t bought by James Potter.

“I’ve got to go to Ollivander’s’ sir,” said Harry as he and Severus walked around the Apothecary.

“Why don’t you go ahead now? Meet me back here when you are done?” suggested Severus. He had been to Ollivander’s and it wasn’t something he was keen to experience again. Ollivander had creeped him out when he was eleven, he hated the feeling. Then again compared to Dumbledore and Voldemort he was sure Ollivander was nothing now. It’s just the way Ollivander had known who he was, despite the fact he knew he hadn’t seen the wizard before. He had been raised in the Muggle world for Merlin’s sake, so obviously there was no chance Ollivander had known who he was. Of course Severus knew his secret now, he was a very rare wizard that could read magical cores and see auras.

“Yes sir,” said Harry immediately.

“Stop with the sir, you may be my apprentice but I prefer my given name or Professor Snape.” stated Severus sharply, he had been telling the boy this for a few days now. Sir, reminded him too much of Voldemort, constantly debasing yourself for the amusement of a mad man. He had put up with it in school, knowing it was expected. Sir, Master, Ma’am all made him inwardly cringe.

“Alright Severus,” said Harry, he himself didn’t want to use Professor Snape; it reminded him off all the teachers that had ignored him. So he with great privilege called him Severus. Still getting over the fact his old Potions master was Eileen’s son, and cursing himself for not figuring it out sooner. It had never dawned on him before, but now he knew - he could see it in different parts of him.

“Good, go,” said Severus pleased that he had finally gotten through to the stubborn, genuinely respectful, teenager. Words he had never used when he was thinking about children, or teenagers. Harry was different to them all, he was unsure if that was a good thing or a bad thing yet.

Harry took off in a jog towards Ollivander’s, remembering his first experience. He unlike Severus didn’t think there was anything odd with the fact Ollivander knew who he was. His family was famous; his brother had already been for his wand. To him it didn’t take a genius to figure out who he was really.

He opened the door, and wasn’t surprised to find it empty. It wasn’t time for the first years to come for their wands yet. He doubted it was busy apart from those few months when people turn eleven,
and claim their wand. Then there would be the occasional person, like him, who lost, broke or had their wands broken for them.

“I wasn’t expecting to see you again Mr. Potter,” said Ollivander coming from the shadows. His silver eyes alight with curiosity and surprise, and he was rarely surprised. This boy baffled him completely, his magical core and aura was extremely powerful. More powerful than his brother and father combined, he was the most powerful boy he had ever laid eyes on - even more so than Tom Riddle at that age. Yet his wand was for a mediocre wizard at best. It was as though he had suppressed a part of himself, his magic which to him was inconceivable. He had puzzled over it for years, even more after seeing him again in the boy’s forth year, for the weighting of wands, he had still never found his answer. Yet here the boy stood, even more powerful and confident than ever, more so than at the beginning of his fourth year. Obviously in his shop for a wand, he was curious about what had happened to his other wand he had sold the boy.

“My name is Harry Peverell,” said Harry coolly, staring straight at Ollivander’s eyes unafraid and no longer shy like he had been the first two times. He had met Ollivander for a second time during the Tri-Wizard tournament.

“Ah, of course,” said Ollivander amused, nothing like that had been done before. He knew the Goblins all over the world, were probably talking about it to no end. He had taken everything, from right under their nose at that. The Goblin mustn’t have liked Lily and James, or they would have been warned.

“I’ve come for a wand,” said Harry smoothly.

“Of course, come along!” beamed Ollivander. He was rather excited, it seemed as though he might get the wand that belonged to him this time. The other wand had not belonged to Harry, he knew that, but because he had suppressed his magic - the wand had seemed perfect for him at the time.

It took them twenty minutes to find the wand for him, and to the surprise of Ollivander it was one he had expected Nick to have. “Holly wand, eleven inches, nice and supple. Very unusual combination, it has a Phoenix feather, from a bird I’m sure you are aware of Fawkes, Headmaster Dumbledore’s phoenix. It has a brother wand, it belongs to a man you will know as Voldemort. He did great things, yes, terrible but great…I was sure it would pick Nick Potter…” Ollivander trailed off.

Harry looked extremely uncomfortable for a few seconds, before he covered it up. He gave Ollivander his money, thanked him and promptly left. Going back to the apothecary, he met up with Severus and continued his shopping for Potion ingredients.

Since Ollivander was only required to tell the Ministry of the first wands bought, when they turn eleven he didn’t have to tell them. So Albus Dumbledore didn’t get told or realise the brother wand was sold. It was a good thing really, or Dumbledore’s suspicion would have been complete. He would have realized who Harry really was, and he would have gotten control of him. Emancipated or not Dumbledore would have stopped at nothing. As it was he didn’t know, and with that he would never control Harry or his now immense fortune.

----------0 END OF FLASHBACK 0----------

“What happened?” asked Luna curiously.

“I don’t know, its either still in that graveyard or snapped, but I suspect it was snapped. I doubt Voldemort would have left it lying there.” stated Harry as matter of factly.
“I’m sorry,” said Luna softly, nobody liked loosing wands, after a few years it became a part of them. Loosing a wand was very traumatic to most wizards and witches. Then again what Harry had been through was probably more traumatic anyway - being tortured.

“Its okay,” reassured Harry looking solemn. If he had been alone, he knew it would have been worse. The nightmares, being alone, the constant need to look over his shoulder. Having someone permanent in his life, made Harry feel safer, happier and more confident.

“So what’s in this one?” asked Luna, she knew from the Prophet whose wand had what. Or at least the four that had been in the tournament anyway, Fleur, Viktor, Nick and Harry.

“Muffliato” cast Harry, one of the first spells he had learned from ‘The Half Blood Prince’ even before he had became Severus’ apprentice, and he had admired and helped him without realizing it. That book had been his saving grace from the world, helped him love potions more than anything else in the world. To think it was all down to the fact James Potter had forgotten to buy him his potions book.

Luna cocked her head to the side; she was familiar with the spell. Harry had used it a few times, when he wanted to talk privately. Plus she had gone to look it up afterwards; she wasn’t a Ravenclaw for nothing.

Harry noticed a glimmer in Luna’s eyes…was it him or did she know what he was going to say? He was going to have to ask her about that. It wasn’t the first time she had done that. She had gasped just before Dumbledore read out his name during the goblet of fire. He had been too stunned to think about it until after.

“Phoenix feather from Fawkes, it’s the brother wand to Voldemort’s, have you read anything about wands?” asked Harry, he had been looking for information but found nothing as of yet.

“No, not really,” admitted Luna, not at all surprised by Harry’s revelation.

“Why aren’t you surprised Luna?” asked Harry curiously.

“Yea you’re a seer?” asked Harry wondering why he was surprised - he shouldn’t be he had suspected as much.

“Yes, but its not as clear as it’s described in the books. It’s as though the gift is too diluted or something…it’s hard to explain. Maybe it will get better over the years but right now it’s just very muddled.” sighed Luna sadly.

“You know who I am don’t you?” asked Harry grimly.

“You are Harry Peverell that’s never going to change,” said Luna smartly.

“You know the secret I keep though don’t you?” asked Harry almost accusingly.

Luna bit her lip, wondering if Harry was going to be her friend after today. Reluctantly Luna nodded her head, she knew, she had known since she got a vision earlier. The wand had been a dead give away, plus she had seen him telling her. For reasons unknown to her, he seemingly
changed his mind either that or her seeing abilities were becoming useless.

“I know, I saw you telling me this morning,” said Luna, everyone just thought she was odd because she stared off into space. Unfortunately she couldn’t control when she got visions. She’d rather them think her odd rather than know the truth. Seers were either revered, or during war times wanted by the highest bidder and controlled. After all who wouldn’t want the advantage? During war it’s a gold mine to have a seer on their side.

“I actually told you?” asked Harry surprised.

“Yes, but something went wrong…did you decide not to?” asked Luna leaning forward, eager to learn more about the…about her gift.

“Er…I decided to wait…a few weeks,” said Harry a little sheepishly.

“Maybe it’s becoming better…maybe I’m beginning to see things that people decide but never bother doing or saying…this is brilliant!” giggled Luna grinning like a banshee.

“Well I’m glad you’re amused,” said Harry feeling a little embarrassed.

“I only knew today I swear it’s not why I became your friend!” said Luna becoming serious once more.

Harry smiled softly “Good,” Harry didn’t think he could cope with the betrayal if it was true.

“You can’t look Dumbledore in the eye Luna, if he finds out…I don’t know what I’d do, probably disappear,” said Harry determinedly.

“Harry I don’t know if you’ve noticed or not but nobody pays attention to me. I hardly look anyone in the eye never mind Dumbledore, plus seers have natural barriers…I’d know if someone was trying to get into my mind. I couldn’t stop them of course…but it would be enough of a warning to try and stop it.” said Luna.

“Let me know how your Defence class turns out,” smirked Harry getting up, cancelling the spell.

“I will do,” said Luna, thinking about everything she had just learned about her gift. Maybe it wasn’t getting murky, maybe it was getting better. So it meant every decision people made…changed her visions. Or rather changed the outcome, which means there might come a time where she saw various outcomes and which to avoid. Being friends with Harry, maybe that was a good thing. The knowledge that he was the true boy who lived, meant nothing to Luna, just made her fearful for him. She dreaded the thought of people realizing it - Harry hated fame of any kind. Hated the thought of people knowing, obviously he didn’t want others to know. With Voldemort on the loose she wouldn’t either. Maybe she would be able to help him with her visions as the war continued.

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“How did your day go?” asked Eileen the second Harry floo’ed back from school. He dropped his school bag on the floor, at the side of the fire. He brought Eileen into a hug and began chatting about how his day went. Severus was not there, and it didn’t take a genius to figure out where he was. Considering Eileen smelt of potions, he knew she had been down in the lab too.

“It was good, saw Luna, she was in three of my classes!” said Harry greatly relieved.

“Do you have a lot of homework?” asked Eileen concerned. She realized the massive workload
Harry was putting on himself. Especially during his OWL year she was worried about him. All she could do was make sure he didn’t over do it. Or she certainly would be having a word with her son and Harry’s teachers.

“Yeah, they gave out three or four foot essays, each class” stated Harry not looking too bothered.

“Are you going to be okay doing that sweetie?” asked Eileen concern deep in her black eyes.

Harry smiled at her concerned, truly touched at her caring - he appreciated it all the more not having any of it growing up. Instead of thinking she underestimated him, or thought him stupid or was reminding him of getting it done he appreciated it for what it truly was.

“Yeah, but I wont be able to work on my potions,” said Harry feeling like pouting.

“Oh don’t worry about that, you have all the time in the world to do make potions,” said Eileen laughing softly, Harry reminded her of her son so much it was scary. He hated coming home during the summer because he didn’t get to brew. Not just that reason of course, main reason being Tobias. She refused to consider the alternative, Harry had to survive, with her son teaching him - he had to.

“I guess I better get on with my homework,” said Harry grimacing slightly.

“Oh no you don’t, you are having dinner first then some hot chocolate with me,” said Eileen, she wasn’t going to let himself tire out. He had to have some Harry time, or it would get on top of him quickly.

“Okay,” grinned Harry, a warm glow settling into his stomach. He could never get used to this, no matter how many times she said it. It was so nice having someone asking about his day, about his week hell about his year. This was better than just seeing her during the summer, it was official - becoming an apprentice was the best decision he had ever made. Of course getting emancipated came very close to being first as well. For now it would just have to settle for being second.

“Good,” said Eileen satisfied, as they continued chatting waiting for Severus to come up for dinner.

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“Hey Nick, are you okay?” asked Roxy coming up to him, he looked exhausted and extremely hurt.

“I’m fine,” said Nick automatically. Nobody seemed to really care anyway, no point in telling anyone. Hiding a grimace as his hand hurt even more painfully. ‘I must learn quicker’ was engraved across his hand. It wasn’t disappearing; it looked as though it was permanently written on it.

“How did your detention go?” asked Roxy. She had heard the others talking about it, saying about time he didn’t get ‘special treatment’ whatever they meant by that.

“The usual writing lines,” shrugged Nick. He had gone to tell his mother, but she hadn’t even listened to him. Just told him she was busy, just to keep his head down and try his best not to get any more detentions, or rather ‘not to rock the boat further’. Lily trusted Umbridge because she was a trusted ministry official. She had no idea what her son was going through, because she didn’t listen. Then he had gone to Professor McGonagall, only to be told basically the same thing. Neither adult would listen to him! So he had given up and was now licking his wounds in private.
He was magically exhausted, so exhausted if he did more magic he would end up in a coma. They were pushing him too far, and if they weren’t careful they would lose him.

“I’m going to go to bed Roxy, I’ll see you in the morning,” said Nick, a yawn stretching across his face.

“Okay, night Nick,” said Roxy watching her brother go; somehow being at Hogwarts wasn’t as exiting as she thought it would be. She had spent a lot of time with Frank Longbottom. Unfortunately she wasn’t in classes with him, and nobody in the classes had spoken to her much. It wasn’t like it used to be, lots of people used to ask her a hundred questions about her brother, about what it was like growing up with him. Then they would ask her lots of questions etcetera. No, she was being treated as though she was invisible, while her brother was looked upon in disgust. It felt as though the world had shifted on its axis.

When she had gone to the library today, only Ravenclaw’s were in there. Her decision was already staring her in the face; there was nothing to be done about it. She had made her decision; she had chosen Gryffindor and family honour. She would just have to live with it; she loved her parents more than anything in the world.

More than her own happiness it seemed.

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Lily sighed in relief once her work was done; she had graded everything and gotten all detentions over with. Two teachers had given detentions out under her! Without telling her. She had been rushed of her feet all day; she didn’t think it was right to land them with her. She had to speak to Slughorn and get him to stop it. She slumped onto the couch in her quarters extremely wary. She smiled at the thought of her youngest, she was a Gryffindor, one less thing to worry about. She was so proud of her, James would be too.

She failed to realize just what she was doing to all her children by raising them wrongly.

She couldn’t believe Nick had come whining to her about detention. Couldn’t he see how selfish he was being? Perhaps becoming a teacher had been the wrong thing. Nick was going to try and use her now, to get out of detention of all things. Delores was a Ministry employee, very high up and could make life good for them if they got on well enough. Further up than James was, with Nick’s bad publicity he couldn’t afford anymore. She knew they would love him once he killed Voldemort once and for all. It was destined that he would, she knew it. Until then it was best not to get on their bad side anymore than necessary.

She missed James already, he was working all hours to get money, she missed how simple life had been. Back then all she had to do was take care of Nick and Roxy, cook dinner and take them outings. Now she was working too, they would have no time together she hated that. It was exhausting work being a teacher, but she had to do it, damn Harry to hell. He had ruined their lives; she wished she had never had twins. She wished she had only had Nick, and then this wouldn’t have happened.

She failed to realize that without Harry, none of them would have survived that Halloween night.

Something she would learn all too late and all too soon.

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It was Tuesday, Harry’s second day at Hogwarts since it started back up. After lunch he hadn’t been able to see Luna again, he would see her today though. Harry had taken to outright avoiding the Great Hall, knowing Lily Potter was there made Harry lose his appetite. So they had taken to eating at the lake, plus no one bothered them there. Nobody sat outside during lunch time, or at least the first twenty minutes or so. So they had the place pretty much to themselves.

“How was Defence?” asked Harry as soon as he plonked his bum on the ground. He had a selection of fruit and a ham sandwich, Luna had pretty much the same except she had two sandwiches.

“Alright for me, not so good for your brother,” said Luna.

“Why is that?” asked Harry grimacing at her use of family term regarding Nick Potter. He wasn’t his brother, but right now he was too curious about what was going on.

“Well he was picked to learn the spell we had to learn, nobody else got a chance to learn anything. She made him stand in front of the class until he could perform it. I think I feel sorry for him,” said Luna.

“What spell?” asked Harry curiously.

“Bone breaking curse, very nasty, Auror version,” said Luna.

“You made it sound like she wouldn’t teach you anything yesterday,” said Harry impressed with the new teacher.

“She’s teaching him, not us, she gave him detention and loss of house points for not doing it quick enough.” said Luna.

Harry was suddenly extremely glad he had not been pegged as the boy who lived. Well and truly happy about that, he felt no pity for Nick; he had left him to die for Merlin sake. He could never feel pity for Nick again, not after that anyway.

“He’s not my brother, and I could never feel sorry for him,” sneered Harry at the thought of him.

“Of course not, I’m sorry I didn’t mean to bring it up,” said Luna just realizing what she was saying. She knew Nick had left him to die, everyone did it was in the paper. It’s why nobody was talking to Nick anymore; his own house was even turning against him. Each time Nick failed to do it, Umbridge had also unnecessarily removed house points. Gryffindor must be down fifty points already, and they had only had one class of defence yet. This was the Ministry’s way of ensuring Nick Potter was trained for what was coming.

“It’s okay,” said Harry quietly.

“How are you finding everything? It is okay?” asked Luna.

“What do you mean?” asked Harry briefly confused.

“Homework, classes, working for your mastery,” explained Luna.

“I did one of the assays and half of another, I can get the rest done tonight I hope. I don’t want to be doing homework for Hogwarts, on the days with Severus.” said Harry.

“That’s probably the best way to do it,” agreed Luna cheerfully.

“Yeah, I just hope I can keep it up,” stated Harry looking a little worried.
“Your smart, hard working, if anyone can do it you can Harry,” said Luna truthfully. Harry was the most Ravenclawish, Ravenclaw there ever was.

“Thanks Luna,” said Harry.

They both continued talking for the rest of their lunch break, about nothing important. Just enjoying being back at Hogwarts, and getting to see each other again, even if it was only for two days. Harry felt slightly guilty, Luna didn’t have anyone else. No other friend to talk to, just him now that Cedric was gone too. He was training under a Quidditch team, the English Quidditch team. Fleur had gone back home and was in the whole fashion thing, but Harry knew it was more of a hobby until she figured out what she wanted to do in life.

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Chapter 29

Invisible

Chapter 29

It’s always when you least expect it - Nick feels guilty for the first time

Harry Peverell had been an apprentice and a student at Hogwarts now for two months and two weeks. It was now Christmas, the school had broken up for the holidays yesterday. Luna was back home with her father, and Harry had no reason to go back to Hogwarts - since there were no classes. Harry was currently brewing a potion for Severus, which required completely fresh herbs. Which meant he had to leave the potion to simmer and pick it, then go back do what he needed to do to it then add it in. Severus had done it to see how well Harry did under pressure, and so far it seemed he was at his best when the pressure was on. Severus was currently in the living room, gathering a few things he needed for his updated version of Wolfsbane potion. He was trying to make it less painful for them, before and after transforming. The only problem was, the potion ingredients in the updated one, was more expensive. Which meant on the market the new one would make more money. It wasn’t about the money to him; he knew most werewolves’ found it difficult to get the money together for it. So not only was he trying to make it less painful, but not as expensive.

“Severus are you sure Harry is coping well?” asked Eileen, watching Harry walking over to the green house. Obviously gathering ingredients for one reason or another, he was working so hard! He hardly had any time to himself.

“You know as well as I do he’s coping extremely well, we all knew he was undertaking a lot.” stated Severus. “This is the last day he has to work; he has the holidays off as well as everyone else.”

“He needs some good sleep,” nodded Eileen.

“Yes, he’s been having nightmares on and off,” sighed Severus, and Harry didn’t seem to want to talk about it. Having nobody in his life to care about him, made him reluctant to talk about even the basic of things he needed and wanted.

“I noticed,” said Eileen, drinking her coffee. They both heard Harry getting up at night, coming down the stairs for a few hours before going back up to bed. From the house elf’s they had gathered that he drank some warm milk, read a book and then went back up to bed.

“What are you getting Harry for his Christmas?” asked Severus curiously.

“I’m getting him a few more potion books,” smiled Eileen.

“Are you sure there’s any he doesn’t have?” snorted Severus in amusement, he had seen Harry’s collection, and it was impressive. Coming from a man who was older, and had nearly all the widely available potions books he had it meant something.

“I’ve also noticed him playing chess a lot, with that old set I was thinking of getting him his own set.” said Eileen.

“That’s a good idea mum, he needs to have more fun,” agreed Severus.
“Yes, yes he does,” said Eileen softly. She loved when Harry acted childish, well if you can say anything he did was childish. He was far too mature for his tender age of fifteen years. She wished she had cursed Lily Evans-Potter when she had, had the opportunity.

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Severus bottled all the potion into vials; it was already cool so he didn’t have to wait on it cooling down. It had been going on too long now; Harry needed a long lie without nightmares. So he was giving him a dreamless sleeping potion, whether Harry wanted it or not. Bottled and labelled, he put the potion bottles into the appropriate space where the Dreamless sleeping potion usually went. He cleaned up his workspace and cauldron before leaving the lab with the one vial he wanted. Making his way towards Harry’s room, he knocked but received no answer. A frown marred Severus’ features; he opened the door to a sight that made him smile slightly.

Harry was sprawled out on his bed, books surrounding him with nothing more than a top and a pair of shorts on. A very inappropriate reaction shot through him, but he ignored it completely. Harry was young enough to be his student, was his student in fact, and he did not like little boy’s thank you very much. He couldn’t help but notice that Harry wasn’t exactly … a little boy anymore. The top he had on, was getting rather small for him, Severus saw the scars still marring Harry’s chest. He knew it bothered the young man, more than it should. He had his own share of scars, and he didn’t care about them. He knew there would come a time where Harry wasn’t so self conscious of them. Irritated at himself and his thoughts, he used a spell to remove the books and put them neatly on his nightstand. He levitated Harry up, moved the covers with his hands and cuddled him in. It looked as though he wasn’t going to need the dreamless sleeping potion after all. He left a candle burning, knowing it was safe to do so - they didn’t burn out or burn things period. He also put the potion right next to it, so if Harry woke up, he would see it no problem. Hopefully the boy would take it; he truly wanted to help him. If he wasn’t willing to talk about the nightmares, Severus could at least make sure he slept without them once in a while.

As he was walking out, he saw a picture on the nightstand, and he didn’t know how Harry had gotten a picture of him - he hadn’t seen a camera. Yet here it was, a picture of himself, Eileen and Harry together drinking hot chocolate. They looked very happy; Severus wasn’t used to seeing himself like that. Then again he wasn’t one for having his picture taken either. It made a warm glow settle into his stomach, he felt as though he could walk on air. Harry truly loved them; he was picked over James Potter and Lily Evans. He was a better person than Potter, he had known it but it truly hit him there and then. He was the better man than James Potter. A sinister smirk stole over his features; it’s all he had ever wanted since he was a young boy. To be chosen over James Potter, to be thought of in a higher regard than him. He knew he didn’t in Dumbledore’s eyes, just because of Nick Potter, but he did in Harry’s. Leaving the room he closed it quietly, not wanting to wake the sleeping teenager up. At least now Harry would have a chance to relax with it being Christmas.

“Hello son,” said Eileen surprised to see him as she went to her own bed, a cup of hot chocolate in her hand.

“He’s sleeping. I’ve put a sleeping potion on his nightstand, so here’s hoping he has a good night’s sleep.” said Severus smoothly in explanation even though Eileen hadn’t said anything.

“How’s he doing as an apprentice though Severus?” asked Eileen curiously, standing there in her nightgown her onyx eyes, she had given to her son, gleaming with pride for her two boys. She hadn’t made a mistake coming back; she was getting the chance to make new memories of Prince Manor.

“Exceeding my expectations,” said Severus smirking wryly.
Eileen positively beamed in pride and awe.

“If he keeps this up, he will be finished his apprenticeship in less than two years. He will take my title as youngest potion Master in Britain - in more ways than one.” said Severus. He’d be sixteen going on seventeen when he finished his apprenticeship if he kept going this way. He would be the youngest that way, and he would also be the quickest to finish too. He had completed his mastery in two years three months, he had a feeling Harry would finish way ahead of him. Then again he had the worry of Voldemort, spying and Dumbledore on top of his apprenticeship. If he had been able to concentrate on his potions solely he would have finished earlier.

“I'm so proud of him,” said Eileen happily, “I'm proud of the man you have come also Severus.” giving her son a one armed hug, keeping the mug of chocolate away from them just in case it spilled.

Severus leaned into his mother’s comforting touch; he had missed this, spending some proper time with her, talking to her more than just a few hours every week. He realized you could never outgrow your mothers love, or comfort. Right now it meant the world to him, and he loved her so much. He could only hope for her sake, he made it through the war. More than that he hoped and prayed she did, after the life she had lead, she deserved a good long life now. He failed to take into account what he deserved too.

“You need some sleep yourself, don’t think I don’t notice how long you lock yourself down in that workshop of yours,” said Eileen chastising him softly, she called the lab a workshop some times.

“I’ve been making the Wolfsbane Potion more effective,” said Severus, removing himself from the comfort of his mother’s arms.

“I wish I could stand for hours on end brewing like I used to,” said Eileen sadly, she missed brewing so much. She just didn’t have the strength to brew again, hadn’t since she married Tobias. If she had to do it all over again, she’d go through it for her beautiful boy in front of her. He might not look like much to others, but to Eileen, her son was beautiful. She couldn’t take potions, because pain relievers slowed reaction times - it would just be extremely dangerous and stupid to do such a thing. She ached all over, back, legs arms; she just couldn’t stand and brew for any period of time.

“One day mum, I promise you…you will be able to brew again,” vowed Severus. He and Harry were already working on the potion. He needed a better means though, for potions they were working on together. He had a rough idea on what to do, so he it was going to be part of Harry’s Christmas.

“Aye, if anyone could do it son, it would be you.” said Eileen, patting her son absently, she reached up and gave him a kiss on the cheek before saying “Goodnight son.” and she made her own way to her bed.

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“How was school sweetie?” asked Mr. Lovegood, Luna and himself had just got home from the station. Luna was all he had left, and he cherished her, he’d do anything for her. He knew she had made good friends with Harry, and that Harry was an apprentice to Severus Snape.

“I got to see Harry more than I thought I would! We have quite a few classes together,” beamed Luna happy to be home again. She wondered where they would go this year, when she was home her father always took her somewhere. Usually looking for animals that most Wizards didn’t think existed. Last year he had taken her to the Quidditch World cup and she had loved it, despite its
“That’s good, how was everyone else?” asked Xeno calmly, plating out two meals he had made before apparating to the train station for Luna. He was very aware of the trouble people had been giving Luna at school, stealing her things and putting them in the most ridiculous places. It had stopped when she befriended Cedric, Viktor, Fleur and Harry - but they weren’t always there now.

“They didn’t bother me,” said Luna aware of what her father was asking about without outright saying anything. Nobody wanted to piss Harry off, by annoying his only friend. Not after seeing what he had done to his brother, not that they blamed what he had done really. Each and every one of them would have done the same thing, if their situations had been reversed. Most admitted to themselves, they would have done much worse.

“Classes okay?” he then asked pouring them some juice.

“Yes, Professor Slughorn is really nice, he explains things a lot better than Reese did.” said Luna. “Hagrid didn’t take over his classes until last week; the other teacher wasn’t anywhere near as exciting as him.”

“Slughorn? I had him when I was a student, he is very good,” nodded Xeno. Sure he favoured his Slytherins, but that was behind closed doors not during classes. Most of his best potions brewers in Slytherin became part of the Slughorn club. Xeno didn’t like her brewing potion, its one thing he didn’t allow in his home. He had sealed up his wife’s potions room, and nobody had entered it since the accident. He was greatly relived she didn’t have the same love for it as her mother had. His wife and daughters mother had died because of a potions experiment went wrong. Luna had witnessed the entire thing, she had never been quiet the same after it. She was always his quite little girl now, but he didn’t care how she was - as long as she was here. He wouldn’t have been able to go on if both of them had passed on. His wife and daughter had been his life; it had devastated him to loose her. Now Luna had all his attention, and it would remain that way.

“Are we going away this year dad?” asked Luna curiously, as she finished off her dinner.

“We are how would you like to visit Egypt this year?” asked Xeno.

“Egypt?” asked Luna frowning in confusion.

“Yes, just as a holiday me and you,” said Xeno quietly, he just wanted to get her out of the country for a while. Especially with Voldemort being back, and Death Eater activity brewing on the horizon - he didn’t want to risk it. So yes, he was going to take her on a nice holiday. His house wasn’t safe, and he didn’t delude himself otherwise. At Hogwarts he knew his daughter was as safe as she could be.

“Can we at least come home for Christmas and New Year?” asked Luna wondering silently what her dad was up to.

“Of course, if that’s what you want sweetie that’s what we will do,” said Xeno. He just hoped and prayed this war didn’t last as long as the lat one. It had truly been hell, but at the same time bittersweet. It’s when he had met his wife, and had his daughter so really…how could he say it was all hell?

“Great!” chimed Luna happily. “I’ll tell Harry in the morning so he knows not to write so much! Or poor Hermes will be exhausted!”

Xeno just smiled in amusement.
“James…you’ve spent every penny we had on them!” shrieked Lily, who had cast a silencing charm five seconds ago. She had just received a bank statement, and couldn’t believe her eyes.

“What’s wrong with that Lily? It’s Christmas?!” frowned James not understanding why she was having a hissy fit.

“You should have left some in the bank just in case we need it! And in case you have forgotten we need to save up for somewhere to stay before Hogwarts closes for the summer!” shrieked Lily, her hands waving manically the statement still in her hand.

“We will be staying at Potter Manor,” said James adamantly.

“It no longer belongs to us James,” said Lily tears in her eyes, tears of frustration and pain; they no longer had a house of their own. “We are homeless and now penniless too!” this wasn’t something she was used to, having money troubles. She didn’t understand just how Molly had managed with so many children with only one person bringing in the money.

“Don’t worry about that Lily, we will be fine,” said James hugging his wife close, obviously not sharing her concern for their welfare. “We have many friends that can help us.”

“Who?” snapped Lily angrily, pulling herself from her husband’s embrace. She had no friends, the only person who she had truly spoken to had been Remus (and that was James’ friend not hers). She didn’t have true friends, that she could confide in she hadn’t had one since Severus. Thinking of him made her lip curl, she couldn’t believe he had taken in Harry and told him what to do. It must have been his way of getting back at James for all those pranks. Otherwise the brat wouldn’t have gotten himself emancipated he wasn’t that smart.

“Sirius will let us stay in Grimmauld Place, there’s plenty room!” said James soothingly. Lily stared at her husband, she didn’t know what to think, was he deluding himself? Or did he truly think Sirius cared anymore? “James…Sirius hasn’t spoken to you since last year…he sent a present for Roxy and Nick nothing else. He didn’t reply to your quest for money.” said Lily eventually wondering if anything would get through to her husband. She was till angry that he had spent every Knut they had on the children, she knew she should have did the shopping herself.

“It’s just a phase, he’ll realize he’s being stupid and come back…Remus did,” said James, not as sure as he led his wife to believe. The insecurity was deep in his brown eyes, eyes he had past on to his daughter.

“Remus didn’t James!” cried Lily in exasperation “He’s training Nick only; he’s not spoken a word to us if he hasn’t had to since everyone found out!”

“He’s just busy that’s all,” said James defensively.

Lily felt like crying, they were truly alone, even Dumbledore didn’t look at them the same way. She wasn’t sure if they would let them stay at Hogwarts this year, with the way things were going it didn’t seem likely. “James…stop deluding yourself, we are in deep trouble…and you just spent all our money.”

“Not all of it, the Christmas bonus hasn’t gone in yet,” said James.

“How much is that?” asked Lily hopefully.
“Eighty Galleons,” said James.

“Don’t touch any more money, I’ll look at some houses we need one,” said Lily grimly.

“Why? We can just stay here Lily,” said James comfortingly.

“Not forever, and if something happens to us we need to know our children are going to have at least a roof over their heads.” said Lily gritting her teeth angrily. James really didn’t know how to spend wisely. Having never had to do it before, he always seemed to think everything would just work out.

“Nothing will happen to us,” soothed James, the thought left him cold nonetheless. He realized Lily was right; they had to have at least one house. He really could murder the boy he had at one point called his son. He had basically left them homeless and penniless. That was his inheritance he had been stolen from him, and he was still furious to this day that there was nothing he could do.

He failed to realize it wasn’t stealing; Harry had done what was perfectly within his rights. Otherwise James would have had his money back, after all this they were still willing to blame Harry for everything. Instead of accepting the blame for themselves.

“Okay, we will save up for a house,” said James anything to stop Lily worrying.

“Thank you,” sighed Lily falling into his arms feeling at least a little better.

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“Why aren’t we at home?” asked Nick a deep frown on his features. He had just put all his things in the bedroom that had appeared in his mother’s quarters. He had to ask even if he wasn’t talking to his parents, they hadn’t listened to him. He was being hurt and they didn’t even care. For the first time in his life he was beginning to see what they had done to Harry.

“Why? Do you want to be?” asked Lily diverting the question, it was much cheaper if they stayed at Hogwarts. They wouldn’t need to buy food or worry about anything else either. They didn’t have a home, they belonged to the boy she had wished she hadn’t birthed. Everything in the houses, everything in the vaults, the lot and she hated him for it.

Nick shrugged his shoulders, not wanting to talk to her more than he had to. Looking at the palm of his hand, anger consumed him, he walked to his bedroom deciding he would rather be alone than in their company.

“What’s wrong with Nick?” asked James coming into the living room as Nick closed himself in his bedroom.

“I think he’d rather be home for Christmas,” sighed Lily in sadness. She seemed to forget how she had been treating her own son.

“I heard he’s been getting a lot of detentions…what’s been happening?” asked James, feeling amused. Nick had never been one to get detentions before; if he kept this up he’d out do him in the detention department.

“He’s been really defiant with Delores, when she’s asking him to take part in class he’s refusing,” sighed Lily sadly, Delores had of course explained everything to her. She had gone to see her after the fifth detention she had assigned his son. To say she had never been more embarrassed in her life would be putting it mildly.
“Playing games with the Ministry isn’t a good idea…doesn’t he realize how this will make him look? They might not let him become an Auror if he doesn’t watch what he’s doing.” said James irritated. Of course Nick hadn’t said he wanted to be an Auror, it was just presumptions on James’ part. Everyone in his family had been Auror’s and he was heaping that expectation on his son.

“I know people aren’t looking up to him as it is…if he keeps it up they will loose faith.” said Lily grimly.

“Is Albus continuing his lessons?” asked James curiously.

“No, he’s not doing them, Nick’s getting a few weeks off,” said Lily.

“Perhaps you and I should teach him some?” suggested James.

“Should we? It’s Christmas James?” asked Lily warily. She didn’t want to teach anymore, not when she had time off.

“It can’t hurt…the more he knows the better off he will be,” said James worriedly.

“I guess so,” said Lily nodding along.

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Nick lay against the wall, the door open just a tad; he sat and listened to them talking. Tears were pouring down his face, he felt so exhausted, and in pain too. Part of him wished he had died in that graveyard, so he didn’t have to put up with this. Didn’t they realize they were hurting him? Why did they want him to learn all this? Why did he have to defeat Voldemort? He was only a boy, why didn’t Dumbledore just kill him? He had killed Grindelwald or at least he assumed he had. Why did he need trained? Sure he knew Voldemort would be after him…but they were acting as though he had to defeat him.

He didn’t know how he had defeated Voldemort the first time around, he couldn’t remember it. He had only been one years old; he wished he hadn’t been the one to defeat Voldemort. For the first time though, he wouldn’t wish his life even on his brother. Even Harry didn’t deserve this, but his brother was smarter and stronger than him. He could do it, Nick knew it deep down. There was no jealousy or anger when he thought of him now.

Just sadness so profound it stole his breath away.

He hated his mum and dad for doing this to him, for treating them differently and making him think he was better. For tearing him away from his twin, more tears ran freely down his face. As he thought of the memory he had brought to the forefront of his mind, during meditating for a good memory of the Patronus charm. They had been so happy, and he’d never have that back. He knew that and didn’t delude himself otherwise; he had left his brother for dead. Because of him Harry had been tortured and hurt by Death Eaters.

For the first time he finally understood why everyone was so disgusted with him.

More tears dripped down his face, as he removed his cloak, trainers and everything before crawling into bed misery clinging to him.
Chapter 30

Invisible

Chapter 30

Christmas, Happiness and Pain

Harry groggily woke up, a huge yawn stretching across his face; he looked at his clock before going and having a shower. It was Christmas day; he had sent his presents by Hermes (his owl) a few days ago. Getting something for Luna, Cedric, Fleur, her little sister and Viktor and his little sister. The presents he had gotten for Eileen and Severus of course went under the Christmas tree; the one for Dobby was in the kitchen. The grounds of Prince Manor, were like something out of a fairy tale, so was Hogwarts come to that but Harry had never stared at its beauty. He had never truly been happy at Hogwarts, always being friendless and alone until last year. He would have enjoyed last year even better, if he hadn’t been forced to participate in the Tri-Wizard Tournament. He couldn’t regret it, standing in the hall of Prince Manor; the events had led to his life being one hundred times better than he could ever remember.

There were around five huge Christmas trees adoring the manor, decorated in all different colours. The green one was in the living room, the gold one in the hall, blue one on the grounds, red one on the first floor landing last but not least the multi coloured one in the kitchen. They were all done spectacularly and as though they had been done by a profession. There wasn’t tinsel or bauble out of place, the house elves had outdone themselves. The snow lay unspoiled on the grounds, not even a footprint on it. The plants and flowers frozen in their states, the potion ingredients had been covered so they weren’t spoiled. The horses though were pigeonholed, they wanted to get out and trot about, judging by their constant neighing. Same could be said for the Thestrals, but they didn’t make as much noise as the horses.

This place was Harry’s sanctuary, somewhere he was free to be who he was, to do what he wanted (for most part). Somewhere that people knew who and what he was, the boy who lived, they didn’t see a hero though - they saw a human being.

“Merry Christmas Harry,” said a voice from behind him, Harry didn’t jump, but his wand was already in hand. “Well done, you’re getting there.” he said sounding proud. Severus observed Harry, pride filling him. He had been teaching Harry stealthy modes, getting him to act instead of being afraid or jumping at sudden noises. It could be the difference between life and death during a war - it would easily become a habit for him and that’s how he wanted it. Although he wasn’t too happy about having to teach Harry it here, this was somewhere he was safe and happy.

That wasn’t the only reason he was proud of Harry, he had managed to keep his grades up at school. Not only that but he hadn’t fallen behind in his apprenticeship. He was juggling both aspects of his education with balance. With maturity, that’s not to say it was easy. Harry wasn’t getting enough sleep, or rather he hadn’t been. It was holiday’s Harry was getting to sleep in, be a normal child for once. Harry wasn’t getting everything handed to him on a platter, he worked extremely hard, with dedication that Severus didn’t quite understand but respected. He was polar opposites from his brother and it was a good thing really. Given the new information they had received, not new now, but still it was never far from his thoughts. Harry had as a baby managed to temporary defeat Voldemort, and throw him from his body.

He never imagined life would turn out like this, entertaining a Potter in his home, even if he was under a different name now. Never imagined he’d have improper attentive feelings for a fifteen
year old either, James Potter’s child at that. Never imagined he’d respect a fifteen year old. That said fifteen year old respected him, and liked him a lot more than he liked his own father. He was happy though - happier than he had been in a long time. He was brewing to his hearts content, assisted by a boy who loved Potions just as much as he did. Had his mother living with him, able to see her every day, with the knowledge she was safe behind Prince Manor wards.

“Merry Christmas Severus,” said Harry returning his Potions Masters greeting, his wand already slipped back into its holster. A simple smile gracing his lips, it was the first real Christmas he had ever had, with money to spend on others.

“Ready for breakfast?” asked Severus, as he walked down the steps, Harry beside him.

“Yeah, I’m starving!” agreed Harry, it was ten thirty the longest he had ever slept.

Severus simply nodded, considering his stomach was used to being fed at six o’clock in the morning it was no surprise.

“Happy Christmas!” beamed Eileen, from where she sat.

Harry stopped suddenly cocking his head to the side…he could hear talking coming from the tree. How weird, he went further forward listening intently. It sounded muffled, the voice sounded angry at being in the dark. “What the hell…” gaped Harry confused.

“Perhaps there’s one gift you might like to open first,” smirked Severus in amusement, knowing exactly what was wrong with the teenager. It might sound like hissing to them, but who knows what the snake was saying to cause Harry that confusion.

Harry just blinked at him temporary forgetting the weird voice under the Christmas tree.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” asked Harry.

Severus smirked even wider, before walking towards the tree, and plucking the square blue package from the floor. He then walked over and placed it in Harry’s hands, now Harry could hear the talking even more loudly. Realisation began to filter though Harry’s green eyes. “Go on then, open it.” said Severus sardonically “Or do you prefer to just stand there gathering flies?” he said to the jaw dropped teenager.

Sitting down Harry carefully began opening his present, biting his lip at the voices constant grumbling about being man handled. He found it actually very funny, when it was finally opened; he found the snake curled up, head facing him, its tongue sniffing the air gently.

Harry’s eyes were huge, unless he was very much mistaken; this was an extremely venomous snake. “Is that…”

“Viper, Saw Scaled Viper to be precise,” said Severus smoothly. “Mostly found in Middle East and Central Asia.”

“These Snakes are mostly nocturnal,” said Harry staring at it, still barely able to believe he had been given a snake for a present. His parents had been disgusted with him, for having such a gift in the first place. He had looked up his family tree, and he knew why he could, why Voldemort could too. They were both related to Salazar Slytherin, through the Peverell line. Then it had branched out, until it got down to the Potter line and Gaunt and Riddle line. Since Voldemort probably didn’t plan on having any heirs that branch would die out. So contrary to popular belief Voldemort wasn’t the only living Salazar Slytherin heir. Of course, the Potter’s would rather die, than admit they were descendants from the Slytherin line. It’s why he never spoke it, or answered the snakes when
he had been in the magical menagerie.

The fact that Severus bought him it meant that he accepted Harry for who he truly was that he
didn’t care about his ability to talk to snakes. Considering that Voldemort could, and that Severus
hated Voldemort it was a surprise really.

“They are, since you can speak to it, I am hoping it won’t attack us, and perhaps defend you should
the need arise. I already have a stock of anti-venom should the worst happen.” said Severus,
always prepared for the worst. There was only a few people and things he trusted and that snake
wasn’t one of them.

Swallowing thickly, Harry managed to say “Thank you Severus,” his green eyes meeting black
ones, gratitude shining deep within his shimmering green orbs.

“You are welcome,” said Severus extremely proud of himself, he had been worried that he
wouldn’t get anything decent for Harry. Yet he had managed to surprise him, and the way Harry
looked at him made it all worthwhile. He once again ignored the inappropriate thoughts and
feelings. Concentrating instead on breakfast, Dobby surprisingly brought it today.

“Now let’s eat,” said Severus his voice softer than usual.

Both of them became increasingly concerned, when Eileen, cried out until to get off the couch.
Both males rushed to her aid, Severus summoned a pain reliever, giving it to her as Harry rubbed
her back his green eyes nearly tearing up. She was going down hill fast, he had only recently found
out what was causing it. If Severus hated his own father, it was nothing on how much Harry hated
Tobias. He was terrified he was going to loose her, she had been the only woman in his life to care.
She was his mother for all intents and purposes. He knew he’d be lost without her, damn it he
didn’t even want think about it. Seeing her like this though made dark thoughts come to his mind.
Thoughts he didn’t want to entertain at all.

“Are you okay?” asked Harry, his green eyes full of terror for her.

“Aye, I’ll be fine lad,” said Eileen patting his arm, comforting him, as the remains of the pain
faded away with the potion fully in her system.

Severus walked over to the sitting area, and brought Eileen’s breakfast over to her. He didn’t want
to overly stress her, while he tried not to get stressed himself. It was a wonder Severus didn’t have
an ulcer in his stomach, with all the worry he had done over the years. In his childhood worrying
about his father, teenager years over the Marauders, and his mothers wellbeing. Then joining
Voldemort, spying, and trying to stay alive, as he played a dangerous game of cat and mouse.

Needless to say it was a quiet breakfast; both males were lost in thought concerned over Eileen.
Eileen was worried about leaving her boys’ she knew she was deteriorating rapidly. She had
managed to keep how much pain she was in from them, but unfortunately it was becoming more
painful, and more abruptly. She was finding it difficult to get up and down the stairs now. She had
come here, knowing she didn’t have long left. What time she did have left, she wanted to spend it
with Severus and Harry.

Fortunately, they temporary forgot about it, as they gleefully (on Harry’s part) dug into their
presents. Harry had gotten Eileen a cane, a beautiful hand crafted one, with a space to put ones
wand. He had noticed she had trouble with her hips, and this was what he thought would help her.
He got her a stylized Photo frame, for a particular picture which was inserted. Another one Severus
hadn’t known about, the day the three of them had been collecting Potion ingredients. Prince
Manor stood proudly in the background, as the three of them collected herbs and hellebore (a
poisonous green leaved plant). Harry knew she wanted to make new memories of Prince Manor; Harry was just helping her capture them.

“It’s beautiful,” she gasped in awe.

Harry beamed in delight, staring at her positively smitten; Severus realized just how much the teenager loved his mother there and then. Harry didn’t show much emotion, preferring to keep his thoughts and feelings to himself. Which Severus understood all too well, why show them when nobody cared? When they would just be ignored?

“I’m glad you like it!” grinned Harry, before he passed Severus his present.

Severus gasped when the paper was ripped away, revealing the book for Severus to see. Or rather the hand written book, Harry’s handwriting, a book by Salazar Slytherin. Originally written in Parseltongue, about Potions long ago lost in time. He had used Muggle paper, and a binder to do it. This book was the Holy Grail for Potion Masters’. His second present was Potion ingredients, ones he noticed as he flipped through the book, that were used in the recipes.

“Thank you,” he managed to croak his voice filled with wonder and disbelief.

“You’re welcome,” said Harry softly.

Eileen’s presents were passed around next; Harry found she had thoughtfully given him a chess set. Harry’s heart lurched, he really did love her, and she had noticed him playing with the old chess set that was already in the manor when they moved here. So she had gotten him his own set, with his name engraved in it. Harry Peverell - a Prince by heart. He found it difficult to swallow the lump growing in his throat.

Harry had to get up and hug her, trying to get his turbulent emotions under control. Screw the Potters’ he had found his true home - where his heart was.

Severus received chocolates, potion ingredients, a few books and few new pair of protective clothing for working with potions. The protective clothing was always dragon hide, the only thing truly able to protect them from spillages. Even then it wasn’t always completely safe. Potions could eat through the protective wear; it’s why you had to constantly buy new stuff.

The rest of Harry’s presents were opened, Fleur had gotten him a lot of clothes. Robes, trousers, t-shirts, jumpers, cloaks, a huge variety of stuff all expensive and highly sought after in France. She obviously didn’t realize Harry could get his own things now, since he had become emancipated. Not to forgot the head of his own family, meaning he had all the money. Fleur thought he couldn’t afford things, since he had borrowed Viktor’s robes during the Tri-Wizard Tournament dance (Yule ball).

Viktor had gotten him a broomstick, a Firebolt 2; of all things it was beautiful. He smiled softly, remembering the times he had Viktor had flown around Hogwarts grounds. He wasn’t one for Quidditch, but he really liked flying. Or at least he thought he did, the chances he had on a broom had always been fun. He didn’t like it as much as Potions though, nothing could compare to Potions.

Cedric must have been in touch with Viktor because; he received from him, a professional broom cleaning kit.

Luna got him five Muggle novels that he had never seen or heard of before. She knew him well, and he knew he’d probably like them. She also got him a hot chocolate gift set, with all kinds of hot
chocolate. White chocolate, mint chocolate, orange chocolate, Brazilian chocolate, Banoffee chocolate and a lot more than he thought had existed.

Then he got the rest of the presents Severus had gotten for him, three more of those cloaks Harry liked. In green this time instead of black, they completely cloaked the wearer from view. Plus they were warm and heavy enough to wear during winter weather. He received a beautiful Prince pendant that Severus said had been made into a Portkey ‘Just in case’. If he thought the Snake was beautiful, he was blown away by the Pensive Severus had somehow managed to get him. They were exceedingly rare, rarer than his invisibility cloak. Plus they cost a fortune; needless to say, it had taken Harry a good ten minutes to get his emotions back under control. Then he noticed the last present, a two way journal that was already filled with Severus’ Potion ideas.

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Severus woke up out of his sleep; he wasn’t sure what he had heard but listened intently for any other noise. Curiosity got the better off him, plus he was worried it had been his mother. He checked on her, finding her sleeping soundly, the picture Harry got her already on its mantle. Severus had gotten his mother a beautiful diamond pendant. She had been poor the majority of her life, she hadn’t had the luxury of wearing any. He had gone to find one in the Muggle world, as similar to one he remembered her staring longingly at one day shopping when he was a little boy. He had found nearly an exact match, which was currently on her neck she hadn’t removed it obviously. Severus stared at his sleeping mother for a few more minutes, before closing the door. Trying not to dwell on how frail she looked.

He walked further down, and opened the door to Harry’s room, the bed was empty. He sighed sadly, assuming Harry was having trouble sleeping again, he went to the kitchen. Harry always went there for some warm milk, to help him get back to sleep. Unfortunately the entire house was in darkness, where the hell was he? Getting concerned he pulled out his wand and chanted a locating spell.

He followed the globe of light until it reached the Dungeons; Harry was brewing potions at this time of night?

“Harry? What are you doing?” asked Severus coming in, staring curiosity at the head bent teenager.

“Making a potion,” said Harry, surprisingly given Severus’ question - Harry wasn’t being sarcastic. There was nothing but cold hard determination radiating from Harry in waves.

“Indeed,” said Severus, he on the other hand was being sarcastic “What is so important that it cannot wait until morning?”

Harry didn’t reply, just continued to write and scribble things down, obviously concentrating desperately hard on something. Severus wasn’t offended; he knew what it was like. To get so absorbed into something, you just couldn’t drag yourself away. Harry was obviously close to figuring it out or he had just started, judging by the way he was scribbling away. Walking forward he began reading what Harry had written down, actually impressed.

“Damn it!” swore Harry angrily, flinging the quill down.

“Calm down,” said Severus soothingly, laying a calming hand on Harry’s shoulder.

“I can’t, I need to find something to help her,” he croaked desperately.
Severus sighed, turning the exhausted teenager around and hugged him. He wasn’t a very hand on man, but right now Harry needed him. Harry might seem like the only one desperate for answers, but the truth was Severus had been trying to create a potion too. Severus couldn’t have been more stunned, when Harry grabbed at his clothes and buried his head in his chest.

“If I’m so good why can’t I come up with anything?” asked Harry eventually once he stopped raining tears down on Severus’ chest.

“Potions aren’t miracle workers Harry, you know that,” chastised Severus quietly. “Now what have you been trying to do?”

“De-age the bones,” sighed Harry warily separating himself from Severus feeling embarrassed he rarely lost control of his emotions.

“I see,” said Severus curiously, “I have been tinkering with the bone mending potion, Skelegrow.”

Harry’s eyes grew wide, “That’s it!”

Back to his parchment, writing furiously, needless to say Harry’s hand ached by the time he was finished. There was four feet of parchment; Severus had remained, sitting on a stool waiting patiently for an answer. Seeing Harry passionately creating a potion, he wondered if that’s what he looked like while doing it. Brimming with excitement, his entire body almost shaking with anticipation. His eyes were alight with fire that Severus had never seen before. Severus had never wanted to kiss anyone more than he did right there and then. Of course he berated himself for thinking it, and forced his mind to think on something else.

The potion.

“What do you think?” asked Harry stepping back, his confidence gone he looked young and very vulnerable. Completely different from how he had looked mere seconds ago. He realized how easy it would be to crush Harry, and he thanked Merlin he had gotten to Harry first. Most Potion Masters would have been extremely intimidated by him. By an apprentice who was creating potions during their apprenticeship. A sadistic Potions Master would have crushed him, used him for his or her own gain, probably selling and publishing Harry’s Potions as his own.

“I think there’s still an ingredient missing, an entire brewing stage is missing… instruction ten would cause it to blow up.” stated Severus reading it.

Harry’s face fell in defeat he was so tired and drained emotionally and physically.

“Harry, do not worry, we will figure it out, I promise. Just please go to bed and get some sleep. Tomorrow we will spend all day down here, until we get it right if that’s what you want…okay?” soothed Severus.

Harry started at Severus before nodding slowly, he knew he wasn’t going to get anywhere tonight - he was just too exhausted.

“Good,” said Severus satisfied with that answer, replacing the parchment on the table. He guided the exhausted teenager from the Dungeon’s and up the stairs to his bed. Tucking him in without thinking about it too much. “Sleep, I won’t let anything happen to her.”

Harry was already asleep, snoring very lightly.

Severus made his way back to his own bed, hoping he could actually keep his word. It would kill him if he couldn’t save her; he had also been asking himself the same question Harry had. How
come he hadn’t been able to come up with a Potion yet if he was so good at it? He said a prayer to whoever was listening above, to let him be able to keep his word. Harry would probably be more devastated than him, if anything happened to his mother. Then again he understood why, Eileen had been the only adult figure in his life. She had taken him in, sheltered him, fed him, and loved him when his own parents neglected him.
Chapter 31

Invisible

Chapter 31

A solution To The Problem

Things at Prince Manor were extremely hectic to say the least, Harry and Severus spent every waken moment trying to make a potion for Eileen. By waken moment that means they were awake most of the day. They spent at least twenty hours of the day, pouring over Potion books, potion magazines and conference ideas everything. Severus was contacting his friends from America as well, hoping they might be able to help. Although neither Harry nor Severus held a lot of faith in that, it’s why they didn’t stop trying - they wanted to find answers for themselves.

Severus and Harry might be trying to create a Potion to help Eileen, but they always sat beside her when she was awake. Unfortunately she was just in too much pain for her to remain conscious long. Eileen had indeed deteriorated rapidly, and they were trying to hold on to hope that they would find something in time.

“Do you have any quills Sev?” asked Harry coming though to the study; he had been in the dungeons. He was sitting down there trying to think, being down there helped soothe him. He wasn’t sure what it was, the familiarity or being near Potions - something he truly liked. He had known he wanted to be a Potions Master, at least succeed in the Potions expertise since he was eleven. It probably had something to do with Nick, not getting special treatment in that class. Then of course, the teacher, Harry had wanted to prove him wrong. He had, the world knew he was apprenticed to Master Snape. His Ex-teacher was bound to know by now, and it was like putting up his middle finger in the arseholes face.

“Don’t tell me you managed to destroy them all?” asked Severus warily, he would have been amused if it had been under different circumstances. Right now he was just tired, warily and upset at the situation. He was beginning to feel like Harry had three days ago. If he was so damn good at Potions why couldn’t he come up with something that will help his mother? The only person who had been there for him (other than Lily) during his childhood. He didn’t like to think about Lily anymore, it just caused him anger and heartache. He couldn’t understand what had turned her so sour; it’s something he’d have expected of Petunia not Lily.

“Er, I got angry,” said Harry slightly sheepishly.

“Over there,” said Severus pointing towards his spare desk, it had only one drawer in it. So Harry had no problem finding them, he was also running out of paper, but that was the least of his concerns. Grabbing it barely murmured a ‘goodbye’ before descending into the dungeons once more. Pouring over the de-aging potion, and Skele-grow. Hoping and praying he could find something to work with. He didn’t want to De-age Eileen, just her bones why was it so difficult to find something to work with?!

The Potions desks were a mess, filled with Harry’s parchment, the ink stains were everywhere. Broken quills littered the ground, when he got angry and accidentally snapped them. Potions vials dumped in the sink, cauldrons pushed up against the wall.

“Master Harry has to eat sir,” said Dobby popping in.
“Don’t do that Dobby!” shrieked Harry jumping out of his skin in fright.

“Eat,” demanded Dobby his green eyes narrowed in on Harry’s frame. “Starving yourself won’t help Mistress Eileen. Eating will make you feel better, and work harder.” coaxed the little elf. He had changed a lot since coming here; the other elves taught him how to speak properly. Dress properly, and serve properly he was no longer subservient. He vowed to take care of Harry, even if he wasn’t going to look after himself. He put the tray down on a section of paper furthest away from Harry.

“Fine,” said Harry breathing deeply, he laid down the untouched and un-inked quill and began munching on the sandwich and bowl of crisps that had been brought down for him to eat. “I don’t suppose you know much about Potions huh?” he asked almost petulantly.

“All elves have knowledge in Potions, Master Harry,” said Dobby solemnly. House elves didn’t start working for their ‘Master’s’ until they were five years old. By then they had been trained by their mothers to serve and protect. Once their training was done, they bound themselves to a family and got on with life.

“Really? They teach you Potions?” asked Harry sceptically.

“No not Potions Master Harry. Elvin magic, herbs and Potion ingredients.” explained Dobby.

“Does that differ from Wizards Potions and herbs?” asked Harry perking up suddenly deeply interested. Maybe his answer would be in Elvin magic, herbs and ingredients.

“Somewhat,” said Dobby, it had been a long time since he had been allowed to see anyone brewing. He had been sold to the Malfoy family three generations ago. He had served Lucius, Abraxas and Abraxas father’s before him. Abraxas had been good to him, but not as well as his previous Masters and Mistresses who allowed him to do things. Help them brew, and such things, that was before house elves were treated so despicably. House elves had been cherished; they were magical as well after all. Unfortunately as the wizarding world advanced things changed, people changed.

“Can you read?” he asked feeling all kinds of stupid.

“Of course Master Harry,” said Dobby feeling slightly insulted but also happy, someone was paying attention to him. Asking him things as though he was an equal, he had not had that in a very long time. He had forgotten what it felt like, this was nice. He hoped he could continue to serve Harry Peverell.

“Tell me how you would combine those two Potions,” said Harry, he was desperate, too desperate he just wanted answers. Picking his sandwich back up he continued to eat that, already feeling better.

“Well?” asked Harry curiously.

“I don’t think it can be done, have you tried adding more ingredients?” asked Dobby.

“Adding what?” asked Harry feeling deflated.

“Solomon’s Seal Root, Agrimony, Blue Vervain?” guessed Dobby.

Harry frowned, Blue Vervain? That had nothing to do with the bones; it was for bleeding and menstrual cramps. The others all had properties he could use in the potion, having had something to eat he picked up the quill and immediately felt renewed. Maybe that was in the answer, stop
trying to combine them without adding ingredients.

“Is that all Master Harry?” asked Dobby solemnly.

“Yes, let me know if Eileen wakes up Dobby,” demanded Harry from where his nose was buried in his parchment. The quill racing across the paper, writing down every herb he could think of that had healing properties connected to bones. Mullen Leaf, Boneset, Horsetail leaf, and he continued on.

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“Saff?” said Severus smoothly.

“Yes Master Snape?” asked Saff quietly.

“Where is Harry?” asked Severus, “Has he had anything to eat?”

“Yes Master Snape, he’s had lunch, he’s down in the Potions Lab.” said Saff bowing low.

“Is dinner ready?” asked Severus, “And has my mother had anything to eat has she woken up?” demanded Severus.

“She hasn’t woken up since lunch, she had some soup, and dinner is almost ready Master Snape.” said Saff.

“Good, tell Harry I want to see him in the sitting room for dinner today,” said Severus, he needed to make sure Harry took a break. He had let it go on too long, Harry despite his age and maturity was still a young man, a young teenager. He needed guidance, and he wasn’t providing it. It was part of the apprenticeship mentoring he had signed Harry up for. He would make sure Harry got some proper sleep tonight, even if he had to spike his hot chocolate with a sleeping potion.

“Dobby?” called Severus, once he took a seat in the sitting room, removing the creaks from his neck and back. He really needed to sleep as well, but his constant worrying over his mother and Harry stopped him. He like Harry was determined to find something to help his mother.

“Yes Master Severus?” asked Dobby.

“Bring me up a bottle of wine,” said Severus smoothly, not calling upon Saff, knowing she was plating up their dinner. He didn’t drink wine often, he much preferred fire whiskey, but he didn’t want to end up with a killer headache or hangover.

“Yes sir,” said Dobby popping out, he came back three minutes later with a good year and a glass.

“Thank you,” said Severus, Dobby beamed and popped away once more.

Saff brought their dinner up not long after.

“I think I did!” shouted Harry coming into the sitting room, which was right next to the kitchen.

Severus jumped, causing the wine to spill everywhere, cursing himself silently. He hadn’t reacted like that in a very long time, he was a spy after all - or had been. Breathing deeply, he righted himself, staring plainly at Harry. “Well?” asked Severus curiously, trying to stop his hope from building.

Harry practically flung the paper at him, his body radiating excitement that Severus hadn’t seen from him before. Severus didn’t have time to feel the same excitement, or dwell on how it used to
be him that way. It had acted like that when he had first made the Wolfsbane potion. Severus’ onyx eyes roamed over the paper, noticing a lot of herbs in the potion apposed to actual potion ingredients. Now Severus couldn’t contain his excitement, it was solid on paper, so there was no reason for it not to work.

“There’s only one problem,” said Harry bouncing up and down on the balls of his feet.

“It will take two days to make,” said Severus smoothly.

“Yeah,” agreed Harry, biting his lip.

“No breaks, either it needs constant watching,” sighed Severus.

“I think maybe we should take turns, sleep for a few hours each?” said Harry suggestively.

“Probably the best idea, I need to check my stock to see if we have everything.” said Severus already making his way down to his Potions cupboard where everything was. Dinner forgotten both eager men trampled back down to the Potions lab, then into the huge cupboard. Severus handing over the ingredients they needed as he found them. Harry moved them into the lab, putting them on the table, after swiping the load of parchment onto the floor. Before going back and waiting for the rest of the ingredients, thankfully Severus did indeed have all on hand. Thanks to the constant Experimental Potions he liked to brew.

“There are only two ingredients that need to be chopped or crushed before being added, the others can all be cut beforehand.” stated Harry. Gathering up all his paper, it was all useless now, best he could do was set fire to it. Removing the ink splotches, not wanting to contaminate anything. Never mind this potion or the ingredients. The vials that had been lying around, were promptly washed with magic. Then left for three days, that’s how long it would take for the magic to completely disappear. The same was done with the cauldrons, only it was Severus’ turn to help tidy the usually immaculate Potions Lab.

“Let’s get something to eat first,” stated Severus sternly.

“We can’t wait!” protested Harry.

Severus just stared him down, not even needing to say a word.

“Fine,” sighed Harry knowing he wasn’t going to get his way, his stomach chose that time to growl in protest as well.

“How is Luna?” asked Severus changing the subject, stop Harry from brooding that he wasn’t getting to brew right away. It would only take them half an hour to have something to eat.

“She’s having fun, or rather was, she went on holiday but she’s back now.” said Harry, his thoughts on not getting to brew it right away, already gone in talking about Luna. He was extremely fond of Luna; she was his rock at Hogwarts. Especially now that Luna was the only one at Hogwarts that had cared about him the world found out about his parents treatment.

“Well if this is a success you’ll be going on holiday yourself,” smirked Severus wryly.

“It will,” said Harry quickly and adamantly, “It has too.” failure wasn’t an option for him- not in regards to something this important.

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Nick Potter sank on his bed, his entire body shaking in exhaustion. His father had forced him to train some more. Nick was honestly unsure of how much more he could take. He felt hollow inside, he didn’t want to get up in the mornings anymore. He had no more tears to cry, or he would be crying once more. His life sucked, and he just wished he could rest. It was only six o’clock, but he went to his bed after dinner. Food didn’t taste good to him anymore; it tasted like sawdust what he actually managed to keep down anyway. He had just emptied the contents of his stomach in the toilet before going to his room.

He missed how his life had been; he wished things were simple again. Back home at Potter manor, being spoiled, being happy. Not forced into training, he missed Uncle Padfoot and Uncle Moony, the man he had been anyway. Not the man who trained him, there was a hardness in Remus now there hadn’t been before. In truth he was terrified of their expectations. He couldn’t destroy Voldemort; he couldn’t help the deep shudder that ran through him at the prospect. His mother and father had also changed; his mum didn’t listen to him anymore. He had tried to tell her so many times what Umbridge was doing to him.

Tears ran down Nick’s face, Lily had just gone on about disappointing him, by acting up in front of a teacher. That he needed to learn everything to help him defeat Voldemort. James though had been ten times worse; he had gone on about his expectations of Nick being an Auror. That he was destroying his chances continuing the family tradition. That annoying Ministry officials wasn’t the way to go, that he had better buck up his ideas. Then he had gone on about the fame of killing Voldemort wouldn’t be enough to get him through the Auror training and into the academy.

Nick stilled, trying to keep his breathing normal as someone entered his room. A hand ruffled his hair before leaving the room, causing Nick to grimace in disgust and anger. Unfortunately it didn’t last long; he didn’t even have the energy to be angry anymore.

“He’s out like a light…the training must have knackered him,” said James retreating from the room.

“Maybe we shouldn’t be so hard on him…it is holiday time…” said Lily.

But Nick didn’t get to hear the reply as the door was shut a soft click surrounding the room. Thoughts of running away swam around Nick’s head, but he didn’t have any money left in his vault. He had nowhere to go, and he realized to his immense shame - he had no friends either. What’s worse Hogwarts would be starting back up soon, and he’d have to put up with the blood Quill and Umbridge again. His breathing became harsh, as his posture became even more apparent of defeat.

Another tear ran down the defeated teenager as he succumbed to a troubled sleep. His last thoughts were his life really sucked, and he had nobody but himself to blame.

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“I shall begin the potion, you on the other hand are to get six hours sleep, and that’s the pattern we will set understood?” said Severus smoothly.

“Six hours sleep, six hours awake?” asked Harry for confirmation, although it had been pretty straightforward. Unfortunately the lack of sleep wasn’t helping Harry any.

“Yes,” said Severus.

“Okay,” said Harry stifling a yawn. Sleep sounded good, and the fact he had a plan of action, a potion to brew. Made his day seem a hell of a lot brighter already. He just hoped and prayed it
worked, and that Eileen would make it.

“Go on, unless you are still hungry?” asked Severus.

“No I’m going, I’ll set the alarm,” said Harry, deciding not to bother with his nightly hot chocolate. He was exhausted, elated and just down right proud of himself. He had worked hard for everything in his life. He had taught himself the basics, reading, writing, math, Latin while his siblings had been taught by a tutor. He had worked harder than Nick to be noticed at Hogwarts for nothing. No matter what he did, nobody took notice of him not even Severus during his first year. At least he didn’t think so. He had half hoped his parents would be proud when he did well with his grades. Heaven forbid that should happen, now though he was getting the recognition he deserved. It was liberating to say the least, now he was going to be even more recognized in the field. It was all thanks to Severus. He owed him a lot, he owed Eileen even more and now he was repaying them for their love and generosity.

Two minutes later, he did his nightly rituals, minus the hot chocolate, and slipped into his pyjamas and into bed. Casting the spell that would wake him up in six hours, he finally succumbed to slumber. His own sleep a lot happier than Nick’s, his own brother.

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Harry jerked awake, his heart beating with fear as he tried to remember everything, suddenly he did. Jumping up, he quickly went to the toilet, got some warm clothes on. Deciding on Muggle Jeans and a thick t-shirt and jumper, he’d be standing in the cold dungeons for hours after all. Dobby thrust food in his direction, telling him to eat that Severus had demanded it. Unfortunately he knew he’d end up with indigestion though, with how quickly he had eaten it. A beautiful stew that only Saff could make, Saff was the house elf that was in charge of cooking in the Kitchens. The House elves all had pacific things they were good at, and jobs they had been hired because off.

“How are you feeling?” asked Severus.

“I’m fine, go on get some sleep,” said Harry, seeing the dark baggy circles around his Potions Master’s face. He had thought for half a day that Severus didn’t care about his mother. He had felt a little betrayed, but that had soon disappeared and shame and disgust (at himself) took its place. Severus just liked to keep his emotions to himself, just like he did for most part. Harry had shown more emotion in these past few days than ever before, he wasn’t used to displaying emotions in front of everyone. Severus, Harry knew had been a spy and that’s probably made him so stern and serious most of the time. Not that Harry knew anything other than seriousness himself, he’d never truly had fun until last year. That hadn’t lasted long like everything else in Harry’s life, he had then been tortured for three days. Managing to get away by the skin of his teeth, and he had Severus to thank for healing him. He swore to himself never to think badly of Severus.

“I just finished stirring clockwise,” stated Severus, making off the next stage.

Harry simply nodded, watching Severus leaving flushing as he remember clutching at his Potions Master. He had felt so safe in those strong arms, especially as they wrapped around him. Reassuring him that everything would be okay, explaining that Potions weren’t miracle workers.

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Severus closed the lab door behind him, making his way up the stairs, he was cold despite the heating charms. In his exhausted state, his magic probably wasn’t working to its full capacity. He was just gratefully entering his bedroom, when a house elf popped in front of him.
“Master Severus, Mistress Eileen is awake,” said Saff quietly.

“I shall be there momentarily, I’d like some food delivered to the room,” said Severus hiding his tiredness. The House elves weren’t getting much sleep either, it was a good job there were quite a few of them. So they could relive each other and get some rest, house elves couldn’t work all day and night they needed sleep as well. They needed to recuperate their magic just like normal Wizards and Witches.

“Yes sir,” said Saff popping away.

Severus instead of entering his room, walked over to his mothers room, which of course wasn’t far from his own. They all slept on the first floor of Prince Manor, there was no point in going further up to the second or third floor. Opening the door without hesitation he walked into her room, something he wouldn’t normally do. He always knocked, but he knew he didn’t have to worry about his mother doing something he didn’t want to see. She was in too much pain to move never mind anything else.

“How are you feeling?” asked Severus sitting down, brushing away some of his mothers gray hair from her head. It was actually more a peppery colour, black hadn’t completely faded from her hair yet.

“I’m fine lad, no need to worry,” said Eileen, inhaling deeply, a small wistful smile lingering on her face. When she looked at the clock her wistful smile turned into a frown. “What are you doing brewing at this time of night lad?”

Severus rolled his eyes at his mothers muttering, he wasn’t by anyone’s divination a lad, she hadn’t called him that since he had been a young boy. When he had stayed with her, which hadn’t been the case since he was seventeen years old. He had visited her a lot though, don’t get him wrong. He had been busy gaining his mastery and spying, then teaching at Hogwarts. Nobody had known about his inheritance, nobody had known about Prince Manor. He had not wanted Voldemort demanding to let him stay there, as was the case with Malfoy Manor. Lucius had let the disgusting man remain under the same roof as his new born child. Severus’ wasn’t a fan of babies, but he wouldn’t let any of his within a ten mile radius of Voldemort. Who knew what the insane sycophantic maniacal man would or could do. He was unpredictable and lethal on his best days, he wouldn’t get into his worst days.

“Sev?” she asked quietly her voice was no longer raspy.

“Hm? It’s a potion that will help you,” explained Severus softly, taking one of his mothers hands in his.

“You both rely on Potions too much,” said Eileen fondly coughing a few times.

“You should be proud of him, he’s not slept properly in days, he’s only fifteen years old and he’s already created his second potion.” said Severus, a small smile unconsciously playing on his lips. He certainly was proud of the teenager, it seemed though that Harry only brewed or rather created new potions under pressure. Perhaps next year he’d get Harry to create a potion that will go towards nearly a third of his total score for his Mastery. He was indeed curious to see what Harry could do, maybe Harry needed more motivation. Or maybe it was the belief that he wasn’t capable, either way it was something he had to get out of Harry before he passed his Mastery. Harry could do great things, if he only believed in himself.

“Oh I am Lad, believe me, I’m proud of you too,” said Eileen, patting at Severus’ hand that was already wrapped around her own.
“Did Saff bring you a potion?” asked Severus changing the subject to more immediate matters.

“As soon as I woke up, she brought me a glass of water too,” said Eileen quietly. “Now go to bed son, you are exhausted. Do not worry about me I’m going to sleep too.” she finished sternly, or an attempt at sternness it didn’t go over very well being so weak.

“I’ll help you get something to eat first,” said Severus his voice low, he just didn’t have the energy to speak loudly.

“No, Saff can do that, its just some soup, I’d rather she did it son, I’m not completely invalid.” said Eileen quickly, at least she didn’t want to be. She hated being weak, ever since Tobias died it had become her pride and joy not being weak. Something that Severus still suffered with to this day, he too never wanted to be seen as weak. Its why he was so stern all the time, that and teaching students Potions when they had no will to learn the subtle arts of Potions Making. He had no excuses for his sternness anymore, as he was an independent brewer, making a lot of money and attending more conferences now that he could do what he liked. While at Hogwarts he couldn’t just leave for two or three days, attending conferences and show off new potions he had created and such.

“If you are sure,” ventured Severus, he was secretly glad to be able to get some sleep - he was finding it hard to keep his eyes open right now - never mind feed her. He would have done it though, don’t get him wrong.

“Go on,” she said grimly, she could see how exhausted they were. It filled her with warmth and love, seeing how concerned they were. The fact that they had created a potion together to help her made her feel even more special. She had seen the smile Severus had on his face, she was rather curious about it. She found herself wanting to survive, to find out just what had made her son smile like that. She hadn’t seen one like that on his face, since that horrible woman had broken her sons heart. Lily.

“Alright,” agreed Severus, patting her hand, bending down he kissed her softly on the forehead before quietly leaving the room. “I’ll be back soon.”

Two days later, two exhausted Potion brewers practically slumped over in triumph. Bottling the Potions, they took only one, and put it in the fridge to cool. They couldn’t use magic on it for risk of tampering it. So the only way they’d get it cooled enough was to use Muggle means. They both had panda bag under their eyes, from the lack of sleep.

“How long will it take for it too cool?” asked Harry exhaustion written all over his face.

“Not long I’d imagine,” said Severus warily.

“We did it though,” ginned Harry his happiness was tinged with tiredness, stopping him from feeling true excitement.

“Indeed,” replied Severus.

“Do Masters’ want something to eat?” asked Dobby.

The two wizards shook themselves out of their thoughts, realizing they were still standing in the kitchen. Their stomachs rumbled in protest, practically yelling yes for them, they were starving they hadn’t had a proper meal in nearly a week. Choosing instead to have sandwiches and biscuits, things they could eat and do whatever they needed to do as well.
“Yes, some soup wouldn’t go amiss,” said Severus to Dobby, “We have time to kill before the potion will be cool enough for consumption.”

“How long will it be before it takes affect?” asked Harry slumping gratefully on his seat. He had refused to go to sleep, when only six hours of the Potion stage remained.

“It should start right away like most other potions,” said Severus dryly, not able to keep his tongue in check being as tired as he was.

Harry just rolled his eyes at Severus’ dry wit, not even bothering to formulate a response.

The bowls of soup were placed in front of them, along with the fresh bread. Both tired men ate the food, the only sound that invaded the air was the clinking of the spoon on the bowl. They finished quickly, sighing in contentment at least one of their needs had been seen to. Dobby quietly and magically removed the bowls and began cleaning up. Half an hour passed, both men seemingly in a sleepy daze.

“It should be ready now,” said Severus smoothly. Getting up he opened his fridge, removing the vial giving it a shake, he nodded his approval. Together both men made their way up the stairs to Eileen’s room. They found a house elf tending to her, the elf bowed before leaving them alone.

“We did it!” grinned Harry sitting down next to Eileen a look of total adoration on his face.

“I never doubted you boys for a second,” said Eileen, her sharp eyes catching her son’s look at Harry. Eileen would have grinned like a loon, if she had been able to. Instead her heart warmed, her son had finally gotten over Evans, er Potter now. The irony wasn’t lost on her, that it would be her son he’d choose to love. His face was once again impassive, but Eileen had seen. Now she was thinking of ways to get them together, nothing would please her more. She wanted nothing more than to see her son happy and in love. So she was already scheming. Her son had very good taste indeed.

“Here, drink, it might be a little warm,” said Severus helping his mum to sit up so she could swallow the potion.

“Will it hurt?” she asked, not that it would stop her taking the potion, she’d just rather know before hand.

“No, none of them should illicit pain, but I think it will be a bit like Skele-grow,” said Severus truthfully.

“After I take this, you both take a dreamless sleeping potion and get some rest - you hear me?” she demanded, her black eyes narrowed on both boys she loved like sons. If she had her way, Harry would be her son in law.

“We need to make sure nothing happens…” protested Harry.

“You take the potion or I don’t take this,” said Eileen resorting to blackmail. Sort of.

“Fine, fine,” grumbled Harry seeing Severus nod his head curtly, as if to tell him it was best to agree other than argue with the determined mother.

Severus helped his mother swallow the potion, smirking slightly when she grimaced. “Dobby?” he shouted as soon as he had lain his mother down.

“Yes Master Severus?” asked Dobby.
“Watch my mother, if she needs anything get her it, if the pain gets too much come for me. She cannot have any other potion, at least not for twelve hours.” stated Severus sharply.

“Yes sir!” beamed Dobby happy enough with the request.

“Both of you, go to bed.” stated Eileen sharply, “Dobby may I have a glass of water please?” her tongue was still disgusting with the remains of the potion. She gratefully guzzled down the water, waving her boys off when they said goodbye.

Two sleeping potions later, both boys slept and recuperated from their weekly stint. Too bad the holidays were over and Hogwarts and his apprenticeship would be starting back up again in a days time. More drama unfortunately awaited Harry Peverell - it seemed as though he wasn’t meant to have a quiet stress free life.
Chapter 32

Invisible

Chapter 32

Wakening Up, Sirius and Nick Repair Their Relationship

Eileen groggily woke up; her mind currently filled with cobwebs she couldn’t seem to get rid off, what was she doing back in her old room at Prince Manor? She had left as soon as she could when she was a young teenager, at the tender age of seventeen. Married the first Muggle that showed any attention to her, making the mistake of not confiding that she was a Witch with him. Slowly but surely the cobwebs receded and she began to remember everything, it was not just her memories that came back either, the pain did too. A grimace stole across her features even as fondness and warmth invaded her. Had she imagined the prideful look of love Severus had given Harry in her delirium? She decided she hadn’t. She also knew her son, and would not express that love either. He hadn’t for Lily and had eventually lost her, who knows what could have happened if he had just told her. She really didn’t want to think on Lily Evans-Potter. The ironies of life didn’t fail to amuse her; it was her son he was attracted too. As a young boy Severus probably hadn’t thought about having a relationship with a man, too enamoured with Lily to think about it no doubt. As a spy he had not really had much of a relationship with anyone. Just one nightstands no doubt, she wasn’t sure which gender her son preferred. Judging by the looks, he maybe swung both ways, now she just had to figure out a way to get them together. Get Severus to notice Harry more and more, maybe even the same with Harry get him to notice her son. Harry liked older men; he had gone out with Krum if she remembered correctly. Although the age difference was bigger with Severus than Krum, but Harry was too mature for people his own age. The question was how to go about it? She thought with a scheming look on her face. Maybe she should suggest a small holiday, it would do them both good to get out of the manor, into nice restaurants, perhaps they should go to America again or wherever they held the conferences. No doubt Harry will be showing off his new potion, no they’re potion, Severus and Harry’s.

“Dobby?” said Eileen, breathing deeply, she was very uncomfortable, and wanted a Pain Relief Potion.

“Mistress Eileen how are you?” asked Dobby regarding her solemnly, staring up at her from where she lay on the bed.

“Has the twelve hours passed?” asked Eileen, her bed was soaked with sweat, she hoped with a few Potions she could bathe herself. Get the house elves to change and turn the bed around, so she would at least lie back down in fresh clean sheets.

“Yes Mistress Eileen,” said Dobby nodding his head, his big ears flapping dangerously up and down.

“May I have a Pain Reliever Potion, a Pepper-up Potion and a Strengthening Solution?” said Eileen, asking instead of demanding, she had never been horrible to the house elves. Her parents hadn’t really either, but they had not been anyone’s definition of nice. Dobby had been treated horribly in his last home, so she always made sure to be extra nice to him.

“Should I ask Master Severus first?” asked Dobby unsurely, he had said twelve hours and twelve hours had come and gone. However, he didn’t want to take any chances of the potions having an unknown affect on his Mistress.
“Is he awake?” asked Eileen curiously.

Dobby closed his eyes for a few seconds before opening them again, “No Mistress Eileen,” replied Dobby negatively.

“Then no, just retrieve the Potions Dobby,” said Eileen kindly.

“Yes, Mistress Eileen,” said Dobby quietly popping away.

Dobby returned five minutes later with a tray filled with breakfast food, coffee, tea, pumpkin juice the works. Most importantly three Potions lined up the side of the tray, and they were all the Potions she had asked for. She could tell by looking at them, she wasn’t as good as her son but she was no novice either. She immediately removed the corks and drank them gratefully, sighing in relief as her aches and pains immediately vanished. Her aches and pains weren’t anywhere near as painful as they had been before. For that she was grateful, she also knew she must be on the mend, suddenly very famished she dug into her breakfast with gusto she hadn’t felt in what felt like forever.

“Is there anything else Dobby can do for Mistress Eileen?” asked Dobby stepping back, seeing that she was able to eat on her own. That excited Dobby; it meant his kind Mistress would be fine. Not that he had much doubt, Master Severus was well known in the magical community, even to the house elves. They heard and saw things nobody did, because nobody cared about the presence of house elves. Although Dobby was coming to realize that this family did care. At least his Master Harry did, without him Dobby knew Narcissa Malfoy would have killed him. He had after all betrayed the family, and it’s what happened to disgraced House elves. They got their head cut off and put with the other house elves, there were many in Malfoy Manor - to remind them how ‘Unmerciful’ they were as Lucius had liked to say. In Dobby’s opinion Lucius Malfoy was right where he should be. Azkaban and Dobby couldn’t help but viciously think that he hoped the blonde died there.

“I shall bathe myself Dobby, if you can would you and Saff put new bedding on and turn it around?” said Eileen.

“Of course Mistress Eileen,” said Dobby popping out, already gathering fresh clean and ironed bedding for when she needed it.

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A few hours later, Eileen was indeed very comfortable, new Pyjamas, new bedding, and clean from her bath. Although it had taken a lot out of her, she realized it wasn’t going to be an easy fix; she must have been pretty bad off. Potions could help just about everything immediately, unless the body was not in great shape. She realized she obviously wasn’t, she had lost a great deal of weight so it would take a few weeks to get back on her feet.

She jumped out of her skin when Harry came bounding through her room door, his green eyes full of worry and apprehension. She smiled sweetly at him, watching as the tension bled from every molecule of his body. “How are you feeling?” he asked his attention solely focused on her.

“A lot better, how are you lad?” asked Eileen patting the side of her bed, wanting Harry to sit down instead of hovering.

“No sickness or soreness?” asked Harry.

“No sickness, but yes some degrees of soreness, but I think that might have more to do with me not
the Potion,” said Eileen, patting Harry’s arm. She had to tell the truth; Harry wanted to publish the Potion no doubt. So she had been his test subject for this one, Harry had been his own test subject for his first invented Potion.

“Have you had a Potion?” asked Harry ready to call for Dobby.

“I have, don’t worry so much,” said Eileen. Who would have thought her life would turn out like this? She certainly hadn’t. It was certainly better than anything she could have dreamt up.

Harry sighed in relief, finally convinced that Eileen was truly alright, she had survived and she was really going to be fine. He brought the frail older woman into a hug, closing his eyes in pure happiness. His stomach grumbling made Harry pull back sheepishly. He was starving and his stomach was telling him it had, had enough, it wanted food and it wanted it now. Eileen laughed softly, her face lit up in amusement, for the first time since she started getting sick.

“Dobby?” asked Eileen.

“Yes Mistress Eileen?” asked Dobby Popping in.

“Can you bring us some lunch?” asked Eileen.

“Yes Ma’am,” said Dobby popping out of existence.

Eileen started at Harry wondering how he felt about her son, she wasn’t about to try and get them together for her son to be bitterly disappointed. Not like he had been with that horrid girl, no she was a horrible woman. Was it wrong of her to call her that when she hadn’t been a model parent herself? Possibly but at least she had never ignored her child. Even worse…was she wrong to be slightly glad Lily did do it? Because if Harry had loved his parents he wouldn’t be the man he was today. Harry would never have wanted to work in her shop, never become a daily part of her life, and eventually both her and her son’s life. She supposed there was no point in feeling guilty about her thoughts, they had happened, nothing could change them, even if she could she didn’t and wouldn’t want to. She had to be careful about this, see how Harry felt first before she planned anything. Her son was the most important thing in her life, and she wasn’t about to see him heartbroken.

“Is there something on my face?” asked Harry feeling it for whatever had Eileen staring so intently at him.

“Sorry lad, I got lost in thought there,” said Eileen shaking off her thoughts, determined to do as she had thought. Watch and wait - see what happened, how Harry felt first.

“It’s okay,” smiled Harry, removing his hand from his face now that he knew there was nothing on it. Just then Dobby appeared with three meals, so neither Eileen nor Harry was surprised to see Severus join them a few minutes later.

“Mum, how are you feeling?” asked Severus, it was his turn now. He was dressed in black dress trousers, white t-shirt and a black jumper. He was wearing nothing on his feet; he took a seat at the edge of the bed, thanking Dobby when the elf passed him a plate of lunch.

“I’m fine son,” said Eileen in exasperation, wondering how long she would be asked that.

“Any side affects?” asked Severus staring at his mother intently.

“None,” said Eileen.
“Hm, I’ll do a scan after lunch,” said Severus, sitting cross legged on the bed, if a student saw him at that moment they would have surely fainted. Even sitting cross-legged, he made it look like the most natural thing in the world. His back still straight and tall, still managing to look a little imposing.

“Are you going to publish the potion?” asked Eileen the picture of innocence.

“Indeed,” said Severus, that wasn’t a potion they kept to themselves, it would help a lot of people. Not just those that had been badly hurt, repeatedly but those who had been hit with the Crucius curse quite a lot in their line or work. It would practically renew the bones, hell even those who suffered from arthritis would benefit from it. Although it wasn’t often a wizard or Witch suffered from such an infliction, it was known.

“When do you think you boys will do that?” asked Eileen fishing for more information.

“Soon,” said Severus “If you are up for it Harry, I know you were rather uncomfortable the last time.”

Eileen’s mouth thinned, so her son had been watching him closely even then? Just how long had Severus admired and dare she say felt affection for Harry? Her eyes practically burst into a dance, twinkling brightly when she saw Harry’s blush. She almost squealed like a little girl, Harry liked her son it was the best news she had heard in years. She forced herself to a composed state; she’d think more when she was alone. That way she wouldn’t give anything away, but she’d still watch though.

“It’s because I didn’t know what to expect…” Harry said trailing off; Harry didn’t understand why his mind kept running back to when Severus had held him. He wasn’t as muscular as Viktor, but he certainly had a hard body hidden under those clothes he wore. His dreams were changing; it was no longer Viktor in them but a strong, handsome man with long dark hair. It didn’t take a genius to figure out who it was. He knew Severus probably didn’t think of him like that. He was just a fifteen year old boy after all; he obviously didn’t see his own appeal. He didn’t see the tall long haired lithe lightly muscled young man when he looked in the mirror he just saw a young boy. He wasn’t at his most confident yet, he didn’t care what others thought except those he loved. There would come a time soon where he would believe in himself, “I didn’t expect people to basically tell me I had plagiarized either.” murmured Harry actually resentfully, and he had a right to be. There he had been, publishing his first potion proud of himself, only to have someone asking him if he stole it. He had felt two inches tall, yet remained strong, silent and proud even if his ‘Master’ had come to his rescue. Glaring at everyone who dared to criticise Harry or day to try and tell Harry he didn’t brew it.

“That I should have predicted, you were extremely young, most people are finishing their apprenticeship when they invent their first potion. In fact it’s expected of you, to create a potion for around third of your final score. To prove to the Potions community you have what it takes, that you will help advance the Potions community further and help others interested in it.” said Severus smoothly, he had been angry when those Apprentices and new Masters had questioned Harry like that. They had no right to do such a thing; unfortunately jealousy was a horrible and infectious thing. Bread discord among them and stopped them getting along as they should.

“Hardy you’re fault,” said Harry shrugging his shoulders simply, he wasn’t flinging blame around just warily of a repeat performance.

“I think they will respect you a lot more this time around,” explained Severus his attention on Harry now forgetting anyone else in the room. “Of course I offer no guarantees but all you need to do is keep your back tall, chin up and stare them down. You know you didn’t cheat, you created it,
at the end of the day only you can affect how you feel.”

“I didn’t create it myself you know, you helped a lot, if we do this then we do it together,” said Harry adamantly. “I am not about to take credit for something not solely based on my own actions.”

“If you wish,” said Severus nodding in respect. He didn’t need the recognition but if it’s what Harry wanted then so be it.

“I do,” said Harry, “Plus there will be a time where I obviously need to create something entirely on my own anyway. I didn’t realize I had to create a potion to pass my Mastery.” he was glad he had found out, otherwise it would have panicked him. He hated being put on the spot for some reason.

“You do indeed, otherwise how can one tell if you are worthy of passing a Mastery if you aren’t truly loyal to the art?” asked Severus simply.

“So everyone I met…they’ve all created Potions?” asked Harry chocking his head to the side, thinking about the Apprentices, they had been angry…perhaps that was why.

“No, not yet, at least not all of them. They do not get to pass until they have created something, and until they do they remain Apprentices.” said Severus. “Some of them have been Apprentices for three to five years.”

“Five years? And still not created a Potion?” murmured Harry taken aback.

“Yes,” said Severus realizing Harry was beginning to understand why everyone was so impressed with his abilities. “Some of the Masters have a lot of pertinence obviously.” he finished dryly.

“I think I understand why they reacted like that,” said Harry, he had been a newbie, still at school and coming along stealing their thunder. Showing them up, embarrassing them. He still couldn’t understand why they hadn’t created a potion. “Do you ask us to create a specific Potion or is it our own choosing?” wanting confirmation about something.

“Something of your creation and based on your own decision.” stated Severus firmly.

“What did you pick?” asked Harry asking a personal question.

“I made a truth serum, not Veritaserum that came afterwards.” said Severus quietly, “I had wanted to make modifications to the older version of the Wolfsbane Potion. Unfortunately I didn’t have the time nor the means to do it. So I made something complicated but simple in terms or brewing and the ingredients.”

Seeing Harry’s confused looks he continued.

“The Master I had, expected me to brew it on my own, with my own ingredients in my own time. I did not stay with him, and at the time I did not have the money to make the Wolfsbane better.” said Severus smoothly.

If anything Harry’s confusion tripled, he was sitting in a manor after all.

“I did not get all this until after I had passed my Mastery,” said Severus his hands gesturing to the luxury he now owned.

“I had nothing I could give my son either, since I was cut off from my inheritance, after I married
Tobias.” said Eileen and it was something she deeply regretted, not being able to help her son. Look at him now though, he had done more than just make the Wolfsbane Potions better, he had created his own version that was ten times better. The Original version only helped the transformation, eased them a little. Severus had created it so they kept their mind and the pain wasn’t so bad either.

Harry merely nodded; he understood all too well what it was like without money. It’s something that had worried him since he was eleven years old. Since he had figured out what he wanted to do with his life, he had just wanted to get back at James Potter and emancipate himself. He hadn’t truly realized what he had done until he received full control of the entire Potter estate and monies. Seats at the Wizengamot, the power that came with it, and to be honest the Peverell name held a lot more power than the Potter name. He no longer had to worry about money of course, and that was a good thing. Too bad he didn’t realize he was giving his own parents a taste of their own medicine.

“Are you ready to go back to Hogwarts?” asked Eileen, as Dobby popped in and removed their finished lunch.

“Yeah, although I have Ancient Runes homework to finish,” said Harry.

“You finished everything else?” asked Severus not sure if he should be surprised or not. Harry was very organized for most part. Although for the past few days it could be said otherwise, the parchment was still littering his Potions Lab floor. Although everything else had of course been cleaned that hadn’t yet, at least they hadn’t cleaned it the House elves might.

“I did it within the first few days,” replied Harry.

“That’s good,” said Eileen proudly.

“Are you finding anything difficult?” asked Severus, he hadn’t had a chance to speak to Harry regarding his Hogwarts coursework.

“Ancient Runes is very…challenging, sometimes difficult the rapid wand movements need to be timed just right,” said Harry a little sheepishly. “It’s good to have a class that’s not easy though, so it gives me more time to think on Runes.”

“It is challenging and mostly useless in day to day activities.” said Severus honestly.

“I don’t know, I rather hated Ancient Runes,” said Eileen, she had dropped out of the class half way through. Her magic just wasn’t strong enough to cope with such a class. She had barely graduated school because of her lack of magic. It’s probably why she had taken to Potions so much in her teenage years, preferring that to silly wand waving. Its something she had always told her son, ‘I prefer brewing Potions than the silly wand waving everyone else does.’ ironically enough she didn’t realize that had also stuck in her own son’s mind too. She didn’t know he always said the same thing during the introduction speech for his Potions classes while he was a teacher. ‘There will be no silly wand waving,’

Severus smirked in amusement already knowing his mothers feelings on subjects that require wands. “So all your other classes are fine?”

“Yes, Arithmancy is very easy,” commented Harry.

“I never took that class in my youth,” said Severus brushing it aside, he truly had no interest in that particular subject.
“How are you both feeling?” asked Eileen after silence reined in the room for a few minutes.

“Better than I have done for awhile,” grinned Harry.

“Indeed,” said Severus.

“You best get those Potions magazines out and see where the next Conference is taking place.” said Eileen smiling proudly.

“Yes, we had best.” said Severus.

“Lets hope its not on either Monday or Tuesday,” said Harry, he didn’t want to miss any classes, not that he had a fear of ending up behind. He was proud to say he was a fast learner, and if he missed a class he had all the books - he could just look up what he missed.

“If it is you will miss the classes, the conference is much more important,” said Severus, and it was because Harry wanted to establish himself as a Potions Master. That was the most important thing for Harry, for his future. Plus he knew a few classes wouldn’t put Harry behind, he was a very dedicated student, when he put his mind to something. “There is also something I wanted to ask… if I could publish the Potions text, Salazar Slytherin’s Potions text. The one you translated from Parseltongue to English.” there were many interesting Potions in it lost and forgotten to the world. He wasn’t going to publish it as his work, he’d be writing the truth, and that they had been created by Salazar Slytherin. That he and Harry were the ones that had found and translated it. These potions and the knowledge deserved to be out there for the world to see and know.

“Of course you can,” agreed Harry immediately.

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Albus Dumbledore slumped into his chair completely exhausted, not many people realized how exhausting it was to be him. He was lucky if he got a few hours sleep these days, between Order meeting’s, Wizengamot meetings, personal meetings with Minister Fudge, doing his duty as Headmaster, replying to his correspondence and of course training Nick. He never really got the chance to do anything he wanted to do never mind sleep. Trying to figure out what Voldemort’s next move would be, and trying to see if Slughorn knew information and was keeping it back. He had nixed the idea of using Nick Potter to find out.

Sighing in exhaustion, he picked a packet of lemon drops from his drawer, picking up a Pepper-up Potion and drinking it in one swallow. Steam bellowed out of his ears, and Dumbledore instantly felt renewed. Un-wrapping his sweet, one of his many indulgences he began sucking on it getting rid of the taste of the Potion he had just used gone. Everyone knew his fondness of sweets, but they didn’t buy him any the old man couldn’t help but think. He couldn’t help but be thankful school was off, even if it was only for another day, the students would be back on Sunday night. Getting straight to school work on the Monday morning, but that wasn’t what was truly on his mind.

There was something different about Nick Potter; he was different, not as joyful as he used to be. You would think it being Christmas, and getting to spend it with his family in Hogwarts would be a good thing for him. Unless the Potter’s had told their children about their money troubles. He couldn’t see that happening, both of them had been adamant about not letting anyone know. Which was futile itself, as it had been in the paper, Muggle Born’s might not understand but Pureblood’s would and did. Whether Lily and James told them or not, the children probably realized it. After all they probably didn’t get half way near as much for Christmas as they were used to. He couldn’t deny he was worried, it seemed as though the teenager was pulling away from them all. Even curiouser he had been using his left hand to duel with, and he had always used his right hand.
before. Which was why he was going to have a conversation with him, over tea and biscuits find out what was bothering him. He did not like the darkness and depression lingering in those green eyes.

Just then a hesitant knock surrounded his office, looking at the beautiful sophisticated Grandfather clock he had in his office, he noticed it was exactly the time he had asked Nick to come.

“Come in Nicolas,” shouted Dumbledore clearly.

Nick came in looking extremely uncomfortable and his eyes regarding Dumbledore with a dull dead look in them. He had in effect mastered his emotions, and Dumbledore couldn’t get a read on them. He would have had to enter his mind to glean anything from the teenager. Dumbledore wouldn’t risk actually entering someone’s mind, not unless he had a very good reason.

“Sit down tea? Cake?” asked Dumbledore happily, spreading his hands around showing him the little feast he had in his office ready for the taking.

“No thank you sir,” said Nick his stomach already rebelling at the sight of it. He hadn’t been eating much, he was thankful for the short reprieve. He didn’t get a second to himself anymore, unless he was sleeping. It didn’t help that the Gryffindor’s had kicked him off the team now. He knew he hadn’t been exceptional but he had loved flying. It didn’t help that his father was so disappointed in him. It was as if everything he did wasn’t good enough anymore, not being good enough at training, not being good enough at school, and what Umbridge was doing to him. He had so badly wanted to rage at his father, explain what she was doing. Unfortunately the fear of James agreeing with her held him petrified. He’d never be able to look at his father again if that happened. His thoughts drifted to his brother, which had been happening more and more often. He was so free, unaffected by their parents, able to do his own thing. So different from him, so much more mature. He had watched Harry and Luna from the atrium, seen them happily talking by the lake. He was no longer jealous of him, no longer blamed him for everything - because he had realized quite pathetically and sadly, that Harry was no longer in their life- so how could he be to blame? Simply put he couldn’t. No he was happy his brother had true friends, he only wished the same could be said for himself.

“How are you Nick?” asked Dumbledore, his eyes not twinkling as much as usual, there truly was something wrong. Perhaps it was Lily and James he should be speaking too? If it didn’t fix itself out then he would speak to them.

“Fine sir,” lied Nick, like Dumbledore really cared as long as he was able to train. Nobody cared right now, and it hurt big time. He was so tired and it was only the morning, he had been sleeping a lot lately. Yet he was always exhausted, it was all rather frustrating, if he slept anymore he’d be sleeping days away. The poor boy didn’t realize just how magically depleted his magical reserves were.

“How are you Nick?” asked Dumbledore, his eyes not twinkling as much as usual, there truly was something wrong. Perhaps it was Lily and James he should be speaking too? If it didn’t fix itself out then he would speak to them.

“Is there anything you wish to tell me?” asked Dumbledore.

“Nothing sir,” said Nick impassively.

“Anything you’d like to do before Hogwarts starts back up?” asked Dumbledore getting desperate now. The child was answering him with curt sentences, he reminded him a little of Severus. He was obviously on the defensive and angry, just like Severus had been. The question was why was he that way? He knew Nick wasn’t happy with all the training…but surely not to this extent? No surely not.

“I’d like to visit my Godfather,” said Nick after a few minutes of contemplating the question.
“I’m sure that can be done!” beamed Dumbledore, so that’s what it was; he was missing Sirius, his
godfather. Unfortunately friendships had broken apart, when the world had found out about Harry.
Sirius had taken it really hard, at least according to Remus anyway, he felt extremely guilty. Not
only Sirius, Dumbledore had observed, Remus had been angry too. He barely said anything to
either James or Lily. He had not expected it to last this long, they had known each other longer
than they hadn’t known one another. Still there was hope, especially with the frequent Order
meetings. Now wasn’t the time for anger or falling outs, he’d make that clear to them. Especially if
it was upsetting Nick, he was just too important to be upset especially now.

“Really?” asked Nick hopefully.

“Of course!” said Dumbledore his twinkle back full force. “Come up to my office in the morning
and I’ll have everything worked out. You can spend the day with your Godfather, I’m sure he’s
missing you too.”

“Thank you sir,” said Nick, hiding his distain, Sirius hadn’t been in touch with him so he was
obviously very angry. He only hoped his godfather would at least talk to him; tell him why he was
angry at him. He needed to fix things; his own parents weren’t listening to him. So he was hoping
that his Godfather would at least.

“No problem my boy!” beamed Dumbledore. “Let your parents know I need to speak to them will
you?” he had a lot to do before lunch time. After lunch he had to get some work done, he couldn’t
put it off any longer.

“Yes sir,” said Nick his eyes a little more livelier than they had been when entering the office. Nick
left the room, and all the red and gold Dumbledore had in his office, it’s obvious whose house he
belonged to and supported.

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Nick woke up bright and early, ready to plead his case to his Godfather; he just wanted someone in
his corner. Remus had been so cold and hard to him, forcing him to use magic and train when he
didn’t want to. He was different now; when he first started he had been understanding and helpful.
Not pushing him into anything, now it was obviously a whole other story. His dad hadn’t been
pleased when they returned just before lunch. He had muttered under his breath for hours, his mum
had hugged him and told him he was going to ‘Uncle Sirius’s’ tomorrow.

Grabbing his clothes he put them on, noticing a big difference in his clothes, they were getting very
loose. He had obviously lost more weight than he realized, he used a spell to shrink them so they
couldn’t fall off - and he wouldn’t end up almost mooning at everyone. That done he immediately
left his mothers quarters, not even saying goodbye, he wasn’t in the mood to be near them anymore
-ever.

Nick ran the entire way to Headmaster Dumbledore’s office, eager to be away from the now
oppressive school. It was a sharp contract to how he had felt when he first entered her halls. He had
been so eager, so proud and so happy to be at Hogwarts finally. After all the stories his father told
him, the attention he’d surely get. Now he hated all his teachers, was hated by the students, and he
was cast aside. He deserved it this time around though; he had left his brother to die saving his own
skin. It was furthest you could get from a Gryffindor; he had lost himself on his path along time
ago.

“Are you ready to go?” beamed Dumbledore happy to do something nice for his soldier.

“Yes,” said Nick impatiently.
“Here you are then, I shall see you back here before eight o’clock tonight,” said Dumbledore that would give him more than enough time to get back before curfew.

Nick nodded his head not even bothering to verbally reply this time. Grabbing a handful of the Floo powder, he stepped into the fire and yelled out the location of his godfather’s home.

Sirius Black was waiting at the other side a curious look on his face.

“Hello Nick, why did you want to see me?” asked Sirius gesturing for him to sit down. Breakfast was still being served in Grimmauld Place. Remus had taken his breakfast and scampered off, it was obvious that Nick only wanted to see Sirius and Remus respected that.

“Why are you angry with me?” asked Nick swallowing past the sharp lump lodged in his throat. He was surprised that tears weren’t running down his face, he guessed he didn’t have any more to shed.

Sirius sighed sadly, he knew he shouldn’t be angry with him, but he couldn’t help it. Perhaps if he was honest they could work through it, it was obvious Harry didn’t want him in his life. So unless he fixed things with Nick he’d loose both his godsons. It didn’t hurt to try did it? And so he buried his anger, and spoke.

“I’m not just angry at you Nick, I’m angry at you’re parents too,” said Sirius.

“Is it because I ran?” asked Nick swallowing thickly again, his green eyes full of fear.

“I’m disappointed in you for that, but no it’s everything Nick,” said Sirius eventually. “How could you steal Harry’s presents?”

Nick blinked his head snapping up to stare at Sirius confused, what had he meant by that? What presents? “What do you mean?” asked Nick completely bewildered, his fear and sadness gone.

“I always sent both of you a present, until you were both around the age of eight. I stopped when Harry never replied that he liked his presents of thanked me.” admitted Sirius.

“I don’t understand…I got them both - there was no name tags on them…I always thought you and Remus ended up buying me the same thing.” said Nick genuinely taken aback.

“So you didn’t steal them?” asked Sirius, begging for confirmation. If he was wrong about that what else was he wrong about? At least that was one less thing he would be angry at Nick for. He should have realized, he was but a child, or had been back then.

Nick just nodded his head, still completely bewildered unable to believe that’s why Sirius had stopped talking to him. Sirius let out a relieved sigh of air; at least he hadn’t been a bad child.

“Why did you leave your brother?”

“I was scared!” shrieked Nick the terror he had felt that day written plainly across his face.

Sirius paused and took a good look at Nick, his godson was terrified, and rightfully so, after all what fourteen year old would remain in Voldemort’s company longer than necessarily? A groan of defeat left Sirius’ lips, how could he stay angry when he understood it? He had seen Voldemort once, from afar battling Dumbledore. It had been enough for him, he certainly wouldn’t like Voldemort’s attention solely on him - he knew he’d never hope to survive.

“Harry got you out of those bindings, Harry then started firing spells back, stopping you and himself from getting hurt. He saved you both, he was only a few feet from you Nick! He’d done
most of the work - you should have taken him with you. Do you have any idea how lucky Harry is to have survived?!” argued Sirius.

“I know Sirius you don’t need to tell me I feel guilty enough as it is!” shouted Nick tears leaking out of his eyes.

“Guilty?” scoffed Sirius “Then why the hell did you lie about Harry being dead?!”

“Because I thought he would be,” whispered Nick brokenly, “I had no idea Voldemort would keep him alive and hurt him.”

“Unfortunately it’s not me you have to tell this to, it’s Harry you have hurt the most.” admitted Sirius wearily.

“I know,” choked Nick.

“Come here,” said Sirius bringing his broken godson into his arms, holding onto him. Nick in turn held onto Sirius as though he was his lifeline. This was what he had been wanting, someone to hold him. Someone to care about him, he just wanted someone to understand what he was going through. Not just what he had done to upset the family name or his future prospects. Nick buried himself further into his Godfather and cried bitter tears of frustration and sadness that left him an hour later feeling cathartic. Sirius soothed him the entire time, telling him it would be okay, that everything would seem better soon. That it was alright to cry, that he Sirius didn’t think any less of him for it.
Chapter 33

Invisible

Chapter 33

Conferences and visiting Pyramids

Severus, Eileen and Harry - Prince Manor - Living room

Two weeks had passed since Harry and Severus had saved Eileen. Things had been extremely busy since, of could that wouldn’t surprise anyone. Harry was currently undertaking an apprenticeship; his OWLS were coming up and currently promoting his new co-created Potion. It was a good job Harry was very good at time management. One could say Severus was responsible for that, as he’d given Harry a diary/timetable so he could succeed in keeping his time well kept. It was a good job Harry could magically erase things, since his schedule was constantly being changed. Harry was travelling to Egypt, where the next conference was going to be. Eileen of course was coming; she was doing a great deal better these days. Eating properly, and able to move much more swiftly than either men were used to seeing from her. Severus didn’t think she’d even been able to move like that when he was in his youth. They’d written a lot they had learned about the potion, the best thing about it - no side affects at all it was all positive.

“Look can we go to the Museum while we are there?” asked Harry curiously, looking up from his book on Egypt. It was ten o’clock at night and he’d be in Egypt tomorrow morning. “It’s right next door to it.”

“I’m surprised you don’t want to go see the Pyramids,” said Eileen teasingly, “I know I’ve always wanted to see them.”

“I never thought I’d get to see anything,” said Harry a wistful look on his face, “James and Lily always took us on holiday where Nick wanted to go. Mostly to the seaside holidays, like Devon and a few times to Butlin’s in the Muggle world. It was only for like five days, they didn’t pack anything for me to wear - I spent most of the time in the Caravan or they’d take me with them and forget about me. Lily spending all her time with Roxy and James with Nick.”

Severus and Eileen looked at each other a significant look on their face. Harry didn’t speak about his family often. Usually only when pushed, even at that he gave them only enough to get them off his back. Or when he was extremely angry, in fact he’d been angry when he’d revealed the worst fact of all. James and Lily had not given Harry an education. Out of everything they had done, that was what the public found the most appalling. At least the Pureblood population of the world, half blood and Muggle-born’s were in general disgusted by the fact they’d favoured one child over another. Even if that said child was the Boy-Who-Lived. Eileen looked furious, she only wished she’d hit Lily Potter where it would have hurt for a very long time. Oh she hoped she crossed paths with the red headed woman. She cared not that she’d helped her son during his bitter childhood. Severus himself was finding it difficult to even dredge up an ounce of feeling for Lily anymore. She’d been there for him in a time where he’d had no one else. Each time he learned something new, more and more memories of Lily were tarnished. She wasn’t the little girl he had befriended, who knew James Potter could have changed her so much? Or had she always been like that and he’d not seen it? Shaking his head he vowed not to think on her, she was in his past. Had been his past since he was sixteen years old, when she’d rebuffed all attempts Severus had made of reconciliation.
“Well lad, you won’t have to worry about that anymore,” said Eileen firmly her voice filled with grim determination. “You are in charge of your own destiny now; nobody not even that woman will stop you.”

“I know,” grinned Harry almost wickedly. He’d known that ever since confronting them in the Great Hall. It wasn’t until he actually spoke about what he’d done, had Harry truly realized he was free. Of James and Lily, free of Nick bloody Boy-Who-Lived Potter and most of all free of being in his shadow. He’d not realized just how free he was, and just how out of his twins shadow he would get. Here he was the youngest apprentice in history (on record anyway), youngest Potions inventor and one of the most aspired person an adult would want their own child to be. He was also one of the ‘Hottest’ Wizards in the world according to the Witch Weekly magazine.

“Maybe we should visit the Pyramids and museum it’s not like we wont have the time.” stated Severus. He’d do anything to make Harry happy; he deserved it after everything he’d been through. He had all the money he could possibly want, yet here he was, still working extraordinary hard to gain his Mastery. He never slacked, no matter how tired he was. Severus had never really respected anyone as much as he found himself respecting Harry each and every day.

“What about all those other places we can see? So much history!” said Harry he was once more buried in the book.

“We are only going for two days,” said Severus dryly, “Don’t get your hopes up.”

“How many Potions have been invented?” asked Eileen curiously.

“Five,” said Severus. “Two of them look very promising.”

“What time does the Portkey activate at?” asked Harry looking up from his book.

“Seven thirty, the time over there will be eight thirty. The Conference starts at nine so we have half an hour to get ourselves settled and to the conference.” said Severus.

“Will there be Muggles nearby again?” asked Harry curiously, they’d had to be careful where they Apparated in America. It had been a Muggle hotel; they’d had to wear a special pin so the security Auror’s knew who they were. Muggles had been sent scuttling in another direction.

“No, this is a Wizarding Hotel, it’s very secluded nobody other than us know its even there.” explained Severus. “Everyone you see is magical so you don’t have to worry.”

“Great,” said Harry, not that he had anything against them, he just preferred not having to worry that he was going to reveal magic to anyone. He had to admit the Muggles had some really tasty food. Hopefully they’d go to a nice Muggle restaurant and see what’s available there.

“Go to bed, it’s getting late and we have an early start tomorrow,” stated Severus. Despite how he’d hoped, the conference was on Monday and Tuesday, the days when Harry was supposed to be at Hogwarts. He knew Harry would make up for lost time, not that time was lost. Harry was ahead of his class, in probably everything other than Ancient Runes.

“I think I will,” said Harry, “Night.” he called out to both of them taking himself and his book up the stairs.

“I think I shall hit the trail too,” said Eileen suppressing a yawn, she might be feeling young again - but that didn’t mean she could go without sleep. She could hardly believe how well the Potion had worked, she’d never felt this energetic, this free of pain since she was a young girl. She’d always owe her boys everything for what they’d done. She’d be around to see her boys get together now,
she could only hope that they both survived the war and had a happy life together. If nothing happened to her, she’d live for at least another fifty years as was the case for all Wizards and Witches.

Severus smirked in amusement; his mother had picked that up from a friend she had made for a brief time. That said friend had been on holiday, from Scotland visiting cousins or something. Eileen had liked her a lot, Heather her name had been if he remembered correctly. They’d kept in touch for a while, until as always the letters dwindled down to nothing. Tobias had always been in a drunken stupor to notice his wife’s friend thankfully; otherwise he’d have had something to say. “Yes, goodnight mother.” said Severus absentmindedly. Watching her go he mused to himself, that this year had been the busiest in his life and he knew busy. He’d at one point been Potions Master, teaching students, brewing Potions for the hospital, Head of Slytherin house, looking after seventy students under his care. Doing rounds, schedules and being asked to Dumbledore’s office every other day it had been extremely exhausting.

Three years he’d been expectation free, brewing potions, visiting his mother and quite happily living without schedules. He’d been brewing an even more advanced version of the Wolfsbane Potion, when his mark had burned. It had shocked the hell out of him; he’d gone to Dumbledore of course. Then he’d been told about the potion Harry had created, after being told the teenager was dead. What he thought was the first casualty in the upcoming war. Then things had just gone from there, finding Harry in his mothers flat, finding out it was the Harry she spoke about all the time. Getting to Hogwarts and learning even more, about the Potters’ Harry’s life and everything in-between.

Now he had taken on an apprentice, something he had sworn not to do. Jacob had been right to be surprised, not only had he taken on an apprentice he’d taken on a Peverell or a Potter as Jacob had called him. Jacob was one of the fellow Potions Masters he had befriended during his trips to the conventions. Severus shook himself out of his thoughts and memories, and followed Harry and his mother’s idea - and decided to get some sleep.

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Harry & Severus - Potions Conference - Egypt - Cairo

“Ladies and Gentlemen may I have your attention please?!?” shouted Master Sorens, who as usual was opening the conference; he’s the one that organized each and every single one of them. He was also the owner of Potions Weekly and Monthly. So he was easily able to advertise the conferences. “I’d like to welcome you all to the seventh hundred and twenty ninth Potions Conference. To start off I’d like to introduce you to Evan McNama who’s recently just passed his Mastery and created this Potion. Give him a round of applause ladies and gentlemen, Potions Master Evan McNama from America!”

Everyone applauded as Evan took to the platform; he looked to be around twenty three years old. He was very confident as he ambled up, staring them straight in the eye. Harry felt a deep sense of respect, perhaps that’s what Severus had meant. Maybe his nervousness had made them react the way they had. Shaking off his thoughts he looked at the programme and took notes of the Potions that had been created. Evan spoke about why he’d created that Potion, how he’d created it and the downsides to it. He added a few ‘funny lines’ in, it wasn’t his kind of humour but the people there seemed to find it hilarious. Either that or they were faking it, just to make it easier on the new Potions Master. It sounded genuine though, Harry shifted it was quite interesting ten minutes in. Now it was getting rather boring, the second Potion on the programme sounded rather interesting. Harry silently prayed for the guy to stop talking, he wanted to get something to drink. At least it wasn’t Muggle money he’d need - he could use his Galleons here to get a drink.
Harry applauded politely when Evan was finished his speech, he stood up and quickly explained to Severus where he was going. Seeing he had his eyebrow raised in curiosity. “I’m going to get a drink…do you want one?” asked Harry.

“No thank you,” said Severus, shaking his head watching Harry’s progress across to the line where he waited to get his drink.

“I see another Potion from Harry on the programme Severus,” said Master James sitting down in Harry’s recently vacated chair. James too was watching Harry curiously, his blue eyes gleaming full of respect for the fifteen year old boy old before his time.

“Yes,” said Severus wryly.

“He’s very determined isn’t he? To succeed I mean?” said Master James.

“Well I think it all stems from being ignored his entire life,” confided Severus quietly.

“He’s old before his time,” stated Master James looking at the figure with slight pity.

“He’s had to murder someone in self defence that changes anyone. Not only that he was tortured by Death Eaters Rick, of course it’s going to change him.” said Severus bluntly.

“He was tortured by Death Eaters?” asked Master James, surprised by Severus’ use of his first name and stunned by what Severus revealed.

“You don’t read the Daily Prophet do you?” asked Severus dryly.

“No, I don’t.” stated Master James matter of factly, “But I think I might start.”

“It’s been rather amusing to read it, fortunately Harry doesn’t read though.” stated Severus a smirk on his face.

“How fortunate?” asked Master James blinking confusion.

“Harry isn’t aware that he’s cut the Potters off completely.” said Severus his voice filled with unholy glee.

Rick smirked in amusement, only Severus could find amusement in something like that. Then again he knew the hate Severus felt for them, in fact Rick wouldn’t blame Harry if he did know. They’d treated Harry despicably, and they deserved everything they got and more.

“What made you both brew that kind of Potion Severus? It’s rather complicated by creation standards.” said Master James.

“My mother,” said admitted Severus.

“I see…I do hope she’s okay?” questioned Master James, standing up when he noticed Harry was making his way back with a drink in his hand.

“Yes, the Potion worked fantastically,” said Severus.

“Hey,” said Harry standing there feeling very awkward.

“Harry, this is Potions Master Eric James, Eric this is Harry Peverell,” said Severus introducing them. Harry hadn’t gotten to meet the others the last time, preferring to stick with the apprentices. This time that wasn’t possible, the apprentices were sitting with their masters along the rows of
“Nice to meet you sir,” said Harry nodding his head in respect.

“Same to you, congratulations on your newest Potion.” said Eric shaking his hand.

“Thank you sir!” grinned Harry extremely pleased, a red flush spreading across his face. He wasn’t used to it yet, it seemed, being praised. Severus vowed he had better tell Harry how he was doing more often. That flush though was rather distracting, clearing his throat he shifted rather awkwardly. Severus was finding it rather hard to keep the image out of his mind - he couldn’t think of that right now. Alone tonight though would be a different matter.

“No problem, here your seat, it looks as though Soren is about to call the next apprentice up.” said Master James wryly, rolling his eyes in exaggerated exasperation he quickly made his way back to his seat.

“Are all of them new Potion Master’s?” asked Harry sitting down.

“Everyone other than yourself yes, that’s why this ones a bit more official than the others as you’ve no doubt noticed.” said Severus.

“I did notice they’re sitting together instead of the Master’s together and the Apprentices together.” said Harry nodding his head.

“Yes,” said Severus nodding his head curtly.

“Nobody is glaring at me today - that’s good.” grinned Harry.

Severus noticed that Harry was much more relaxed this time, whether it was because he knew what to expect or because as he said nobody was glaring at him this time - he didn’t know. Perhaps it was a bit of both, he needed to work on Harry’s confidence, but that would come with time. “Indeed, they wouldn’t risk it at such a formal setting.” explained Severus.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I’d like to introduce the second Potions Master to have passed today - Ardeth Mubarak from right here in Cairo.” said Soren cheering politely and everyone followed suit.

Harry blinked rapidly, Egyptian was coming from the young man’s mouth, but it translated to English over the speaker. He realized they’d obviously put a translator spell on it. It was rather cool, and Harry made a vow to look up the spell - it was rather nifty. “I have to learn that,” Harry finally whispered to Severus awe clearly on his face.

“I’ll show you it tonight,” smirked Severus keeping an ear on the presentation. This potion had caught his attention more than the others had. It was a transformation Potion; it didn’t turn you into your Animagus form. No it turned you into a cat, for a limited time. As the man continued to speak, they found out it turned you for five hours. That you could turn back if you wished, but just simply expanding your magic outwardly. It was similar to the Potion Harry wanted to create, only Harry’ was ten times more complicated. Perhaps with the basis of this Potion, Harry could finally create the Potion he desired. A Potion to give you the ability to turn into all possible Animagus forms that you have rather than just one. Of course it would only work on those who had the power and ability to change into any form. The Potion that Ardeth had created was useful for those who wanted to change into an animal but didn’t have an Animagus form.

He noticed Harry was paying a lot more attention to this potion, Severus stopped himself smiling just in time. He could almost see the clogs turning in Harry’s mind; he almost wished he could
peek in and hear what he was thinking. Harry was very passionate about Potions, probably what
was drawing him in along with his looks. He was very graceful, lithe and stunningly beautiful and
decidedly off limits. Severus forced himself to look away, reminding himself harshly that Harry
was merely a boy, and he was old enough to be the teenager’s father. The excuse was becoming
rather feeble each passing days, as he fell further and further.

The applause was much louder when Ardeth stopped speaking, nodding his head curtly he thanked
them before sitting beside his ‘Master’ who was beaming proudly at his apprentice.

“Well what did you think?” asked Severus curiously.

“It’s given me some ideas,” said Harry almost jumping up and down in glee.

“I thought it might,” said Severus sardonically a smirk pulling at his lips. “It’s why I like attending
these, not just for new ingredients, but for new ideas…you miss things when reading about them in
the Potions Weekly Magazine.”

“I noticed that, from the last conference.” said Harry nodding thoughtfully.

Severus merely nodded his head; Soren once more stood up and introduced another Potions
Master.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, give it up for another Potions Master, coming all the way from Sweden
Alfrida Skarsgard, completing her Mastery in three years,” said Soren clapping politely, gesturing
for the only female to have passed today to take to the podium.

Alfrida in rapid Sweden began speaking, telling everyone why she’d decided on this potion and
how she’d gone about creating it. She certainly got to the point; nobody could accuse her of
wasting her time. She was probably the quickest to finish, and Harry knew it was his turn. Harry
picked up his notebook and took a deep breath as Soren once more took to the podium.

“I’d like to introduce you to the youngest Apprentice the Potions community has ever seen -
creating his second Potion in the matter of a year Harry Peverell,” said Soren clapping very loudly,
louder than he had for the others making Harry gulp nervously. Instead of sitting on the chair
beside the edge of the raised platform Soren went down and sat on his seat nodding in respect that
the platform was all his.

“Hi,” said Harry nervously, but he did what Severus suggested, started them down and stood proud
and tall. “This Potion myself and Potions Master Severus Snape created basically de-aged the
bones. Which is handy for a lot of things and a lot of problems that people suffer over the years.
We created this for Eileen Snape, and we are proud to announce that there’s no side affects at all.
For all intents and purposes her bones have been completely renewed and healed. We have an idea
that it will work on those with permanent injuries that magic cannot completely heal.
Unfortunately we don’t know anyone so we could not test it, we shall just have to wait until one
comes forward after the Potion has been approved by the Potions community.” the nervousness left
Harry as he continued to speak, everyone was staring at him in awe. He didn’t look at them for
long; he kept moving his head from one side of the room to the other.

“The reason for no side affects we are assuming is because we used a lot of Herbs apposed to
actual Potion ingredients.” said Harry and he went on naming every Herb and Potion ingredient
that was used in the Potion, and how long it took them to make it. “I’d also like to thank Dobby the
House elf for his contribution, he was the one that gave me the idea to use more Herbs.” he said
seriously, wanting to giggle childishly seeing their shocked looks.
“Thank you for listening,” he said finishing nodding his head to the crowd in general before closing his book with a snap and stepping down. Harry flushed bright red when people began applauding very loudly.

“Will you brew the Potion for St. Mungo’s? There are many people curious about it! We’ve had people asking us questions regarding this potion!” said a young woman in her thirties with red hair standing up from the crowd.

Harry blinked and looked at Severus wide eyed, he wasn’t sure how to respond to that. Severus nodded his head, and he stood up “We will brew it, set up a contract and send it to me,” said Severus in his normal teacher voice.

“How sure are you that it will work on bad bone breaks?” she then asked.

“Sure enough I used it on my mother,” said Severus coolly.

“Very well,” said the woman gracefully having the nerve to blush in awkwardness realizing she had the entire halls attention.

“Ladies and Gentlemen refreshments shall be served momentarily, we shall reconvene tomorrow at nine thirty.” said Soren. Speaking from where he stood, rather than going back to the podium. “Well Severus, I think Harry here’s exceeding all expectations.” his tone was smug.

“He is,” smirked Severus seeing Harry flushing bright red.

“How about a drink?” asked Soren.

“Again I’m here with my apprentice…and he’s not able to drink for a good few years yet.” stated Severus.

“Its okay sir, I’ll go back to the Hotel with Eileen,” said Harry.

“Why don’t you both go to the Museum? I shall meet up with you in a few hours?” suggested Severus.

“Okay!” grinned Harry transforming into a normal looking fifteen year old.

“Good,” said Severus nodding at Soren to indicate he was coming, Soren quickly rounded up the others and they all decided to go for a drink. It was the only time they met up and had a drink.

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The Next Day - The Hotel - Egypt - Cairo - Harry, Eileen and Severus.

“Did you have a good time?” asked Severus sitting down looking worse for wear.

Suppressing his smirk “Yes, it was fun! I got a few things! A small gold Tutankhamen, and a sphinx and a pyramid. My favourite is the book! Its in Egyptian so I hope the spell works on writing!”

“You’re in luck, it does,” groaned Severus did Harry have to be so damn chipper? He had definitely had too much to drink yesterday. He’d completely lost track of time, he wasn’t sure how he had succeeded in getting back to the Hotel without Splinching himself. He couldn’t deny it though; he’d enjoyed himself being with like minded people.

“Great!” said Harry handing Severus a strong black coffee.
“Well today is the last day,” said Severus.

“Yep, I thought they all lasted three days?” asked Harry, he remembered Severus telling him.

“Mostly they do, not always.” said Severus quietly, sipping the coffee.

“So what will they do today? I mean everything was covered?” asked Harry.

“Mostly updating the book, congratulating them again and confirming it they’ve been approved or not.” said Severus.

“Will I get a new book?” asked Harry sitting up straighter.

“No,” smirked Severus wryly, “You only get one.”

“Oh,” said Harry well he supposed that makes sense. “So when’s the Portkey going to activate? Because I’d like to see the Pyramids before we go! I’d love to know how they did it.”

“Magic,” said Severus wryly.

“What?” asked Harry surprised by Severus’ answer.

“Magic, everything in Egyptian mythology is true, hence why a lot of them have animals heads…it was their Animagus forms…the slaves were magical obviously some of its left out. Although the Muggles think the ‘Alien’s’ helped them.” replied Severus sardonically.

“Is there a place we can go…magical place in Egypt where I can buy books about it?” asked Harry hopefully.

“Sure there is,” said Severus quietly, “If you want to visit both places we will have to be quick.”

“Oh this is going to be so fun!” said Harry hyperly.

Severus onyx eyes watched the teenager sadly, how much would Harry know if his parents had looked after him properly? Educated him as they should have done in the first place? He’d have probably already excelled more so than right now. Being denied an education had made Harry’s thirst for knowledge very strong, so much more so than being a child. It reminded him of himself, a little bit. Unfortunately Harry’s life was worse than his had been he realized. He’d had a friend and a mother who adored him. Harry had not had either of those things. Harry truly didn’t know how to be a child. He realized belatedly he couldn’t deny Harry these things, not just because he was very er…fond of him but because he’d been denied too much in his short life already.

“Go get dressed, we will leave now.” said Severus lifting himself out of the couch and going to his mothers bedroom door. When he looked back Harry was nowhere to be seen, a smile of unadulterated amusement thrummed through him.

“Mum? You awake?” asked Severus.

“What’s wrong son?” asked Eileen coming to the door fully clothed.

“How would you like to visit Cairo’s shopping centre? Harry wants too get some history books while we are here.” said Severus.

Eileen’s eyes lit up, “Of course!” said Eileen, grabbing her purse a look of smugness splashing across her features momentarily thankfully Severus didn’t see. It seems as though her son couldn’t deny Harry anything. Maybe she should suggest to Harry that he deserves a holiday - a proper one.
Somewhere very hot, after his birthday of course. Her son wouldn’t touch Harry when he was underage, no way no how. Since he couldn’t deny Harry, all she needed to do was make sure he went with him…perhaps she’d suggest herself too - just to make sure things go smoothly.

Smothering her triumphant thoughts she met Harry in the living room and they all left for Cairo’s magical shopping centre.

It was a big bustling desert full of people speaking Egyptian selling all manner of things. Severus took a few seconds to show him the translator spell, so he could bargain with them if he saw anything he liked. There weren’t many actual shops, instead just carts full of things. Harry seemed completely enthralled regardless. Harry it turned out was good at bargaining, he bought himself five books, a couple of Anubis book holders and two sets of Magical play cards and exploding snap cards. He also bought a nice Egyptian pendant (cartouche) with Luna written in Egyptian and got one for Eileen as well. And a bracelet with Neville written in Egyptian also.

“Oh Harry it’s beautiful!” exclaimed Eileen looking at Harry fondly, kissing him on the cheek and putting he gold necklace on.

Harry flushed once more but continued on, they got half way down the bustling market and decided they wanted to see the Pyramids before going to the convention then it was back home they’d have to go. Not that Harry minded Prince Manor was his home. He loved it and felt so happy there.

“They’re beautiful,” gasped Harry once they finally caught sight of the main pyramid standing from where he was right next to the sphinx. Staring at it he grinned sadly, remembering the one he’d seen in the Maze before his life had changed. Spider, he remembered of the puzzle the Sphinx had given him.

“Oh Harry it’s beautiful!” exclaimed Eileen looking at Harry fondly, kissing him on the cheek and putting he gold necklace on.

“Indeed,” said Severus.

“They are so big,” said Harry completely awed.

“They are,” said Eileen looking just as mesmerized by the sight before her as Harry. Severus as usual was completely composed, nobody other than Eileen noticed Severus was mostly looking at Harry. Which caused Eileen’s sly grin to remerge once more. The beautiful pyramids before them, years of history in those stones and on this ground. Where wizards and witches had roamed free once upon a time.

“We will be late if we don’t go now,” said Severus glancing at the Muggle watch he was wearing.

“I’m glad I know how to make photographs from memory, this is something I don’t want to forget!” exclaimed Harry, tearing his mesmerised green eyes from the sight before him.

With that said the three of them made their way back to the Apparation point that no Muggle could see. Apparating straight to the Hotel, Severus taking Harry who couldn’t apparate yet. Which reminded Severus of something, he’d been meaning to tell Harry.

“You can get your Apparation license, you are emancipated you don’t have to wait until you are seventeen.” said Severus.

“Really? Cool.” said Harry adding that to his list of things he had to do. It would be extremely handy, just in case anything happened.

They re-claimed their seats, removing the name reserves on their seats as they did so. Everyone that had created a potion had a reserved seat - it was their day after all. Eileen sat at the side beside
Severus and Harry. It wasn’t claimed after all, and if anyone tried they’d know all about it. Nobody messed with Severus Snape’s mother and lived to tell the tale.
Harry Peverell was finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with his schedule. He was getting hardly any sleep, but he refused to let that deter him. He was a teenager on a mission to better himself. He’d had to fight for everything in his life; this was just one more fight. He’d had to fight and work hard to learn to read and write to survive his so called family; he’d had to learn hard at school in hopes of being noticed which was for nothing. He’d had to work hard in Potions but that was also for nothing because the teacher always gave him ‘F’ or barely passing him. Then he’d had to fight himself though the Tri-Wizard tournament. Only to end up kidnapped, then left to die by his own flesh and blood, his twin brother. He’d had to fight and flee from the Death Eaters in hopes of surviving. Then maliciously his life took a turn for the better, the best in his opinion. Without Eileen and Severus, Harry doubted he’d have had the guts to finally stand up to his parents. Or maybe it was a combination of things, being tortured by Death Eaters, healed by someone he hardly knew, and then someone offering to go with him. To face his parents, his brother, after all was said and done. Harry desperately wanted to consume a Pepper-Up Potion, to wake himself up a little, but he couldn’t. You weren’t allowed any sort of potion in you when taking tests in the Wizarding world.

So Harry decided on the second best thing to Pepper-Up Potion - Coffee, caffeine. He’d never had coffee before coming to Prince Manor. He’d given Eileen plenty of Coffee or Teas over the years, but never really had one himself. It was six o’clock in the morning and he had to be in the Ministry in twenty minutes. The place was deadly quiet; the fires hadn’t even been lit yet.

A quiet pop alerted Harry to the fact he wasn’t alone anymore. “Harry sir would you like some breakfast?” asked Dobby, but it was obviously a statement because he had food in his hand and put it on the table.

“Actually Dobby I’m not hungry, I’m going to get my Apparation licence - can you make me some coffee?” asked Harry sitting down.

“Eat the toast, it will help settle your stomach Master Harry,” said Dobby immediately after that he popped away, but he didn’t leave for long. He popped back with a large mug of coffee and milk a minute later. He placed logs in the fire before lighting it magically and disappearing without a word.

Harry sat down, poured more milk than usual into it; he didn’t have the time to drink it as he usually did. He did as Dobby suggested and had some toast; he had it dry but left everything else on his plate. The butterflies in his belly made him unable to eat. He was worried he’d fail, sure he’d Apparated before, but that was under very grave circumstances. He’d been trying to save himself, he had succeeded. Harry really didn’t believe in himself, after his life it was completely understandable really. Looking at the watch, he realized he’d have to go, so he hastily fed his snake that was still sleeping in his tank. The snake started to stir but Harry didn’t linger, he went straight to the fireplace and used the Floo to get to the Ministry.

Standing in the hall, he looked around, it seemed like years ago since he was here, putting the Death Eaters in Azkaban or getting kissed. He looked at the information boards, figuring out where
he had to go. Finding it he made his way to the elevator, and endured the sickening rush (added to his already sick stomach) finally it stopped. He gratefully, yet clumsily made his way out of the elevator, glancing envious at those who simply walked out as if it was nothing. He shook off his irritated thoughts, and then began walking towards the office. Each door he passed seemed the same, only difference as he walked down and across the corridors were the gold plagued names and occupations on the doors. Some of them didn’t even have names on them or handles come to that. It reminded him of the Department Of Mysteries. When he’d gone to retrieve the Prophecy. He rounded yet another corner and finally came upon the area he needed, opening the door he found a lot of people sitting waiting.

Harry headed to the lone desk; it was an older Witch, who looked completely bored. “I’m here for my Apparation test.” he stated firmly.

She looked at him disbelievingly “Name?” she asked incredulously. Not believing him, he did not look seventeen, but she followed protocol.

“Harry Peverell.” he stated with confidence.

She looked down the list, and she found his name, looking along she found the time, then glanced at the clock. She nodded firmly, seeing his age and his status - emancipated. She finally recognized him; this boy was the twin brother of the boy who lived. He’d recently become the youngest Potions Apprentice/brewer in the world. Not only that he’d managed to leave his parents penniless, not that she blamed him if anything she’d read in the Prophet was true. “You are right on time, too bad everyone is not as punctual as you young man.” she told him.

“What’s the problem?” asked Harry a small frown marring his forehead.

“Harry Peverell, I’m Marcus Turner, I’ll be testing you today, come on through,” said Turner, gesturing towards the door, and both wizards left the room and into the second door. The room was
empty, with only round magical hula hoops, for what Harry guessed was for Apparating into. Turner was writing information down as he walked in, what he was writing Harry didn’t have a clue.

“Have you Apparated before today?” he asked professionally.

“Yes, once. Under extenuating circumstances.” stated Harry, hadn’t it been in the newspaper? Maybe not.

“And those were?” asked Turner curiously.

“I Apparated myself away from Voldemort and his Death Eaters in Malfoy Manor.” said Harry without emotion, he wasn’t going to let this stranger know how deeply he was still affected by what happened. He had nightmares nearly every night, and was reminded every morning or evening when he had a shower. He was scarred for life by what that bastard had done to him, he was only too glad he couldn’t do it to another - since he had been given the Dementor’s kiss. Turner flinched and his cheerful face turned ashen, regardless he began writing with his self inking quill. He had known the young man had been captured, and also somehow managed to get himself to safety. He never thought it was Apparation. It was definitely a different respond; normally people said they practiced with their parent or a mentor before coming for their tests. He asked a few more normal questions before he got down to business.

“I assume you remember the feeling of Apparating?” asked Turner.

“Yes,” said Harry quietly.

“Alright, the tests are simple enough, first things first, the magical hula’s I want you to apparate into each of them in turn.” said Turner

“Yes sir,” said Harry the butterflies were even worse now, his heart was racing why was he so nervous? He wasn’t even this nervous during his tests in his first year. He’d been so desperate to do his best, to prove to his family he could be better than his brother. Of course it was all for nothing, because they didn’t care about anything he did or didn’t do. He’d been desperate, a hurt desperate little child wanting his parent’s approval. That little boy was long gone, in place stood a young man who had approval of two people that meant more to him than anything else in the world. A young man who had turned somewhat bitter vengeful yet kind-hearted to those who had been kind to him.

“Good, take your time, try and keep within the magical lines,” said Turner stepping back, keeping in the corner watching the proceedings. Something he did every day, this was his job, what he had chosen to do. He did give the Auror’s better Apparating tips when they first joined, especially in regards to Apparating someone blindly. It was much more fun than watching (normally) seventeen year olds Apparating.

Harry calmed his erratic heartbeat, looked at the first magical hula ring at the bottom corner of the room. Concentrating on the circle, imagining himself inside it, his feet not touching any part of the out-line. With a loud crack he Apparated, opening his eyes he grinned with glee, he’d done it! And without touching the sides.

“That was well done, the crack is usually louder as well to first time Apparators,” said Turner impressed. “Now the next one.”

Harry Apparated once more, this time he was much closer to the magical line and his magic was beginning to strain slightly. Had it taken that much out of him when he escaped Malfoy manor? He
wasn’t sure he could barely remember Apparating never mind being healed. All he remembered was wishing himself away and wakening up the day after. He realized he’d have to use his magic more, or it would continue to strain.

“Two more to go,” said Turner.

Harry looked at the next one; it was next to the fireplace, the only thing that was in this empty room. Closing his eyes he concentrated, and Apparated once again, his magic straining just like before. This time his left foot was on the magical line. Harry closed his eyes; he hoped he hadn’t failed because of that. He looked at the last one and Apparated before he was told to. This time he was back in the middle where he was supposed to be.

“Are you up for one last test?” asked Turner noticing Harry was straining.

“Yes.” he said immediately and adamantly.

“Okay, I’ll apparate with you in to the Leaky Cauldron, this is the Side-Long Apparation test,” said Turner.

“Right,” said Harry, Turner stood beside him, Harry grabbed his arm firmly, closing his eyes once more, wrapping his magic around the tester he imagined the small square little garden with long brick walls, the entrance to Diagon Alley and Apparated. He opened his eyes immediately and breathed in relief - they had both gotten there and in one piece too.

“Well I believe congratulations are in order Lord Peverell, well done you passed the test,” said Turner, clipboard still in his hand. Swishing his wand in a complicated manner, approved soon appeared over the paper. Harry had passed with 98 percent, not a bad accomplishment at all. “I also believe good luck is in order for your Mastery. If you concentrate on anything like you did today, I know you will succeed.”

Harry positively beamed finally acting like the fifteen year old he was. “Thank you and please call me Harry,” said the teenager.

“Harry, congratulations, and good luck, I’m afraid I cannot stay and talk, I have others to attend to.” said Turner, shaking Harry’s hand nodding his head in the same manner Harry had earlier and Apparated away.

Harry with an unusual bounce in his step Apparated for the first time to his home - Prince Manor. He Apparated straight into the living area that they sometimes ate in. The plate he’d left lying earlier was gone, and Severus and Eileen were sitting there.

“You passed?!” squealed Eileen standing up and bringing the child into a congratulatory hug. She seemed much more excited than Harry was at passing. Harry hugged her back grinning widely, he’d done it and the butterflies were gone. He suddenly found himself very hungry and relived if not a little tired.

“Well done,” said Severus staying in his seat, a small smile playing across his face, a proud glint in his onyx eyes. “Do you need a Potion?”

“Yes, I have one in my Potions kit, I can take that then Apparate to school.” grinned Harry wickedly, no more Floo’ing to Dumbledore’s office or risk bumping into him. Dumbledore was supposed to be this great guy, and friendly to everyone. Yet he’d ignored Harry in favour of his brother for years, only paying attention when he’d saved the school during his second year. His brother was always more important, and he’d never forgive him for that. He feared the time that
Dumbledore somehow found out that Nick wasn’t the boy who lived.

“Very well,” said Severus proudly.

“Are you staying for breakfast?” asked Eileen.

“No time, I don’t want to be late,” said Harry shaking his head, “I’ll have lots of lunch with Luna and Neville.” he said to placate Eileen she was a mother hen and he loved her for it.

“I’m going to go and get Harry a cake,” said Eileen excitedly, to her son as soon as Harry was away.

Severus smirked in amusement, Eileen was all too happy to take the roll of ‘Mother’ as serious as possible. If anyone deserved it though, it was Harry, he shook his head it made him think of Lily and how bad a mother she was.

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Roxy squirreled herself away in the library again; she had never felt more alone in her entire life. She’d never wanted to cry so much either, which she had been doing regularly in Moaning Myrtles toilet - the only place she could get complete peace from the students in the school. The Gryffindor’s were all treating her the same way as her brother. It didn’t matter how many points she got them, they just treated her like a leper regardless. She’d tried to befriend some of the Ravenclaw’s that were in the library a lot, but it hadn’t worked out well. They didn’t seem to care to befriend people outside their house, apart from one of the Patil twins who had friends in both Gryffindor and Ravenclaw.

She loved her books, and she was realizing she’d made a big mistake making the hat put her in Gryffindor. At least she thought so, would the Ravenclaw’s have done the same thing? Or welcomed another brainy person in their house? She wasn’t sure, after all Luna was a good friend of Harry’s; she’d have probably made her life hell.

Swallowing thickly, she stopped the tears from swimming into her eyes, it would have been bearable of her parents had cared. Her father hadn’t written to her once, she’d not seen much of him at all, just Christmas day. Her mother didn’t invite her to her quarters, or speak to her, even if class she was treated like any normal student. Umbridge treated her like she didn’t exist; McGonagall barely gave her a second glance just like Dumbledore. She wasn’t used to being ignored, not even Neville’s brother was talking to her! And they’d been friends for years - well before they began Hogwarts.

She’d heard such stories, from both her parents at how exciting and happy they had been at Hogwarts. How happy they had both been in Gryffindor. How could they be so happy? Yet she be so damn miserable? Was it because her father used to be a bully? Was that what it took to be noticed? It certainly seemed so. Nick had been happy for four years at Hogwarts; his letters told them as much. She just wanted that, she didn’t want to be treated like Harry had been. It was awful, and for the first time in her life she was just realizing what life had been like for him. Yet she brushed it off, and blamed him for it. If their parents didn’t have to worry about money so much they wouldn’t ignore them like that.

Or course she shared her opinion with her brother.

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“What’s the matter with you? You seem a lot more cheerful?” asked Remus puzzled, staring at his
friend curiously. Remus for most part was out looking for work, in the Muggle world of course. He was being paid for his work in the Order, but it wasn’t enough to live on forever. He never accepted charity from his friends, but the fact he had a place to stay with Sirius helped with rent of course.

“Nick came yesterday,” said Sirius almost smugly.

“And?” asked Remus confused, last he’d heard from Sirius he didn’t want to speak to his godson.

“I think we are working through everything,” said Sirius slightly unsure now.

“Meaning?” asked Remus curiously.

“We spoke for a few hours, I might have been a bit harsh to blame him for leaving his brother…we are forgetting he’s just a child too.” said Sirius a little grudgingly he didn’t like admitting his failures.

“Yes but you forget Harry helped him first, and he was just a few feet.” stated Remus standing up for Harry and what had happened to him.

“I know,” grumbled Sirius, “He’s my godson, I cannot abandon them both…Nick’s under a hell of a lot of pressure.”

“You abandoned Harry never Nick,” stated Remus rubbing salt into the open wound. Not that he was denying doing the exact same thing. He’d accepted blame, and wasn’t making any attempts to get Harry to accept his apology knowing he didn’t deserve it.

Sirius refused to answer his nostrils flaring slightly showing his anger at his friend.

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Nick has as usual this year, been picked on by Umbridge, and received detention for not getting the spell fast enough. None of the Gryffindor’s wanted to mess with Umbridge, and didn’t care enough to defend him. He was alone, just as he had been the entire year. Dumbledore nor McGonagall, or even his parents seem disinclined to help him against her. Nobody was willing to listen to him; he’d not spoken to anyone other than Sirius or his sister lately. His sister, she’d made him see things in a whole other light since talking to Sirius. He knew she was right, it had to be all his fault, if his parents hadn’t had to worry about money they’d be like they used to be. They would listen to him; they were just pushing him to be an Auror because it was good money. With them having none they just wanted to make sure he did have some, its why he hadn’t fought Umbridge today, just did what she asked - too bad it hadn’t worked. She’d had been as terrible as ever.

He’d avoided going to the Great Hall, instead staying in an unused classroom, he didn’t want to see Umbridge’s gloating face. Nor his mothers disapproving one, the one she’d acquired lately that had her pursing her lips at him. Something he was sure she had picked up from Professor McGonagall to scold the students without saying anything.

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“Maybe you shouldn’t go that way,” said Luna seriously, so different from her usual self.

“Why is that?” asked Harry arching an eyebrow in curiosity. It wasn’t like Luna to say things like that and it piqued his curiosity.

“I can’t say,” said Luna she didn’t like speaking about her visions just in case she made things
“Now you have my attention,” mused Harry out loud. “What’s going to happen? Am I going to be killed?” he said almost teasingly.

“No nothing as bad as that,” said Luna shaking her head, a smile on her face, she liked Monday and Tuesday’s best, because Harry was here. She didn’t have many friends, mostly because of how she was - but that couldn’t be helped. People just thought her weird and freakish; it was good they didn’t know the truth, that she was a seer. The only other person she liked was Neville, but he didn’t know she was a seer; Neville was still having lunch with his brother in the Great Hall.

“I need to go in that direction for class anyway, tell me,” said Harry cocking his head to the side, a small pout on his face.

Luna giggled at her friends antics “You’ll have a run in with your brother, and it doesn’t end well,” she finally told him.

“Does it accomplish something in the end?” asked Harry.

“Yes but not in the way you may think.” stated Luna firmly.

“Okayyy,” said Harry, suddenly feeling as though this day was just about to get even longer.

“I’ll see you tomorrow at lunch,” said Luna, “Bye.” she finished giving him a little wave as she went off in a different direction. They didn’t have classes together, although Luna had come into his class at one point to talk to him, she’d left the second the teacher came.

“Bye,” said Harry now fully alert, as he made his way towards his class.

If Harry had doubted Luna, he never would have again. As it was Harry had believed Luna, and was prepared for it. He noticed Nick in one of the unused classrooms, sat down on his backside, staring at the palm of his hand with a tortured look on his face. Part of Harry had to wonder, would he have noticed his brother if he hadn’t been told by Luna? Had his looking made this happen? Quite a curious set of questions, ones that would never be answered that was for sure. Harry nudged the door with his foot, his face impassive as he stared at his twin. Harry didn’t think he’d ever get over what his own brother had done to him. Sure they had never been close, but he had never considered saving his own ass and leaving Nick. What had driven his own brother to leaving him? He had never done anything...in fact they were in the wrong he knew that now.

“What are you doing here?” said Nick bitterly.

Harry raised an eyebrow at the bitter defensive yet biting question. “I still go to school here,” said Harry leaning against the door casually appearing unbothered by his ‘brother’s’ depressed state. Harry wasn’t bothered he was more curious than anything, especially in regards to what Luna had said.

“Go away,” snapped Nick, his anger building.

“Well something has your pants in a twist,” said Harry cocking his head to the side curiously, maybe he should go...he really wasn’t in the mood to argue or fight with him.

“Like you give a fuck,” sneered Nick an ugly look on his face.

“You’re right I don’t,” said Harry honestly, his voice going cold. He wasn’t about to stand around, he was just about to move, and leave when Nick spoke again.
“It’s all your fault anyway,” he said his voice full of resentment.

Harry stiffened, his anger lashing out furiously, which meant his magic too. As mature as he was, he was at the end of the day a teenager, a fifteen year old boy with fifteen years worth of anger he hadn’t been able to display inside of him. Which probably made him a very lethal weapon right now. “What exactly is my fault?” he shouted standing up straight glaring at his brother, taking a step forward into the room, his anger very much noticeable.

“Everything that’s happened, because of you mum and dad won’t even talk to me! They are so worried about money and it is your fault! And if they weren’t so distracted I could tell them about what Umbridge is doing to me!!! And they’d listen instead of being angry at me!” shouted Nick standing up facing his twin angry too. “Instead I’m getting detention nearly every night and she’s using a blood quill on me!”

“Oh really? Did I use the Imperious curse on her did I?” gaped Harry still trying to process exactly what Nick had just said to him. He wasn’t a part of the family…yet he was still getting blamed for everything? And what was this about having no money? He didn’t understand it at all.

“You may as well have,” snapped Nick, he knew he was blaming the wrong person, but he’d done it for so long and Roxy had made it sound so simple that he was drowning in his own denial.

“I’m to blame because you are too cowardly to fucking open your mouth and tell someone what’s going on?” shrieked Harry letting out his anger. “That’s all you’ll ever be Nick a fucking coward! You were raised one a spoiled cowardly little brat!” he was in his brothers face shaking him letting out his fury that way.

“Let go of me!” he shrieked back not wanting to hear this only because it was true.

“As for money they bloody brought that on themselves! You had to have the best of everything the second it came out. Just like the spoiled brat you are! A new professional broom every year! New chess sets, new clothes, new everything! Did you think the money would always be there?” snapped Harry furiously.

“So your parents are ignoring you huh? Welcome to my fucking world Nick!” snarled Harry his voice full of viciousness. “You are finally getting a little dose of what I’ve had to bloody put up with for years!”

“Go away,” pleaded Nick, his anger gone just pure sadness was left behind.

“Oh no, I’m not fucking going anywhere! It’s your own bloody fault; you were the one that had to start this! I’m not to blame Nick your own actions have brought you here. You left me for fucking dead in the middle of nowhere! So what? You blame me for the fact the world knows what you’re truly like huh? Too fucking bad! The truth hurts doesn’t it? But maybe now they’ll try and save their own skin and not rely on a weak link like you for safety. You are no hero, and you’ll never be one no matter what you do. You can’t blame your upbringing, if anyone has that right it’s me and I don’t. Deal with Umbridge yourself Nick, for once in your life grow a bloody set, and a spine while you are at it and fucking stand on your own two feet.” hissed Harry standing there panting in exhaustion. The argument had been strangely cathartic; his anger was gone as quickly as it had come.

Shaking his head bitterly, at his downtrodden, shaking brother he stomped out of the room. It was hard to believe they had shared the same womb for nine months, even worse still, hard to believe
they shared the same DNA. They may have grown up in the same house, but they’d not had the same upbringing. He couldn’t believe Nick had just turned around and tried to blame him for everything. He had to get out of here; his anger was building up again just thinking about him. He ran from the school, he didn’t care about the rest of his classes. He Apparated away, to think before he had gone he’d been in a good mood. Well that mood had evaporated like a boat in the Bermuda Triangle.

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Severus felt the wards vibrate slightly, someone had Apparated into the manor, that someone was Harry. He should be at school, what was he doing back so early? Concerned and curious, he used a stasis charm on it and made his way out of his lab. His mother hadn’t come back yet either, she must be waiting on the cake being made either that or she was Apparating around the world for it. She had to be for the length of time she’d been gone.

Severus walked into the living room, he could feel the magic leeching from Harry, crackling and sizzling in the air. Something or someone had gotten Harry extremely angry, angry enough to affect his magic in such a manner it must be big. Magic reacted best to emotion, if you didn’t have the right emotion for it the spells failed. The Cruciatus Curse was a prime example of how emotion effected the spells they use.

“What’s the matter?” asked Severus cautiously standing at the door.

Harry whirled around in shock, his anger draining immediately; it was as if Severus’ very presence grounded him. Made him feel safe, wanted, happy, and more inclined to think on better time’s not bad ones.

“Well?” asked Severus coming further into the room seeing the magic disappearing.

“Nick.” stated Harry as if it explained everything.

Normally it would, but Severus knew something had to have really gotten under his skin for this reaction.

“Coffee?” asked Severus “Dobby two coffee’s please quickly.” Dobby was gone as quickly as he’d appeared. “Sit down.” he told the rattled teenager.

Harry did as he was told, as he sat Dobby came back with coffee, he placed them on the table before disappearing as if sensing the tension. Severus sat down as well; his curiosity had taken over his caution ages ago. “What happened?” asked Severus taking his own cup, warming his hands; he’d been down in the Potions Lab since Harry had gone to school this morning.

“Nick blamed me for everything that’s happened,” said Harry quietly, he was exhausted, he needed sleep and desperately.

“What everything exactly?” asked Severus surprised.

“The papers, the lack of money, the fact James and Lily aren’t speaking to him,” said Harry firing off everything Nick had blamed him on. “Oh yeah, blamed ME for the fact that Umbridge was using a blood quill on the students - whatever that is.”

Severus paled making him look ill especially with the black clothes he had on. “He said blood quill?”

“Yeah,” said Harry blinking in confusion. “What is it?”
“It’s an illegal object that makes you write out lines in your own blood, it also acts as though you are cutting into your own hand. You could end up in Azkaban for using one…and she’s openly using it on Potter?” gaped Severus shocked, completely concerned about his Slytherin’s.

“I told the coward to tell someone,” snapped Harry, “But he won’t he never does.”

“Excuse me Harry, I need to tell Dumbledore, like it or not - those students don’t deserve it even Potter. Even worse she might be using them on my students, my Slytherin’s.” he said possessively. Despite the fact he hadn’t been a teacher for three years he still cared about the students that had been in his house. They would always be his children, he’d been teaching too long not to care.

“Yes sir,” said Harry immediately, feeling slightly guilty, it’s true she could be using it on others. He hadn’t even thought of that in his anger, his frustration at his brother.

“I’ll be back as soon as possible,” said Severus grabbing Floo powder and he was gone in a swirl of flames the shout of ‘Hogwarts’ Headmaster’s office’ ringing in the air.

He stepped out of the Floo, Dumbledore positively beamed at him…that was until Severus opened his mouth.

“ALBUS DUMBLEDOR!?” snarled Severus Snape, looking extremely intimidating, so much so that even Albus Dumbledore, a man who’d faced Voldemort without fear, blanched in worry, his blue eyes losing their sparkle and he gulped - loudly. His only thoughts were ‘Uh-Oh what have I done now?’ because Severus was always angry at him for one thing or another these days. Mostly about Nick Potter unfortunately there was nothing to be done about that until after the war.
Chapter 35

Invisible

Chapter 35

Reaction and Consequences

Albus gulped loudly, he’d never seen Severus like this before, not in all the years he had known him. He knew how pissed off he was, for once he was showing how angry he was, and that was a big thing for Severus. He never normally showed emotion, which normally made him appear unfeeling and to some more intimidating. Second he wasn’t pacing, which meant he was beyond furious. Severus paced when he was angry and confused, he’d done it quite a lot during his spying days. He was actually very nervous, because this anger was in fact directed at him. If those onyx eyes were anything to go on, they were flashing furiously in his direction. Albus almost wanted to sink into his seat, he’d never seen Severus like this before, and he looked as though he was going to have a stroke. The vein at the side of his head was throbbing dangerously. He was genuinely worried about the young man, who he liked to think of as a son. “Severus, sit down,” said Albus his voice a little squeakily as Severus glared even more fiercely at him half way through his sentence.

“How dare you let that…that woman into Hogwarts,” growled Severus, standing face to face with Dumbledore. His hands gripping his side of Dumbledore’s desk tightly. So hard his fingers were turning pale in some places and bright red in others. Severus was having trouble speaking through his fury. It was one of the things he hated about himself, his sometimes uncontrollable anger; it reminded him of his father. How he refrained from calling Umbridge something extremely, unsavoury he had no idea. There just wasn’t a name bad enough to describe her.

“I’ll assume you are speaking about Professor Umbridge?” asked Dumbledore calming his racing heart. Had she given Harry a fail in defence? Or perhaps detention for nothing? It didn’t seem right. Severus wouldn’t be so angry about such an insignificant little thing. Then again he was possessive of people or things he considered his own, he’d been like that even as a young boy. He knew Severus well, or as well as anyone could. Severus wasn’t a man who revealed a lot about himself, at least never intentionally.

“She’s not a professor,” snarled Severus angrily, she was not a professor; she was no ones definition of a professor. She might be hurting his Slytherin’s! Something that was not tolerated by him at all. He had not left to see them hurt! Why they hadn’t gone to Slughorn he didn’t know. They weren’t in the sixties where it was okay to belt students! Harming them was a big no, no. how Dumbledore could allow this was inconceivable to him. He couldn’t believe it, why had Dumbledore allowed it to continue? The old fool knew everything that happened at Hogwarts.

“Severus, why are you here?” asked Dumbledore, his own irritation rising, it had been one hell of a year. He had planned on using Nick to gain order members, which had spectacularly failed. He’d had to put up with the negative newspaper reports, and a family that was falling apart. Training Nick, which was instead of getting easier, it was becoming increasingly more difficult. Nick was downtrodden, ill and his magic was acting strange. By strange sometimes no magic came out of Nick’s wand. He’d seen sitting wondering what to do of course, then Severus came on through and all thoughts of Nick were swept from his mind.

“Did you know?” asked Severus his masks now up, he was angry but his fury was beginning to subside. If Dumbledore did know, that was the end of it. He would walk out of that office, and
have nothing further to do with the old fool. Before that he’d go and visit his Slytherin’s then get in
touch with their parents. Consequences be damned, the old fool can be removed from his position
for all he cared. Nobody hurt his Slytherin’s, or allowed it for the greater good. His Slytherin’s
meant more to him than Dumbledore, at the end of the day.

“Did I know what?” asked Dumbledore, he was being judged by Severus, he didn’t like it. He
knew he’d made some bad mistakes, and he had spent his entire life atoning for them. He did not
like a man who’d made his own mistakes judging him like that, whether he thought of him as a son
or not.

“Umbridge is using a Blood quill on MY students,” said Severus, well he didn’t know that for sure
but he’d put his money on it. Another thing they weren’t his students either, he had retired. Severus
didn’t see it that way, to him they would always be his students, at least until the ones he taught
even as first years, had graduated Hogwarts. Severus was really relieved seeing all the colour drain
from Dumbledore’s face. It meant he did not know liars couldn’t pale on the spot, not even the
great Albus Dumbledore. Which meant the old fool didn’t know, and Severus felt himself warming
back up to him, just a little.

“What?” spluttered Albus Dumbledore, unable to believe what Severus had just said. He was
anything but deaf; he knew what Severus had said he just found it difficult to believe. Had the
students gone so far that they didn’t trust him? To come to him with their problems.

“Oh that’s not all, you’re precious ‘Boy who lived’ was being tortured by her as well.” sneered
Severus taking great satisfaction in Dumbledore looking sick. Understanding and devastation
suddenly flashed over Dumbledore’s features. Feeling particularly vicious and happy about it he
watched Dumbledore in feral satisfaction.

“Nick?” croaked Dumbledore; well it seemed he wasn’t such a great mentor if Nick didn’t come to
him. He had obviously not gone to his parents, nothing was going as planned. Blood loss that was
causing Nick’s magic to go haywire, especially if she had been doing it since the beginning of the
year. Nick was supposed to trust him above all else, everyone else. He failed to note how
sarcastically Severus had called Nick the ‘Boy who lived’ so much sarcasm and scorn in the words.

“Oh yes, now you had better deal with this Albus, before I do.” said Severus, and that was a
promise. If he found out any of his Slytherin’s had been touched, Umbridge had better well be
away from the school or she’d figure out why his Slytherin’s had liked him. It was because he
defended them so viciously, and always, always took their side because there was nobody else to
do it.

“Do not do anything rash Severus,” said Albus gathering his scattered wits. He had a teacher to
deal with, and he’d be damned if he let her remain. Why hadn’t his students come to him? Had he
been that unapproachable this year? He didn’t like to think so. “I shall alert Filius, Pomona and
Minerva.” his twinkle noticeably absent. He didn’t bother offering to speak to Slughorn, he was
under no delusions - Severus was going down to the Slytherin Common room. He obviously
wanted to know his Slytherin’s were okay.

“I’ll speak to my Slytherin’s,” said Severus coolly, looking aloofly at Dumbledore. Knowing or not
he’d let it happen in his own school. He was obviously loosing his touch, and if he continued he
shouldn’t be Headmaster.

“Very well Severus,” said Albus tiredly, “Leave Umbridge to the Ministry.” the warning in his
voice was clear. It wasn’t worth his small revenge on the woman; even he wouldn’t be able to keep
Severus from Azkaban if he did anything. It’s not as if he was still spying for the good of the light.
Too bad Severus had never been scared of Albus Dumbledore. After facing Voldemort all those
times, nobody could really blame him. Voldemort was more likely to kill you than Dumbledore ever would.

Severus didn’t say a word as he left the Headmaster’s office and practically glided down to Slytherin common room. It was rather odd to say the least, to see the halls bare, nary a soul in sight. It seemed as though Umbridge had more of an affect at Hogwarts than it seemed. No student wanted to remain cooped up in the common room unless they had to. It seemed as though the Common rooms had become a safe heaven from the witch, it made Severus seethe even more.

“Open,” demanded Severus, to the portrait, who thankfully liked him enough to open without needing the password. Severus entered the common room, and at once it became hushed, then everyone simultaneously began talking, asking questions. The most often one, asking if he was coming back. It warmed Severus’ heart to hear it, not many missed him he’d bet. Especially the Gryffindor’s.

“Students, I have a very important question to ask, all I demand in return is honesty. You do all still follow the rules I put up don’t you?” he asked sternly.

“Yes sir,” chorused the students together staring at their Ex-Head of house solemnly. Something had obviously happened to cause him to come here, and it was obviously important judging by his voice.

“Step forward if you’ve had detention with Dolores Umbridge,” said Severus his voice had warned no disobedience. He stared at each of them in turn, looking for signs of hesitance or guilt. “Now!” he barked in impatience.

Daphne Greengrass was the first to step forward, her face growing uncomfortably hot at the sudden attention she was receiving. “Blaise Zabini has been too, he’s up in the dorm.” she admitted quietly. Soon a few more people stepped forward; it was mostly the females that had been picked on. Tracy Davis and of course Millicent Bulstrode. Severus was even more furious than when he’d first Floo’d over to Dumbledore’s office.

“Why did none of you tell Slughorn?” asked Severus his fury evident.

Everyone in the room turned around to stare at either, Malfoy, Crabbe, Goyle, Pansy Parkinson, Warrington and Montague. Severus’ eyes narrowed they had something to do with it? This was against every rule he had created for his Slytherin’s if what he suspected was true. He noticed they looked guilty, extremely uncomfortable and decidedly sick.

“Speak up or one hundred points will be removed now.” snapped Severus, and every student knew he would. Severus always kept his words, it was the one thing his Slytherin’s would never forget about him.

“What they mean is they’ve been chosen by Umbridge to be part of her Inquisitorial Squad. They’ve been helping Umbridge terrorise the school, and us.” said Blaise coming from down the boy’s staircase.

Severus looked ready to explode, the culprits tried to fade even more into the background.

“Has she used the Blood quill on you?” he asked the students who’d had detention with her.

They nodded as one, wincing in remembrance.

“Then wait outside the common room please,” said Severus, once the students had left the common room, Severus stood staring at the so called ‘Inquisitorial squad’ his feelings very clear.
“Don’t you have something to do?” he asked the innocent students, who all practically ran for their dorms, or so it seemed. Severus wouldn’t be surprised if they stayed nearby to hear him rip into the students still standing there looking extremely nervous and sick.

“Tell me the three main rules of Slytherin,” said Severus stalking forward looking very intimidating.

“Look af-after your own.” whispered Pansy the first to cave her eyes wide with terror.

“And?” demanded Severus his voice louder now.

“Always help a Slytherin in need first,” said Malfoy his face paler than normal.
“Slytherin is our family, and we should always stick by them,” said Montague; they basically all said the same thing.

“Have you been following them?” hissed Severus.

“No sir,” said the students.

“You should thank your lucky stars I am not you’re head of house any longer. However, I shall ensure Professor Slughorn deals with you appropriately.” snapped Severus, twirling around he left the students almost falling to the floor in relief that he was finally gone.

“Come,” said Severus finally out of Slytherin common room, he noticed they were ruffled, they’d been listening in on the conversation. Smirking in amusement, he quickly ushered them up the stairs and into Dumbledore’s office. Inside there were many students, from all houses standing around Dumbledore’s desk. Dumbledore looked completely defeated by the amount of students standing around him. He noticed one student absent - Nicolas Potter.

“What’s happening?” asked Severus smoothly standing beside Minerva, Filius and Pomona without awkwardness.

“Madam Bones is coming over once she’s looked through the files, Umbridge is claiming she had the appropriate permission.” said Minerva crisply, her claws were out; she wanted blood for the woman. Who had dared to hurt her Gryffindor’s? She was very much like Severus when it came to the children in their ‘houses’.

“Fudge?” asked Severus incredulity.

“Apparently,” said Flitwick.

“I doubt he’d risk his job,” snorted Severus in bitter amusement.

“You might have a point,” said Minerva thoughtfully, Fudge was an idiot but he wouldn’t openly risk his job by allowing that. Not something that could come back and bite him in the arse. There’s no way Cornelius was stupid enough to sign anything, no, it just wasn’t possible.

“Professor’s do we really need to be here?” asked Daphne Greengrass, seemingly speaking for all them, even the different houses.

“I am afraid students, that you are needed here,” said Dumbledore looking at them sadly, “Delores Umbridge must be punished for what she has done.” he noticed all the students in here had no ties to the Ministry, and with parents who’d been questioned with ties to Death Eaters during the first war. He did not call her Professor, like Severus had so viciously claimed - she indeed was no teacher.
“Yes sir,” chorused the students, looking even more nervous and worried now. They jumped when the Floo flared up, spitting out a group of people.

Madam Bones and five Auror’s.

“She was actually telling the truth,” said Amelia Bones, her monocle was noticeably missing. She had paperwork in her hands and she looked grim and angry, but also a tiny bit relieved her niece wasn’t among the group. She passed the paperwork to Dumbledore, who took it grimly and looked over it.

“Is there somewhere the students can get in touch with their parents? They need someone here with them while we question them.” said Shacklebolt standing forward taking control. He was the oldest Auror here so it was his duty.

“You can use this Floo,” said Dumbledore, his voice full of tiredness as he spoke with Shacklebolt, speaking to him as though he didn’t know him. The secrecy was needed, because Voldemort would personally target anyone that was in the Order. Especially with ties with the Ministry.

“Then speak to the children in my office, and the surrounding classrooms, if you should wish it.” said Minerva.

“Thank you,” said Shacklebolt nodding in her direction. The children all contacted their parents, and thankfully they were all available which made the process quite simple. Or so they thought, the poor Auror’s were forced to deal with hysterical and angry parents. Although Shacklebolt couldn’t help but be glad they had Umbridge in custody, with the look Lady Zabini had in her eyes.

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“SIR! We found Potter!” said Filch running into the Headmaster’s office, out of breath, with his cat in tow as usual.

“Where?” asked Dumbledore abruptly standing up, Minerva was already standing looking extremely concerned. Nick had been missing for three hours, even with the Order for all students to return to their common room had failed to bring Nick to Gryffindor.

“Sent him to the Hospital wing Headmaster, he was unconscious when I found him he was.” said Filch.

“Was he hurt?” asked Minerva her eyes wide.

“No sign Minerva,” said Filch shaking his head no.

“Well that’s something,” sighed Minerva in relief, “If you excuse me I need to check on my Gryffindor.”

“Remember you have other students as well,” said Severus scornfully. Honestly, she was dropping all her other Gryffindor’s to see to one student. Yes he was in the hospital wing, but the others needed their head of house.

“I shall take care of them Minerva,” offered Slughorn.

“No, Severus is correct, I shall go and see Poppy then return,” said Minerva, Severus was right, it wasn’t fair on them. They might not be in the Hospital wing but they didn’t deserve to be abandoned.
“Very well,” said Slughorn. He was rather wary of Severus, who he’d just gotten berated at like a five year old. For not keeping the Slytherin’s in order, and upholding the rules. Severus was no longer the student he’d had taught, he was a fully grown and down right scary wizard. Slughorn hoped never to experience it again. Magic had leched off him, his anger and intensity shown by that simple fact.

“I shall accompany you Minerva,” said Dumbledore, “Filch get Professor Potter.”

“Yes Headmaster,” said Filch in agreement before running out of the office, to do the Headmaster’s bidding. Albus was the one person Filch never spoke nasty about, he’d cared enough to give him a position here at Hogwarts. Despite the fact he didn’t have magic, despite the protests his so called ‘family’ gave.

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Five hours later, the Auror’s were finally done, the parents were back home, and the students were back in their common room. The conversations were finally over, and everyone was extremely tired. Outside the school, darkness had long since descended and rain beat of the old building as if washing away Umbridge’s stench.

“How long do you think she will get?” asked Minerva sipping a Scottish whiskey, Muggle variety she liked so much. She nibbled on the Scottish shortbread, it was her weakness she absolutely adored them.

“Illegal object, underage children, I’d say she will receive ten years minimum,” said Severus, Wizarding children were cherished since there were so little of them. On the British Isles at least anyway. You could get ten years for using magic in front of Muggles; she might end up getting a longer sentence. Especially with these dark days descending upon them.

“I hope she gets longer,” said Minerva maliciously.

“She could,” agreed Severus, “But is it safe?” he mused mostly to himself rather than the room.

“Security has been increased, as you well know, I don’t think Voldemort could break out his followers.” said Dumbledore.

“The Dementor’s should have been removed.” argued Severus.

“They should have, but there’s only so much we can do. We have increased the Auror’s stationed in Azkaban should the worst happen.” said Dumbledore.

“Albus! Where’s my son?” asked James tumbling through the Floo looking old and ashen. It seemed as though word had just reached him, of what had happened.

“He’s in the hospital wing, Lily is with him,” soothed Dumbledore.

James gulp, before nodding warily and then he bolted from the Headmaster’s office and all the way to the Hospital wing. Out of breath, aching and sweaty he finally opened the door and entered the room. The situation finally sunk in as he saw his son lying on the bed, as pale as the sheets that covered him. The guilt crippled him, causing him to fall to his knees. He was a failure as a father; Harry had disowned himself, and left them completely penniless. He realized now it was probably his own fault, he’d brought it on himself. As situation after situation that he remembered his son in flashed before his eyes. His son not even being educated, completely forgetting him, in his aid to make sure Nick got the best one. Harry asking for a cat as a child, then him getting Nick one the second he asked for it. Then Harry asking for a familiar to go to Hogwarts with, and him saying to
use Nicks. He’s failed Harry, and he finally understood it. His failures over his son this year also
came back to haunt him. He’d only tried to better his son, so when the time came he had a chance
against Voldemort. In his bid to do so, he had ignored his son, bullied him and now…he was so
pale and unconscious on that hospital wing bed…and he prayed it had nothing to do with him.

“How is he Poppy?” rasped James, finally getting off the stone floor his face full of shame and
defeat.

“He’s suffering from dehydration; his throat is damaged through excessively being sick. He’s also
suffering from blood loss, the most concerning thing of all is his magical reserves are none
existent. Do not use magic near or on him, or I’m afraid we will lose him.” said Poppy
professionally.

“W-what does that mean?” croaked James his eyes wide with fear for his son.

Lily just remained quiet her eyes red rimmed, and puffy and glossy as if she’d been crying for
hours.

“It means these times are crucial,” said Poppy honestly.

“Or what?” asked James licking his dry lips nervously.

“He could die, or become a squib if his magical core doesn’t replenish itself.” said Poppy quietly,
she hated giving parents bad news, this was the worst news she could give a parent.

“Squib?” choked James his green eyes bulging out of their sockets.

“He’s used his magic far beyond its capacity; his body just cannot handle it anymore. Tell me has
he been using magic during the summer holidays?” asked Poppy, she hadn’t asked Lily because
quite frankly the woman had been hysterical. Roxy had been there too, she’d had to send the girl
away, before she witnessed her mother’s complete meltdown.

“Yes,” said James confused.

“That’s why, children are given the time off to replenish their magical cores, to let them grow and
expand so we have no trouble using magic as an adult.” said Poppy her face emotionless. “It’s why
magical educations take up to seven years, if the time isn’t given off, it can lead to as you have just
seen, mental problems, exhaustion, failing magical cores, squibs and death.”

“Why didn’t Albus tell us?” asked James looking defeated.

“Because training Nick was more important,” snapped Lily bitterly.

“What happens to Nick now?” asked James ignoring Lily for the moment, he had to find out more
information about his son. His Auror training was finally coming in handy, because he was
calming down.

“He’s in a coma, all we can do is hope his magical core reconnects and starts replenishing itself.
I’ve given him a blood replenishing potion, so that’s back to normal. We have him on a drip, so he
can hydrate. The blood quill wound has been photographed and healed. I’m afraid there is nothing
more I can do for him, other than pray.” said Poppy.

James swallowed thickly; he nodded his thanks to Poppy and sat down next to his wife. Bringing
her into a hug, comforting himself as much as her, as they kept vigil over their son. He hoped and
prayed Nick came out of it, if he did he swore he’d apologize to Harry, tell him he finally
understood. That they deserved the punishment that had been heaped upon them. He finally understood why Dumbledore told them never to speak of Harry badly in his presence. Dumbledore knew they deserved it too, how stupid had he been not to have realized this?

Poppy left the infirmary to give the family some privacy. She went to her quarters, which were right next to the hospital wing. She had not been able to put a monitoring spell on Nick, so she was going to have to regularly check upon him. She set her alarm with her wand, for exactly two hours time.

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“Severus what has happened?” asked Eileen who was sitting next to the fireplace in her nightwear. He was genuinely surprised to see her, it was nearly midnight. What on earth was she doing up? She needed sleep, she wasn’t as young as she used to be, potion or no potion.

“Where’s Harry?” asked Severus tiredly, no doubt the boy probably felt abandoned. He’d berated Minerva for the same thing he’d done to his own apprentice. Hopefully Harry would understand his Slytherin’s didn’t have anyone to speak up for them. Other than him of course.

“Sleeping, he explained to me what happened, how are you’re Slytherin’s?” asked Eileen.

“They are as well as can be expected,” said Severus quietly, his voice was sore from all the shouting he’d done that day. He had honestly forgotten how aggravated his throat could get. “How is Harry?”

“He went to bed extremely confused,” said Eileen making Severus feel guilty, “He hadn’t realized he’d cut the Potter’s off completely. He isn’t sure what to do with this information. I also reassured him that nothing Nick said was true. I also told him, that your Slytherin’s were hurt and that was the only reason you were still away. That you would do the exact same thing for him. He knows this, he told me that you had helped him in my flat after all.” she finished.

A weight lifted from Severus’ shoulders at hearing this.

“What of Nick Potter?” asked Eileen.

“It’s bad, apparently he’s suffering from malnutrition, dehydration, magical exhaustion so bad he has no reserves left. He’s in a coma, he had better stay in it if his core doesn’t reconnect.” said Severus.

“Severus!” admonished Eileen, “If he ends up a squib, you know as well as I what would happen.” she finished with more bite.

Severus deflated, “I know, all we can do is hope the spoiled brat pulls through.”

“Yes, for all concerned, especially Harry,” said Eileen, “Otherwise they will have another Nick on their hands. Not spoiled wise, but Dumbledore never learns from his mistakes. No doubt within a year Harry would end up in the same condition.”

“I know,” said Severus.

“Do you want a bit of cake? Harry simply adored his,” said Eileen.

“No, I’m exhausted I just want to sleep, since I have an early start tomorrow.” said Severus unable to contain his yawn.
“I’ll preserve it for another day then,” said Eileen.

“Go to sleep mum,” said Severus his voice laced with fondness, a fondness he’d not had for her when he was a teenager. He had just been unable to stand why she’d never used her magic on his father. Why she hadn’t taken them away from the abuse, but that was over with now, and he promised himself not to think on it.

“Very well dear, good night,” she said standing up, kissing her son on the cheek and quietly slipped out of the living room.
Severus got up earlier than normal, sitting deep in contemplation for over an hour. He knew despite what Harry said, he would still be feeling let down. He had to get Harry to understand he’d done what he had to do. Harry was at the end of the day, a teenager, and he’d never truly grown up, experiencing emotions he should have had. Instead all he had ever felt was negative feelings. He couldn’t imagine how he’d grown up; Harry never spoke about his life. He shuddered just imagining it, being ignored by your own family. Wandering around like a ghost, feeling empty. Harry hadn’t deserved that at all, he wished he’d done more than break James Potter’s nose. The fact his feelings were playing a part in this didn’t help matters any. He wasn’t a man who fell for some easily; to make matters worse it was someone who could be the age of a possible son. His ex-best friend and enemy’s son at that.

Thinking of the devil, Harry made an appearance, he looked exhausted. Harry hadn’t slept well at all. The food appeared on the table, as Harry almost fell into the chair blinking sleepily.

“How are you feeling?” asked Severus putting his empty coffee mug on the table, having just realized it was empty. He’d somehow drank the entire mug sitting there deep in thought.

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“Did you come to any conclusions?” asked Severus staring at Harry, his eyes expressed everything he felt. They were so similar to Lily’s yet so different, Lily’s never had the dark jadedness to them like Harry. Harry had been through too much to view the world with childlike wonder and innocence.

“I’m not giving the Potters anything,” said Harry stiffening his shoulder in a way that said he believed an argument was about to come his way. “They are both working; they should get enough to survive on. I’m not about to be made feel guilty for having money. It was the other way around for years, and they didn’t give me a Knut.” Roxy and Nick had been given pocket money of course. Yet Harry? As always had been forgotten.

“Are you expecting an argument Harry?” asked Severus suppressing his amusement.

“I don’t know,” said Harry truthfully, he honestly didn’t know anymore.

“I see,” said Severus, those two words gave a lot more away than Harry liked to think. He didn’t know how things were anymore, where he stood. So he had been hurt at his actions yesterday just as he suspected.

Harry cleared off his plate, moving it away slightly and filling up a cup of coffee. He’d had some orange juice; it was time for something that will keep him awake. As he did so he wondered what he would do doing today, or if Severus was going to be going somewhere again. He knew he was being petulant, but he just wanted someone to put him first. Him against the world, but it seemed as though this person was pretty elusive to him.

“Delores Umbridge and Cornelius Fudge have been arrested,” said Severus smoothly, the paper wasn’t there yet but he’d bet his Galleons’ that was on the front page.

“Fudge?” asked Harry confused finally having his full attention on Severus.

“Yes, he approved the Blood Quills usage at Hogwarts,” said Severus smoothly. “Would you like to go?”

“Why?” asked Harry baffled, why would he want to attend their trial? They meant nothing to him.

“To see justice done, I am attending, since I was the one who made the allegations they will want to question me.” said Severus, “A few of my Slytherin’s were hurt during her bid for Power.”

Severus could see the guilt in Harry’s eyes, “It’s not your fault Harry, I certainly don’t blame you.” said Severus.

“I should have thought of the others, instead of just being vindictive.” said Harry swallowing harshly.

“After what Potter put you through, you are entitled to be vindictive do you understand me?” said Severus his voice cold and hard.

Harry slowly let out a small grin and nodded.

“Okay,” said Harry, and strangely enough - he did feel better.

“You shouldn’t feel guilty anyway, you told me straight away, it’s not as though students suffered further because of it.” said Severus.

“Yes sir,” replied Harry.
“Good morning,” said Eileen coming in she looked well rested at least one of them got a decent sleep. “You look exhausted boys; didn’t you get a nice sleep?”

“Not really,” murmured both men slightly disgruntled at how cheerful Eileen sounded.

“So what are you learning today?” she asked sitting down and as she did, yet another plate appeared, along with a fresh pot off coffee for them all.

“Reading this morning, potion in the afternoon that is if the Ministry doesn’t get in touch,” said Severus smoothly.

“Why would they get in touch? And why so soon?” asked Eileen buttering a slice of toast staring enquiringly at her son.

“They will want to know how I found out, it is the Minister of Magic they have arrested mother. They will need to have him proven innocent or guilty, and then if he isn’t guilty they will need a new Minister of Magic brought in.” said Severus, “Idiot that he is, he should never have agreed to it. This is the wrong time to be swearing in a new Minister of Magic.” it would have to be someone magically powerful, someone not susceptible to the Imperious curse - otherwise they might as well just hand over the Ministry to the Dark Lord.

“Why is that?” asked Harry confused.

“With the Dark Lord around, there won’t be many volunteers to be Minister. Those that do are either in his pocket or suicidal. Everyone knows the Ministry will be targeted; it’s just a matter of when. We need someone strong, light and able to fight off mind control.” said Severus.

“Oh.” said Harry feeling stupid, of course, Voldemort would take control if given half an opportunity. The question was though, was he ready to take such action? The man he’d met wasn’t. He was still weak, his followers weren’t exactly strong. The ones that had been strong were in Azkaban, one of course kissed. He might be gone, but Harry was reminded of him every day. He had scars that would never heal across his chest; he had to withhold a shiver just remembering the pain. They say time heals all wounds, but he’d learned from an early age it just wasn’t true. He was still scarred inwardly with what the Potter’s had done to him. What his own family had done to him. In retrospect he’d have preferred the visible scars, but preferred or not, they were there and would never heal completely.

“That’s what he was doing the last time, he wanted control the best way to do that is by gathering as many followers as possible, breaking into Azkaban, overthrowing the Ministry - and taking over Hogwarts. Once that’s done the world doesn’t stand a chance.” said Severus, he had been a Death Eater, he knew Voldemort’s plans they’d never changed. Apart from once…years ago, he’d put all plans on hold to kill a newborn child. Just because of a prophecy that stated that the child would have the power to destroy him. It might still be his plans; he might still want to kill the boy who lived, well…Nick actually since he was under a wrongful assumption. After that his plans would probably be the same again. Azkaban, the Ministry of Magic and then Hogwarts.

“Isn’t there way to make sure he can’t do that?” asked Harry simply put alarmed. He couldn’t fight the Ministry, he couldn’t fight Hogwarts either! He knew most people fighting would be either blackmailed or under the imperious curse.

“The Dark lord is too powerful, we do what we can but that’s only so much,” said Severus taking a large drink of his black coffee. It was conversations like this that brought back how little Harry realized what he was getting into. He wasn’t going to keep it from the teenager though; he needed to know, needed to be prepared to do what he must. To keep himself alive at the end of all things.
He wasn’t training Harry to defeat Voldemort, he was training him to survive and kill.

“Dumbledore has some sort of Order right?” asked Harry. He had ever intention of asking why one of them didn’t step forward and become Minister.

“How do you know about that?” enquired Severus surprised.

Harry stared at the tabletop as if contemplating whether to tell them or not, “James…used to tell stories to Nick at night. I used to listen by the door; I remember being caught one day. He just told me to go to bed, and went straight to Roxy’s room and read her the tale of the three brothers again.”

“He told him about the Order?” asked Severus did James Potter’s stupidity know no bounds.

“Yes,” said Harry baffled by Severus’ stunned question.

“Did he mention names?” asked Severus his voice still holding that stunned tone to it.

Eileen continued eating her breakfast, as she listened to her two boys talk. She didn’t interrupt them, she knew what the Order was but Severus had never gone into details about the whom, where or when. Information he said was a dangerous thing, and quite frankly Eileen understood that all to well. She also knew lack of information was just as dangerous.

“He mentioned the Bones family, Lupin, Black and Moody a lot, as well as Dumbledore of course…mostly about the fighting they’d done to keep Voldemort at bay.” said Harry.

Severus just shook his head; really he wondered how the hell Potter was alive with such stupidity at play. Then he got to another matter, “You should stop referring to him by his name.” he warned his voice full of caution.

“Why?” asked Harry his coffee was finished he poured himself another one, he was so tired he could sleep right now.

“During the last war he put a geis on his name, anyone…stupid enough to say his name was visited by Death Eaters and killed. It’s how he managed to get so many of the Order during his last reign or terror.” said Severus.

“A geis?” asked Harry he’d never heard of anything like that before.

“Yes, no matter what wards you were under, how secure your home was, it shredded all protection, wards and spells you had up. Let them right to you, now if you do use that name they will find their way here do you understand?” said Severus he wasn’t saying it to be nasty, just the plain truth.

“Unless of course it was the Fidelus charm,” Eileen inputted.

Severus nodded his head, conceding Eileen’s point.

“I understand,” said Harry, making a very big mental point not to use the name ever again. He’d rather chop of his own arms and legs than let anything happen to Eileen or Severus.

“Good,” said Severus satisfied that his point had gotten across.

“Excuse me,” said Harry getting off the chair, and hurriedly made his way out of the room his legs crossed. Neither Eileen nor Severus had to think much to realize what was going on. Harry had sat and drank three coffee’s and an orange juice - he needed the toilet and obviously desperately.
Mother and son shared an amused smirk which was wiped away when the mail came.

“Told you,” said Severus smirking wryly, there was an official looking letter from the Ministry of magic stamped urgent on it.

“Indeed,” said Eileen in mock sweetness using her son’s favourite word against him.

Severus snorted in amusement, opening the Ministry letter first, well they didn’t pussyfoot around. It was a lot sooner than he had imagined, ten o’clock, they weren’t giving people much time at all. Parents had to pick up their children from Hogwarts, sign them out for the day and get them to the Ministry in time to testify for Umbridge’s trial. As far as he knew, each parent had agreed angrily to allow their daughter or son to testify. The outcry had been loud, they weren’t happy at all, and it had mostly fallen on Dumbledore’s overly burdened shoulders. For once Severus wasn’t overly sympathetic to Dumbledore’s plight. He should have realized what was going on in his school, with all his blood ghosts and portraits keeping an eye on the place.

“Anything for me?” asked Harry, coming back in and sitting down. Severus passed over two letters, with scribbled handwriting, it was from his friends. Harry gleefully ripped them open and began reading.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” asked Harry lowering the letter looking a cross between shocked and vindictive.

“I am assuming you are talking about Nick Potter?” asked Severus lowering his own letter.

“Yes,” said Harry.

“Why would you want to know?” asked Severus arching an eyebrow.

Harry flushed darkly not wanting to admit his true feelings so he settled for “I don’t.”

“Yes you do, I told you Harry; you have a right to feel that way about them. Especially after all they have done to you.” said Severus sternly. It was the first time Harry had outright lied to him and he was actually upset about it. Another part of him wanted to rise at the flush covering Harry’s face. He looked absolutely stunning like that, he was barely able to stop himself groaning or biting his lip. That would be terribly inappropriate; he shoved the thoughts from his mind. He’d think on them later, privately when he was himself. When he didn’t have to worry about being found out.

“How bad is it?” he asked the flush leaving his face.

“It’s bad; he’s in a coma, a magical coma. His magical core has split, he’s completely drained. If it doesn’t re-attach and start replenishing itself he will be left a squib. If that happens the body could shut down in shock and he could die.” said Severus bluntly and honestly.

“Then they might find out about me,” said Harry quietly, his face pasty and white.

“They could, it would be guesswork, yes, hopefully Potter will make a full recovery.” said Severus.

“Can’t Potions help?” asked Harry almost desperately.

“Nothing can force a magical core to begin working again, it has to want to do it on its own.” said Severus. “That’s why the situation is so grave.”

Harry bit his lip, his thoughts churning with what if’s and buts.
“Don’t worry about it sweetie, if it happens it happens, you can worry then. No point in panicking and worrying needlessly,” soothed Eileen, her voice breaking through Harry’s inner panic.

“Mother is right Harry, I know it’s hard but there is no point in worrying about it at this point.” said Severus honestly. He knew regardless of what they said Harry would worry. He did it all the time; he seemed to fear being found out. Severus didn’t understand it, but he was terrified of it. One day the world would find out, that much was sure. It was inevitable.

“I’ll try,” conceded Harry.

“Good, I have to leave at ten o’clock, it’s entirely up to yourself if you want to come or not.” said Severus looking at his watch. “Until then you can read your book while I prepare a quiz for you. You should have enough time to do both if you start now.”

“Yes sir,” said Harry noticing Severus getting into ‘Potions Master’ mode and respecting that.

“Good,” said Severus.

Eileen just smiled as she finished her breakfast, she was so happy here, something she didn’t think possible. Severus had been right, everything was different now. She had new memories of her childhood home. Good memories, ones that wiped the bad ones away. She had genuinely thought she’d only last a few months here, before longing for her flat again. It wasn’t true; she loved being here, with both her boys. If only she could come up with a full proof plan of getting them together. Harry would be turning sixteen soon, she was also thinking of throwing him a party. Inviting some of the Potions Masters and their apprentice, as well as Harry’s friends. He hadn’t had a party before; all children deserved them so she’d have to do one for him.

“What are you going to do mum?” asked Severus curiously.

“I am going to read the book Harry loaned me,” said Eileen, Harry loved the books Luna had given him. Harry seemed to be getting into a lot of Muggle things; it’s why Luna had got him some books. One of them had been about Ancient Egypt and the Muggle beliefs. Harry had asked her if she would like to read one, and she had agreed there was only so much she could do.

Severus nodded and summoned some paper, quills and of course the book for Harry to read. It was well thumbed through; Severus had read it many times. He passed the book to Harry, who took it over to his ‘desk’ and began reading. He’d been doing this for almost a year now.

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It was ten to ten before they left Prince Manor, both men able to apparate there themselves. Harry had already been in the Ministry so he knew where he was going. Since passing his Apparation licence he was allowed to apparate, and Severus knew the more he did it the better he’d get. The more you Apparated, the better chance you had of Apparating somewhere you hadn’t been before successfully. Something that would come in handy during a war.

“Let’s get going,” said Severus, “Court room five.”

“This place is packed,” said Harry staring around him in amazement. It hadn’t been this filled when he came for his Apparation test the other day.

“That happens when someone like the Minister of Magic is brought up on charges,” said Severus “Especially of harming the boy who lived.” his voice was mocking.

Harry just sniggered in amusement as he had to pick up the pace - Severus was a very fast walker.
and he had longer legs than him. He bit his lip, as he stared at the Potions Masters behind. He really shouldn’t be thinking of him like that, shaking off his thoughts he caught up with the man. Lest he be tempted to keep staring and end up caught looking. It didn’t stop his thoughts wandering, temptation was a bad thing. He was just glad he could control his libido, last thing he needed was a hard on in the middle of the Ministry of magic.

“Could the Minister be innocent?” asked Harry, thinking of anything just to stop his wayward thoughts. Why was he always attracted to older men?

“No, there will be traces of his magic on the agreement; otherwise there wouldn’t be a trial. Nobody would accuse the Minister of magic without proof. It’s much too risky to do such a thing.” said Severus smoothly. He could tell by Harry’s face that he’d just asked that question. He didn’t believe the Minister could be innocent anymore than he did. It’s when he noticed the two red spots on Harry’s cheeks. He’d have done anything to read Harry’s mind, right there and then. He had to remember they were in the Ministry of magic, thoughts he was having would have to wait for later. Thankfully his rising bulge deflated causing Severus to sigh in relief. Really he hadn’t had such reactions since he’d been an adolescent boy! Thirteen years old, yet here he was unable to control his reactions to Harry.

“How long will he get if he does get put in Azkaban?” asked Harry, thankfully the heat in his cheeks had left.

“That I cannot say, I don’t usually keep track of Ministry trials, he’s the Minister of Magic though, I’d say his punishment might be worse than Umbridge’s since he’s held in a higher standard.” explained Severus.

“Yeah,” said Harry musing thoughtfully to himself. He’d only ever been to a trial once; thankfully his pensive memories had been enough. He had not been forced to sit and explain everything to a crowd of Wizards and Witches. The Wizengamot to be exact, people who were the Head of their lines. There were many places Head of houses could have seats. The Wizengamot was one of them; a seat on the board of government was another seat you could have. Then there was the rare seat on the International Confederation of wizards. Only a few families in the United Kingdom had seats on it, and it could very easily be taken away again.

Once again when they entered the room Harry noticed it wasn’t at all different from courtroom ten. Although it felt warmer, maybe because it wasn’t so far down in the bowls of the Ministry. Severus nodded to Dumbledore and took his seat; Harry of course followed him keeping his eyes down not wanting anyone to recognize him. He hated people staring at him; he’d had enough of it during the Tri-Wizard tournament. He felt as though spiders were crawling about him, that they were judging him. He didn’t know how Nick put up with it; it sickened him to his stomach.

Harry pulled out his book and began reading, if he was going to be here - might as well read to stave of the boredom.

Harry looked up when the door opened, Delores Umbridge was brought in. She looked pale and shaken, and had lost a few pounds in the last time he’d seen her. She no longer had that disgusting pink cardigan she liked to wear on. If she was arrested she wouldn’t be wearing any of that, she’d have the lovely attire all inmates wore at Azkaban on. The white and striped body suit.

She was bound to the chair the second her backside touched it, the shackles wrapping her up snugly er tightly.

“Now that the accused is present, I say we get the show on the road,” said Madam Bones standing up. “Are you ready?”
Harry knew she was speaking to Weasley, Percy Weasley who was writing down everything that was said. Why he didn’t use an enchanted quill he would never know. “Yes ma’am,” replied Percy piling the paper close to him, nodding like an eager puppy looking for approval and attention.

"The trial for Delores Jane Umbridge on the tenth of June," said Madam Bones her voice ringing around the room. Harry was watching Umbridge curiously; he wanted to know why she’d done it.

"Interrogator: Amelia Susan Bones, Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. Court Scribe Percy Ignatius Weasley and Brian Sanchez as lawyer for defence.” said Madam Bones, they were missing quite a few people, and since Fudge and Umbridge were gone she was the sole interrogator.

"So the charges!" Said Madam Bones, placing her monocle on her eye and unrolling a piece of parchment.

“Endangered Underage students,”

“Torturing students, by means of a Blood Quill”

“Using an illegal Blood Quill,”

“Causing Nicolas Potter to be magically drained and end up in a coma,”

Once she was finished with the charges she rolled the parchment back up and placed it on her desk, removing her monocle she faced Umbridge once more. “You are Delores Jane Umbridge of number two Mould-On-The- Wold are you not?”

“Yes,” said Umbridge nervously.

“Do you have anything to say about the above charges? Do you deny them?” she asked.

“I had permission, I do not deserved to be sentenced to Azkaban for something I had permission to do,” said Umbridge trying to be haughtily but failing to do so.

“So you admit to using a Blood Quill on underage students in your care?” said Madam Bones, perhaps they could save the students from having to testify after all. She could see how terrified they were, sitting beside their parents in the back of the courtroom. There was a few, who were sitting up, paying attention and very bravely staring at Umbridge with distain.

“I had permission,” she argued.

“You tortured students, you didn’t seriously think you could get away with it did you?” asked Madam Bones incredulously.

“I was given the go ahead,” said Umbridge, it seemed as though that’s all the toad like woman was going to say in her defence.

“What reason could you have for torturing any student? Never mind Nick Potter?” asked Madam Bones.

“He refused to learn, our world rests on his shoulders, and he didn’t want to do the spells I told him to.” said Umbridge.

Harry stiffened just hearing her words; he had to stop himself reacting any other way.

“Now why would you think that?” asked Madam Bones shaking her head, really? A fifteen year
old boy was supposed to end Voldemort’s reign. It was the most idiotic thing she’d ever heard in her life.

“He stopped him years ago, he has to stop him again,” said Umbridge.

“If you truly believe that then what are you going to do now? Your actions may very well have turned Nick Potter into a squib.” said Madam Bones angrily.

“It wasn’t my attention,” said Umbridge looking contrite for the first time since she entered the courtroom.

“Do you have anything further to add in your defence?” asked Madam Bones, she’d admitted it the students didn’t have to be called forth after all. She had never in her wildest dreams expected it to go so smoothly. Otherwise she wouldn’t have asked to have the students out of school and brought here.

“My actions might just save the Wizarding world, and then you’ll need to thank me.” said Umbridge drawing herself upright.

Bones stood and looked around, meeting the eye of every Wizengamot member. She could almost see the sentence staring her in the face already. Her voice high and demanding she asked "All those in favour of clearing the accused raise your hand!"

The silence was very overwhelming to say the least, Umbridge was looking around the room in confusion, why didn’t they see what she was doing was for the greater good. Without Nick being trained they were going to loose, they’d see her point sooner or later. When not even one person raised their hands she looked at her lawyer begging him with her eyes to her. Her lawyer just shook his head; there was no way she was getting out of this one. It’s why he’d not opened his mouth to say anything; he wasn’t alienating himself to defend her.

Madam Bones nodded her approval before she said "All those in favour of conviction?" her voice a little lower this time.

Harry turned around from where he sat right at the front, curiously, but he already knew what was going to happen. It was basically exactly the same at what happened at the trial he’d attended.

This time they moved instantaneous every single member raised their hand. It seemed as though they were all in approval, they wanted Umbridge to pay for her crimes against the students, and most importantly against their hero.

“I did the right thing, I don’t deserved to be imprisoned because of it!” shrieked Umbridge.

Finally the chief of the Wizengamot stood up, doing his job, he spoke softly, but everyone was able to hear him. “Delores Jane Umbridge, we herby sentence you to fourteen years in Azkaban.” said Albus Dumbledore staring at Umbridge in disapproval and anger. He’d let her be a teacher, given her a chance and in turn she’d done something unforgivable. She had no idea how true her words were, Nick was responsible for them all, and now he might be a squib or worse still die because of her stupid actions. She was receiving five years for using an illegal blood quill, and an added year for each student she’d used it on.

“NO!” she shrieked violently, as she was manhandled out of the room, to an adorning room where she received her new outfit, and was then directly sent to Azkaban.

A few seconds later a pale, shaking Minister of Magic was brought in, Cornelius Fudge was on trial now. The odds most certainly were not in his favour.
Chapter 37

The Situation As It Is

Cornelius Fudge, former Hufflepuff graduate of Hogwarts school of Witchcraft and Wizardry, sat down terrified. The manacles wrapping tightly around him. Binding him to the chair, like they did for all criminals. Not that Fudge would have gone anywhere; his entire form was shaking and his normal immaculate blonde hair messy. If he stood up unaided he’d have crumbled to the ground. His eyes were wildly looking around; you could almost see his mind trying to comprehend how to get out of this situation. Unfortunately for him, there was no way out of this. The world wanted blood for the actions against their once again golden boy.

The stares he was receiving from everyone, including the Wizengamot were making him turn a pasty white colour. He had for one second hoped, to have at least Dumbledore on his side. They had worked together, during his terms as Minister of magic. Albus had struck up a comradeship, which hadn’t stopped even when they announced Voldemort was back. That had only been because Albus had sworn he wasn’t after his job through. The old man had known him well after all. Here he was now, glaring at him, with those blue disappointed eyes. Eye’s he’d hated even as a young boy, the way they twinkled had never been natural. They were twinkling happily as if measuring you out for your coffin. They’d given him the creeps; they were no less intense now.

“Interrogator: Amelia Susan Bones, Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. Court Scribe Percy Ignatius Weasley and Brian Sanchez as lawyer for defence.” said Madam Bones, they were missing quite a few people, and since Fudge and Umbridge were bound for prison she was the sole interrogator. A new Minister and secretary would have to be found. Now that they were in a war, it wasn’t looking good. In fact the world had become a dangerous place; Fudge had royally screwed them all over. Not just Nicolas Potter, the world didn’t have a leader, without it - it would crumble. Amelia was staring at him without emotion, doing her job despite the feeling she had for the Ex- Minister of Magic.

"So the charges!" Said Madam Bones, placing her monocle on her eye and unrolling a piece of parchment. Before stating in a non judgmental voice the changes Fudge was being called upon.

"Endangered Underage students, by allowing a banned object to be used"

"Sighing off to allow Dolores Umbridge to torture students, by means of a Blood Quill"

"For handing over an illegal Blood Quill, to a member of the community" truth be told they should have been destroyed. Something she was going to have to look into, hopefully she wasn’t about to find a stash of illegal items in Fudge’s office. Damn, she realized she should have had his office and house searched. For all they knew he should be brought up on more charges.

"For being the causing Nicolas Potter is magically drained and in a coma,"

Once the changes had been called, she walked over to Kingsley Shacklebolt and Mad eye Moody. She whispered so low nobody else could overhear, even in the deadly quiet room. “I need you to search his office and house, Jasmine will get you what you need.” she said backing away. When they nodded to her, she nodded back before resuming her role as sole interrogator.
“You are Cornelius Fudge are you not?” asked Madam Bones, the Minister’s address were never known. It was much too dangerous to allow it, only the heads and secretary’s of the departments were privy to that information. All public information was expunged, including even their Hogwarts acceptance letters. Even if they didn’t live there anymore.

“Yes I am,” said Fudge licking his dry lips nervously, his mind was racing. Everyone feared Azkaban for a reason, those that didn’t - let’s just say they had to already be insane. Fudge was no means insane, but he was insanely terrified of what was coming.

“How do you plead to the charges?” asked Madam Bones, who was obviously not playing around. Normally she’d ask a few more questions, and if they deny them or not. Brian Sanchez remained very quiet, as if trying to mould himself to the chair. He was obviously going to do nothing to defend Fudge, just as he’d done with Umbridge. Bones realized she’d have to speak to him about professionalism. Guilty or not they were right to a defence, which he wasn’t giving them.

“It’s extenuating circumstances,” said Fudge not answering, “I had a choice to make that affects us all.”

“What would that be?” asked Madam Bones dryly.

“Nick Potter needed training,” said Fudge soothingly, as if he was speaking to a toddler. His brow was still sweating rigorously, and he could do nothing about it as it ran down his face.

“And you thought you’d be the one to ensure it happened?” asked Madam Bones.

“Objection, your twisting my client’s words,” said Brian standing up, for the first time.

“Did you or did you not give Dolores Umbridge permission to use a blood quill?” asked Madam Bones nodding to Brian, before facing Fudge once more.

“I signed something,” said Fudge hesitatingly, and haltingly. He was obviously trying to buy himself some time.

“Don’t tell me you signed something without looking at it?” said Madam Bones dryly, “Exhibit A, the contract Cornelius Fudge signed, giving Dolores Umbridge permission to use a blood quill.”

Percy Weasley, hastily handed it over to the first Wizengamot member, it was passed around for them all to see.

“Did you or did you not read it?” asked Madam Bones exasperatedly.

Fudge slumped into his seat, he knew he wasn’t getting out of it, “Yes.” he admitted.

“So you did consent to the of a blood quill?” asked Madam Bones.

“Object my client has already given you an answer,” said Brian standing up once again.

“If Mr. Potter dies, both yourself and Umbridge will be brought back on murder charges.” said Madam Bones, “Now since we have a confession, I suggest we get this meeting over with.” unlike the Muggle world, they didn’t take days to deliberate. The Wizengamot had a decision to make, within an hour. Even less if they used Veritaserum, which was only used in the worst cases. Torture, death and Murder being the three worst case scenarios that the truth potion was used for.

Amelia Bones looked around, staring into the eyes of every Wizengamot member. She could almost see the sentence staring her in the face. Her voice high and demanding she asked "All those
in favour of clearing the accused raise your hand!” she never removed her eyes from them. Waiting with bated breath, for a sentence to be reached.

Nobody raised their hands; the silence was overwhelming to say the least. Most Wizengamot members were stuck between a rock and hard place. They knew they were potentially giving You-Know-Who the potential opening he was probably waiting for. One wrong move from them could see him taking over the Ministry, without them or the public realizing. Until of course as always, it was too late for them to stop. Unfortunately if they let Fudge off, it would be wrong. Their hands twitching, they kept them lowered their minds whirling with the ramifications of their actions.

“Those in favour of the accused being convicted raise your hand,” said Madam Bones her voice as always, when speaking to the Wizengamot loud. So she could be heard even at the back.

More than half of the Wizengamot members raised their hands; some of them felt the responsibility was too much. They were abstaining from the vote, but it didn’t matter. The results were obvious; Cornelius Fudge was going to Azkaban prison.

Fudge himself was sitting slumped on the seat, or rather as slumped as the restraints would allow him. His brow was no longer sweating, his face haunted and resigned. Wishing with all his might, he’d never listened to Umbridge. Now his life was over, and he was going to be in Azkaban by night end. He’d stopped his wife attending; he didn’t want attention drawn to her or his children. They were innocent in this, and he didn’t want them to see him being taken away. How he regretted that, he wanted the last thing he saw before Azkaban be her face. He’d miss her, them, terribly. At least they were safe from the war; his manor was extremely well protected. He’d made her promise not to leave once the war truly started. He might be greedy and stupid but his family meant the world to him.

“I’m surprised they aren’t here,” said Harry, lowering his book, he hadn’t paid much attention to the action going on around him. He noticed through that neither the students nor Severus had been called upon. It had been a waste of their time, although the students will be glad for the time off, and getting to see revenge dished on those who’d allowed them to be hurt.

“I doubt they’ve left the hospital wing,” said Severus dryly, aware of whom Harry was referring to. Lily and James, he never said their names if he didn’t have to.

Harry just curled his lip before disappearing behind his book again.

The Wizengamot deliberated for quite a while on Fudge’s sentence. Arguing was taking place, even by those who’d abstained from voting. They believed he deserves a harsher punishment due to the fact he was held in such a high regard. If he wasn’t punished that the people might revolt or protest. Wizarding protests were ugly things, and something the Ministry always tried to avoid. After twenty minutes of deliberating, they finally reached consensus. Albus Dumbledore, who usually ruled the meetings, was standing back letting the others decide. Now you’d imagine it would make them feel lost, without their leader. It wasn’t the case at all; they were getting on with it, seeing it through to the end. Considering all and every angle they could possibly come up with.

Once their decision was made, they removed the silencing spell before sitting forward. Their faces showing nothing, no gloating, happiness nothing just resolution.

“Has a decision been reached?” asked Madam Bones, speaking strictly, to the speaker, the leader of the Wizengamot.

“Consensus has been reached,” said Albus his normal twinkle absent as he stared at everyone over his half moon glasses. “We feel with who and what Cornelius was he must be made an example
off. We will not tolerate treason, abandonment or illegal activities from our Minister’s. We have come to the conclusion that his punishment should be doubled. The accused will be sentenced to twenty eight years in Azkaban Prison.”

Fudge paled even more if possible, unable to believe they’d doubled the sentence! He hadn’t even been the one to do anything. Swallowing thickly, twenty eight years, he’d never survive. He’d probably die in Azkaban; he’d never see his wife again.

“Can I ask for one thing?” asked Fudge his voice choked and croaked.

“What is that?” asked Madam Bones staring at Fudge in incredulity.

“May I see my wife for five minutes before I’m taken to Azkaban?” asked Fudge his voice trembling just at the mention of Azkaban.

“Very well, take him down to the cells, I shall contact her for you,” said Madam Bones.

“Thank you,” breathed Fudge in relief. For a man just condemned to Azkaban, he was remarkably calm. Madam Bones would make sure that he was watched twenty four seven. Nobody was that calm after being sentenced to twenty eight years in Azkaban.

Fudge was quickly escorted away by two Unspeakables, and the students were Portkey’d safely back to Hogwarts by Dumbledore. The room quickly emptied, and Harry couldn’t get out of their quick enough. He just wanted to brew, train and do what he needed to face Voldemort. It was hard but he realized he had to stop thinking and saying Voldemort. He had to call him something else; he didn’t want the Death Eaters to get into Prince Manor. It was his home, his safe heaven, a place where he felt more at home than anywhere else he’d ever been.

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Albus Dumbledore landed gracefully, as his students struggles to remain standing. They hadn’t even got to say goodbye to their parents properly. “I am deeply sorry I did not see what was going on in this school. I am even sorrier, that I failed each and every one of you.” he told them staring them in the eye meaning the apology from the bottom of his heart. “I am even sorrier, that you didn’t trust me enough to come to me in your hour of need.”

The students stared at the floor, contritely, feeling rather sorry for themselves despite the fact they were the one hurt. Some of them realized Dumbledore was trying to move the blame so he didn’t feel bad. Others were stupid enough to not realize what was going on, just continued to stare at the floor.

“When it comes to us Slytherin’s headmaster, we’ve learned you take the side of the teachers and students, especially the Gryffindor’s over us. Why would we come to you?” asked Zabini. He wasn’t about to be made feel as if it was all his fault.

“Then I have failed you more than I can understand,” said Albus morosely, perhaps Severus had been right all along. Maybe he truly was a prejudice old fool. “Go on, return to your common rooms, lunch will be served soon.”

“Yes sir,” chorused the students obediently, making there to their common rooms. The walk so familiar, they could do it with their eyes closed and blindfolded.

Albus watched them go extremely pensive, was that what every student thought? That he wouldn’t care if they weren’t a teacher or a Gryffindor? How far out of his reach were they? How could he rectify it? Damn he should have realized this was happening. Unfortunately he’d been too deeply
into making sure Nicolas looked up to him to realize. One plan successful and he lost his students trust. A weary sigh left his lips, the price of war weighing heavily upon his shoulders and his conscience. He trudged to the hospital wing, his mind heavy.

“How many years?” asked James Potter the second Albus stepped foot into the hospital wing. There seemed to be no sign of improvement in Nick Potter’s appearance or his monitors.

“Dolores received fourteen years, Cornelius twenty eight years,” said Dumbledore calmly.

“Good.” snarled James viciously; if he had attended he would have ended up on trial for murder. He would have killed the both of them, he almost wanted to quit as an Auror. To make a stand against the Ministry for what they’d done. Unfortunately he couldn’t, he was using up his sick days just to stay at his son’s side.

“How is he?” asked Albus taking a seat, Lily was sleeping uneasily on a chair, her head resting beside her son’s head. He could sense the magic around her, no doubt a silencing spell.

“Same.” said James swallowing past a lump that formed rapidly in his throat.

Albus stared at Nick his heart sinking some more, but he took solace that he wasn’t getting worse. James had already been pushed to the limit; Skeeters had gotten into the Hospital wing. Demandng answers and pushing him, to breaking point. James had shoved her so hard; she’d been knocked unconscious in the fall. Albus had taken her to St. Mungo’s and thankfully she remembered nothing.

“Please son,” choked James, “Please wake up, I’m so sorry, so very sorry I need you please… please wake up!” begged James Potter, to his son. The only one he really had left. Harry wouldn’t want anything to do with him, and for once James didn’t blame him. He didn’t even blame him of having to work, because he’d stolen the money. He’d spent along time thinking, about everything analyzing all his memories. He realized he’d neglected his son his entire life.

“Excuse me,” said Albus leaving the hospital to give the obviously grieving father privacy he deserved.

It wasn’t long before James was interrupted again, an hour later. Sirius and Remus entered the hospital looking drawn and haggard. James heart leapt seeing them. He missed his friends a great deal; he knew they weren’t there for him unfortunately. “Remus, Sirius…what are you doing here?” he asked weakly.

Sirius stared at his friend, he was a mess, his eyes were bloodshot and he looked as if he hadn’t slept in days. “Do you want us to leave?” asked Sirius unable to help himself. He was still very angry with James, for what he’d done to Harry. So was Remus for that matter, but it didn’t mean they stopped caring.

“No,” choked James his heart twisting unpleasantly, he’d rather a knife in the stomach than endure this torture anymore.

“How is he?” relented Sirius.

“No improvement, but Poppy is optimistic, no news is good news she says. She obviously hasn’t been in this position before.” said James bitterly, he normally really liked her, but his son was suffering, and he had to moan about something.

“Why don’t you get some sleep? Me and Sirius can keep an eye on Nick for a while.” suggested Remus quietly.
James merely shook his head, but he was going to crash and burn soon.

“The news is out, about Umbridge and Fudge.” said Sirius awkwardly, as they all sat down near Nick. Making sure not to disturb Lily, who was still sleeping away.

“She didn’t get nearly long enough,” snarled James viciously.

“I know,” said Remus angrily.

“I just don’t understand why his magical core split,” said Sirius agitated.

James stared at the floor before he admitted in a strangled voice “We trained him during the summer... Umbridge was, then me and Lily were training him during the year again. We were too worried; we didn’t even notice what we were doing to our son.”

Remus and Sirius sucked in deep harsh breaths at the admission. “Are you out of your mind? Did no one tell you what could happen?” gaped Sirius.

“Didn’t you wonder why I didn’t let you train him every day this summer but only two days out of the seven?” asked Remus his amber eyes wide in complete horror and astonishment. James and Lily had trained him even after him training Nick during the summer twice a week?

“No,” said James shaking his head, “How did you know this when even I didn’t? I had to find out after Poppy told me and I nearly killed me son!” his voice angry and self reproached.

“My mother used to preach it all the time, when my uncles and father tried to teach us new spells during the summer.” said Sirius grudgingly. He hated mentioning his father; things had been strained when he’d been sorted into Slytherin. Regardless though he’d been a Black, and he’d received the same training as Regulus. That was until he left and never looked back once. His parents were dead now, most of the Black’s were.

“I read about it,” shrugged Remus, it’s why he was always knackered during his school years. When he turned into the wolf, he was essentially using magic from his core to stay alive. It’s why he aged so much more than others his age.

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Things were tense for everyone, all of them hoping and praying Nicolas Potter would pull through. Word had got out about Umbridge’s speech; they were eating it up for breakfast the next day. They believed Umbridge, that Nicolas Potter was responsible for them all. After all if a Ministry official believed it enough to break the law... it had to be true didn’t it? Unfortunately they believed everything told to them. They seemed incapable of thinking for themselves. It probably had something to do with Dumbledore. Dumbledore supported the Ministry fully, so to the sheep out there - the Ministry couldn’t do any wrong. If the Ministry declared Lucius innocent they’d believe it. Even if they seen him in Death Eater garb, holding a dead Muggle in each hand. That wasn’t the only thing in the newspapers the day after the trial.

Cornelius Fudge, Ex- Minister Of Magic Found Dead In Cell

They’d found Cornelius Fudge dead in his cell, it looked like suicide. He’d managed to conceal a poison pill, upon his person. After an autopsy they realized it had been in his tooth. The Muggle Born’s realized he’d copied it from the old days, spies used the same thing. Just in case they were caught, they’d rather die than betray their country even under torture. It was all new to the Pureblood’s.

The newspaper after that was mostly about Nick Potter and any progress he made. Which ground
of Harry’s nerves, so much so he’d stopped reading the paper.

“Harry, how do you feel about a party sweetie?” asked Eileen, as much as she’d like to surprise him she wasn’t sure he’d like it.

“I don’t know enough people to have a party,” said Harry surprised, but his heart warmed at the thought. He loved her to pieces and for her alone, he reckoned he’d try and end this war. So she could know peace in her older age that she hadn’t as a child or young adult.

“Course you do, it doesn’t have to be anything big, just your nearest and dearest sweetie.” said Eileen, trying to convince him.

“Well…okay.” said Harry smiling at her, his green eyes twinkling blindly.

“Good.” said Eileen almost doing a dance - she’d gotten her way again.

“What’s good?” asked Severus coming in, “You did well on your quizzes, only one mistake.” he said passing over the papers, nodding his head, his onyx eyes glinting with pride.

“Brilliant,” smirked Harry accepting them, he was getting better at remembering stuff. Perhaps there had been a point to those quizzes all those times. If you train your mind enough, eventually it did what you wanted it to. Notice things you normally wouldn’t, training was a valuable thing.

“Indeed,” smirked Severus sitting down in his own eat.

“I was just suggesting a party to Harry, his birthday is fast approaching.” said Eileen, hopefully Severus hadn’t forgotten.

“I know,” said Severus, he’d been wondering what to buy on and off for a while. One month to go, he was cutting it pretty close. Now he had to make sure he didn’t buy him the same as the others would get him. Perhaps he should suggest to his mother to make a list. So nobody ended up getting him two of the same thing. It would keep her happy, his mother was always happiest when she was on the move.

“Excuse me,” said Harry, he always did when he got his quiz, he placed everything neatly in his room. He was very organized and tidy; it was a good thing where Potions Mastery comes in. untidy lab causes contamination, accidents and all sorts of nastiness. He put Severus to shame when it came to neatness, unless of course they get into something. You’d be able to tell right away. They left a trail of mess wherever they were, until they accomplished their mission. After sleeping it off for hours, they tidied up and got back to normal.

Eileen always knew when they were on to something big. It was her turn to be onto something big, she knew Harry’s friends, and he spoke about them often. Severus though would have to invite some of the Potion Apprentices and Masters. Perhaps Harry would come further out of his shell, and mingle properly with people on his own wavelength.
Chapter 38

Invisible
Chapter 38

Having A Party And A Revelation

Prince Manor had been turned into quite a magnificent sight; the house elves could take most of the credit. Even the weather had stayed beautiful for Harry’s big day. For the first time in his life, he was having a party. Balloon’s, Streamers and banners were everywhere. All of them with ‘HAPPY BIRTHDAY HARRY’ written across them. This was a day where everything was all about him, everyone he cared about had turned up. Harry had never felt more blessed in his entire life, the love he felt for Eileen was shooting up further. His brother had gotten more parties than Harry could remember. The house filled with people they barely knew, all coming just because he was ‘The-Boy-Who-Lived’ really. None of them had been really his friends, just people who he liked to boss around, steal from and they helped him feel superior. Harry had always gone to his room, avoiding the parties and people like they had the plague. He’d never been one for the spotlight, even during class or being with friends. He liked blending into the background, he was happy with that and couldn’t understand how people wanted more.

Harry had been given the day off, no apprenticeship and no school; he actually slept in until eleven o’clock. He’d never been one for sleeping in, so he did indeed surprise not only himself but Eileen and Severus. Nobody could deny though that Harry had needed it, it had rejuvenated him. He had worked so hard, trying for some absurd reason to prove himself. They’d eaten lunch and Harry finally got to open the presents from Eileen and Severus.

Severus had gotten Harry his own set of cauldrons, gold, bronze, copper and iron for different potions. Each potion reacted differently with each kind of metal and they were also good for experimenting which Harry liked doing. They had their own stirrers to go with them as well. Harry had been ecstatic, he loved his new gifts he’d wanted to go and start brewing, until of course he remembered he was having guests today. For the first time in a year his friends were all going to be in the same place, under the same roof for one afternoon.

Eileen had bought him a selection of things, some chocolates, and a variety of hot chocolates. She had noticed he had liked the set he got for Christmas, and that they were already finished. Some new dragons hide gloves, a few expensive and rare potion ingredients, she’d ordered from Knockturn Alley. As much as he loved them, he loved the chess set he got from Christmas more. The engraving on it made his heart swell every time he read it. ‘A Prince by heart’ it meant more than even all the money he had in Gringotts. He’d been so desperate for love, yet he’d given up all hope, long before he’d met her. Then life had slowly changed, someone had began paying attention to him. Asking him how his day was going and such, then she’d let him move in. Things had been good then when he became an apprentice and moved here it was even better. Now the same woman who had shown him some attention was throwing him a party. He might prefer his chess set, but Harry loved everything he got from her regardless. He knew how precious each gift was, he cherished his black own Hermes, his first gift he could remember receiving. He had thanked her a million times that afternoon.

Viktor had come bringing his current partner Lukas, only after asking Harry of course. Harry was very happy for Viktor to bring his new partner. He’d always love Viktor in his own way; they had shared something special for a brief time. He had renewed Harry’s faith in people. Out of all the people he could have, he’d chosen Harry and it had helped with his self confidence. They had
known it would end, Viktor didn’t belong in the UK, and they had a special bond though that wouldn’t change. They were both happy to remain friends, and always stayed in contact.

Fleur and her boyfriend were coming, he’d been told about him a lot. Fleur and Gary short for Garrison were neighbours. Had been friends since they were children, Gary was practically immune to the call and lure of Vela’s. Spending so much time around Fleur it was no surprise really. Gary had finally gained the courage to ask her out after she got back from Hogwarts. Cedric and Fleur had stayed friends; it was basically the same situation as Harry and Viktor, just a summer romance.

Cedric had begun dating Cho Chang, she had changed since then. She was no longer the giggly show of girl. Cedric didn’t like that so she had changed, evolved and became a quiet calm girl. Who was happy with what she had, Cedric had joined the Auror academy and had been at it a year now. He had another year before he became a newbie Auror. Normally it only required a year of training, but with the situation as it was, they put it up to two years. The Death Eaters knew a lot, and if they wanted the Auror’s to have the slightest chance, they had to know more than light magic. It was possibly the best thing Cornelius Fudge had decided, as a Minister of Magic. Cho had just finished her sixth year at Hogwarts, with one final year to go.

Then there was of course Luna his best friend and her boyfriend Neville Longbottom. They had come through the Floo, which was only open for one hour before it was being closed again. Severus took no chances when it came to their lives, the longer it was open the riskier it was. Cho and Cedric had Apparated, or rather Cedric had Apparated them there. Fleur and Gary were Portkey’d as well as Viktor and Lukas.

“Hey Harry,” squealed Fleur giving him a great big hug, “I have missed you.” she declared her French accent evident as she spoke in almost broken English. Her boyfriend stood just slightly behind her. Looking around Prince Manor in awe, he’d been told about Harry and felt as though he already knew him.

“I’ve missed you too!” said Harry he was very happy, you could see that his eyes were twinkling brightly. Eileen positively melted seeing the look on Harry’s face, all her hard work wasn’t for nothing. If anyone would appreciate the work put into it, it would be Harry.

“Hello Harry, it’s nice to finally meet you, I’ve heard a lot about you…all good I assure you,” said Gary grinning wryly, holding out his hand in introduction. Harry laughed and shook his hand nodding his head in greeting. His English was much better than Fleur’s but he still had a French accent.

“Nice to meet you too Gary, and I’ve heard a lot about you,” said Harry.

“Here, happy birthday,” said Gary handing over the large package.

“Thanks guys,” said Harry looking a little sheepish, even after these past few years he still felt awkward receiving gifts of any kind.

“Have you used the broom yet Harry?” asked Viktor making his entrance grinning in his normal happy way, his eyes and face softening as he looked at Harry. He always did, but now the passion was missing from his face. He hugged Fleur, Cedric, Luna and Neville before shaking Cho’s and Gary’s hand since he didn’t know them well enough.

“It’s brilliant!” exclaimed Harry “Very fast! It’s like riding yours.”

“Harry this is Lukas, Lukas this is Harry,” said Viktor intruding his partner to his ex.
“Hi, nice to meet you, hope you have a good time,” said Harry politely, smiling at Lukas watching the man relax. Perhaps he’d been worried that Harry wouldn’t like him or would be jealous. Either way Lukas had nothing to worry about; Viktor was simply a friend now.

“Thank you, its nice to meet you,” said Lukas his accent very thick that Harry almost had trouble understanding him.

“It’s a beautiful day what you all still doing in here? Go on outside by the pool and enjoy your afternoon!” Eileen scolded them playfully, “The house elves have set up a buffet and some nice cold drinks.”

That was how they spent their afternoon, catching up after almost a year apart. Harry though kept his t-shirt on, very self conscious about the marks that adorned his chest courteous of McNair. It was the only time he thought anything negative that afternoon, he didn’t even think about the Potter’s once. This was his damn day, and he’d be damned if even his own memories dampen the day.

Later on once it had cooled down; they got out of the pool and dried off. Harry finally opening the presents he got from his friends. Fleur had once again gotten him lots of clothes, and a new pair of dragon hide boots. Very stylish ones and he really liked them; she explained to him that everything was the latest fashion in France. They were summer clothes of course, instead of winter ones.

Viktor got him a travelling kit for his broomstick, a bag and clips to put on the bottom of the broom. Apparently the Quidditch teams used them quite a lot, although Harry didn’t quite understand why they used a broom bag instead of shrinking it and putting it in your pocket. He wasn’t about to say that though, because the gift was thoughtful. You never know when it could come in handy.

Luna got him more mystery books from the Muggle world; he had loved the other set she got him. His love for Muggle literature was well known among his close friends. He had never quite managed to get to a Muggle bookstore and buy more. Too busy with everything going on but he knew he’d love the books that Luna gave him. He wanted nothing more than to brew potions and read his books! But he also wanted to spend all the time he could with his friends. Too bad he couldn’t split himself into three.

Neville had gotten him a lot of herbs, there was an entire stack of them in quite a large box. “I didn’t buy anything, but they are all fresh from my greenhouse, if you ever need anything all you need to do is ask. My Gran let me have a green house when I first displayed magic. She didn’t care that I liked plants more, she was just proud that I was a wizard.” he said sheepishly.

“It’s the thought that counts!” insisted Harry grinning excitedly; there were quite a few he didn’t have. “I love them Neville, there’s even a few here that we don’t have.” they were all securely sealed in unbreakable jars.

“I’m glad you like them!” beamed Neville, he’d felt bad about not buying anything until now.

“I do,” he said happily. “And yours Luna thank you.” he said staring around his friends almost adoringly. He loved each and every single one of them.

“Here you go, this is from me and Cho,” said Cedric grabbing his own gift and giving it to Harry.

They were sitting outside a whole table with food still lying on it, half of its contents gone. They had been eating at it randomly during the entire afternoon; the house elves knew how to put on a spread. The day was beginning to darken into the night, yet they continued to sit and talk enjoying
themselves.

“Thanks Cedric,” said Harry, opening it to find a brand new just out defence book, it had just been put on sale today. He’d been curious about it, it was widely talked about. It seemed he wouldn’t have to buy it after all. The card he opened and found gift vouchers, six galleons to spend anywhere in Diagon Alley.

“I hope you don’t mind the gift vouchers, I’m afraid I didn’t know what to get,” said Cho, she still didn’t feel totally comfortable within their company. They had all gotten together and she had watched them all year, mostly Cedric. They were all making her feel comfortable though, and she knew she liked them. It was just that they all knew each other so well, and she didn’t. She was getting there that was the main thing. She was used to being the popular talkative one, that everyone looked too.

“You didn’t have to, but thank you.” he said for what felt like the millionth time that day.

“Its okay,” she said smiling at him kindly.

“So…anyone up for a drink?” asked Lukas bringing out a half bottle of Fire Whiskey smirking wickedly.

“This isn’t a good idea,” said Luna in a sing song voice.

“Go on then, only a few,” said Viktor, they were only teenagers once.

“Why not Luna?” asked Harry hiding his caution, he and Neville were the only ones who knew about Luna’s gift.

“You’ll all have one bad hangover in the morning,” said Luna smugly, but she also knew she had to let this play out. Something important was going to happen, so she stayed quiet and decided to have fun. She couldn’t change everything, and that’s something Harry had told her.

Harry relaxed and grinned, well he didn’t have a problem with that.

Viktor created some shot glasses as Lukas poured the drink into them. Handing them out, despite knowing that they were too young for this. Luna was only fifteen years old, the youngest of the lot. Unfortunately teenagers were always trying new things out, and didn’t always adhere to the rules.

That was how they spent the rest of their night, laughing joking, drinking and truly having fun reminiscing about their years at Hogwarts and about their friendships. Cedric and Cho where the first to leave, after all Cedric had to go to the Ministry tomorrow. The academy didn’t give you the summer off, so he was busy nearly all week.

“I’ll see you later Harry, we have to meet up more often guys, maybe for my birthday!” said Cedric loudly, he’d had a bit too much to drink. They all had actually.

“Great idea,” said Luna.

“Yeah,” agreed the others all waving Cedric off, how he managed to apparate them was anyone’s guess.

“I guess we best get going as well?” sighed Viktor, Bulgaria was two hours ahead of them, so it was already passed midnight. Viktor didn’t have a game to play but Lukas had to work.

“I really had a great time tonight,” admitted Harry, “I’ve missed you guys.”
“We’ve missed you too Harry,” said Viktor, Luna nodded in agreement.

“Ced’s right, we have to meet up more often, even if it’s just an odd weekend.” Harry told them. He was being a lot more open with his feelings than normal; Harry was usually reserved about it. Nobody could blame him, they knew how he felt but he still kept everything bottled up.

“Yes we do.” said Viktor, fishing the Portkey out of his pocket, “I’ll write soon.” he said hugging Harry, Luna and Neville once more before he and Lukas embraced and clutched the Portkey and they disappeared.

“You going to be okay?” he asked his remaining two friends.

“We’ll be fine,” said Neville grinning lopsidedly at Harry, he’d never had so much fun before.

“I guess we best call it a night,” said Harry.

“Yeah, my dad will start worrying soon, you know what he’s like.” laughed Luna wryly.

Xeno loved his daughter, she was the very reason he lived and breathed. Harry admired Xeno for that, he liked him very much he was also admittedly a tiny bit jealous. He’d have loved to have that kind of relationship with his father. He shook of his thoughts; he had no room for them tonight. He didn’t care, he was just happy for Luna; she had lost her mother so young, and seen it happening.

“Come on then,” said Harry getting to his feet, holding still as the world span around him. Okay maybe he’d had a bit too much drink, he thought to himself feeling slightly sick. He headed back into the manor, the walking decidedly too long for him he just wanted his bed. The three of them giggled randomly during the mostly silent walk, at things the others could only guess at.

“I’m going to remain for a bit okay?” she whispered to Neville so only her boyfriend could hear. “He’s going to need me.”

Neville stared at her curiously before nodding his head; he could always get answers from her tomorrow. She obviously thought it was important and that was enough for him. He just hoped it wasn’t something bad, Harry didn’t deserve that, especially on his birthday.

“Did you have a good time?” asked Eileen her face beaming in pride, as she stared at Harry.

“I did,” said Harry almost swaying sideways, and into the door.

“You’ve been drinking,” said Severus grabbing a hold of the teenager, he was genuinely surprised by this. He shouldn’t have been though; Harry was at the end of the day a sixteen year old boy, a teenager. They all did it, mostly at Hogwarts in their dorms where they couldn’t be caught by adults. Part of him was angry at Harry’s behaviour, and another part of him was actually glad he was acting like a young boy! It was ridiculous.

“Hey, Sev,” said Harry, his growth spurt had made him almost eye to eye with Severus. He was no longer the young skinny child he’d brought to his manor that was for sure. Harry loved the way Severus’ was holding him, it reminded him of the time when he’d hugged him in the Dungeon’s. When he’d been terrified of loosing Eileen. He’d had dreams of Severus holding him like this.

Severus’ stiffened at how close Harry was, even more so when Harry began kissing him. Sure he’d have loved nothing more than to return the favour, but Harry was his apprentice, only sixteen years old. Not even off age in the Wizarding world, he was a man twice his age. It wouldn’t be looked upon kindly, especially considering how young Harry actually was right now. It would have been a different matter if Harry was seventeen, legal age to do whatever he pleased, see whomever he
pleased. Part of him also rebelled at the thought because he’d taught students Harry’s age.

Harry’s drunken addled mind slowly processed the fact that Severus wasn’t kissing him back. He bit his bottom lip, his entire being going cold and he seemed to sober up immediately. Realizing what he’d done he ran from the Manor completely terrified of the repercussions of what he’d done. His terrified mind conjured up all sorts of scenario’s, from being thrown out Prince Manor and his apprenticeship stopped, to Eileen never speaking to him again.

Tears were pouring down his face as he ran until he came upon the horse’s barn. He slid inside shivering and scared. He had been strong in the face of torture, but this…this was a whole other ball game. Sitting down on the hay bales he curled up, tears continued to pour like a torrent down his face. He’d screwed everything up, why did he always screw everything up? How had things gone from being so great to royally screwed up within the space of a minute?

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“Severus! Go after him!” cried Eileen her onyx eyes wide with fear, what if he left the manor? The Death Eaters might not be really active yet but they still posed a danger. She couldn’t believe her son had acted that way. She knew how he felt! She was almost pouring her hair out in exasperation. She’d been trying to get them together for a while now, the second Harry showed his feelings her son shut down? What the hell was that all about? “Damn it Severus I know you like him too!” said the exasperated angry mother.

“He’s sixteen years old,” said Severus through gritted teeth. Only just for heavens sake, he felt bad enough having feelings for someone so young without acting on them. Even worse that Harry seemed to like him as well, it just made the situation ten times more complicated. He was at a loss of what to do; he was well out of his element and passed his comfort zone.

“Excuse me,” said Luna leaving the same way Harry had, knowing exactly where he was. She’d seen this come to pass, but she’d also realized this vision had to come true, it was the only way she saw them having the future she saw. Without Severus Harry wouldn’t have a real reason to survive the war.

She sighed sadly, the road ahead was a bumpy one, but Harry would be happy that was the main thing. Sometimes she really hated her visions, but she could never regret them. She entered the barn smiling at the horses; she truly loved all creatures big and small.

“Harry?” asked Luna walking over to him, it was dark but she knew exactly where he was.

“Luna,” croaked Harry, his face coming up looking in her direction.

“Everything will be fine, I promise,” she said, climbing onto the hay bale and hugging her best friend. He needed all the comfort he could get right now, poor Harry he was probably terrified.

“I screwed everything up,” admitted Harry the tears still falling.

“No you didn’t,” said Luna, wiping away Harry’s tears gently, “Things will work out just you wait and see.”

“How?” he asked burying himself into her side, wanting the world to fade away.

“Do you love him Harry?” asked Luna. She already knew the answer at least in the future.

“Yes,” Harry told her after a few seconds of silence.
“Enough to wait until he’s ready?” she asked him.

“What do you mean?” asked Harry his tears stopping in his confusion. Hope beginning to bloom in his heart, did Luna mean what he thought she did? Dare he hope? That he was loved? That he wasn’t about to be kicked out? That Eileen would still love him? That with one action he hadn’t destroyed everything?

“Think about it this way Harry, you are young enough to be his son, you are young enough to be his student if he was still teaching. He has morals Harry, he can’t just up and abandon them…it’s not that easy.” Luna explained, “If he asked it of you…would you wait a year?”

“I would.” said Harry quietly, his mind reeling at the information Luna was bringing to light. He was a smart boy; he understood and accepted what Luna was saying. “Does that mean I’m not about to be kicked out?” the terror was evident in his voice, making him sound so much younger than he was.

“No Harry, I’m not about to kick you out,” said Severus’ voice from the entrance of the barn, the small locator spell he’d used disappearing in front of them. He sounded exhausted and a little bit defeated. “Come, let us get back to the manor, it’s much too cold out here. Let’s get you some coffee and we need to talk.”

“Alright,” said Harry, worry squirming like a living thing inside of him, wiping away the remaining tears that Luna had missed. He took a deep breath and hoisted himself off the hay bales. Luna got up as well, and accompanied the silent boys, or men back to the Manor. She went into the sitting room, grabbed the Floo powder and smiled reassuringly at Eileen, everything would work out just fine she’d see.

“Dobby, bring some coffee and food please, I shall have mine in my room,” said Eileen once the house elf had appeared. He nodded before disappearing, Eileen then hugged Harry tightly, and reassuringly that no matter what she’d love him. Kissing him on the cheek she went up the stairs to her room. It was up to them now, no amount of meddling would work if her son didn’t let go of his stubbornness.
Chapter 39

Invisible

Chapter 39

Turning Points

Severus stood stock still at his mother's words regarding Harry; he couldn't believe he'd been that obvious about it. Harry, who was quite drunk, had just ran out after kissing him, and his mother had just urged him to go after Harry. He had thought he'd covered his attraction to Harry rather well, and he also couldn't believe his mother was encouraging it. Harry was but sixteen years old, a child, and he was a grown adult. He shouldn't have feelings for such a young boy. Though he thought that, his treacherous mind piped in with, 'When you are a hundred, it won't matter, it only does right now.' He felt extremely disgusted with himself for his reactions to Harry. It didn't help that Harry was now as tall as him and still filling out. Rather nicely if he didn't say so himself...

Cursing silently, he realized there was only one thing to do—talk to the boy and figure out what they could do. He did know he wasn't about to bed someone who was sixteen years old, and young enough to be his student. Hell, he was his student, he was teaching him everything he knew! He didn't want to lose such a good apprentice, because Harry was that. He was very dedicated to his potions, which made him more appealing in Severus' eyes. Especially if he just had a crush that would pass. Only time would really tell.

Glancing at his mother, who looked ready to tear her hair out and run after Harry herself, he put his hand up, telling her he'd sort it out without saying anything. Slipping his wand from its holster, he cast a spell to find his probably terrified apprentice. The glowing white ball emerged from his wand, then moved forward as it bobbed up and down, leading Severus to Harry. He walked out of the manor and followed it towards the stables, where he opened the door—and heard Harry speaking to...most likely Luna, so he paused.

"Does that mean I'm not about to be kicked out?" the terror was evident in his voice, making him sound so much younger than he was. Severus' heart clenched upon hearing it; he'd not heard his voice so terrified since Harry had confessed his secret, that he was the true "Boy-Who-Lived", a year ago.

"No, Harry, I'm not about to kick you out," said Severus, walking properly into the barn, the small locator spell he'd used disappearing in front of him as he noted Luna was indeed sitting beside the boy. His heart was heavy, and he just hoped Harry hadn't been set back. He'd worked so hard to undo all the damage the Potters had done by ignoring their son. "Come, let's get back into the Manor—it's much too cold out here. We'll get you some coffee, then we'll talk," added Severus, shivering in the cold. Despite it being summer, it always was cold at night.

"Alright," agreed Harry. He took a deep breath and hoisted himself off the hay bales, Luna quickly rising as well. Severus walked along side Harry, his mind working overdrive, and only barely noticing how Luna trailed behind them...with a smile on her face...Regardless, how did he handle the situation? Did he just tell Harry nothing would happen and hope he got over his crush? Even as he thought that, his heart clenched with pain. Not many people had been attracted to him, and he had never let them in. He didn't let them see the goodness in him, whereas Harry obviously did. Or was he just grateful for everything he had done and wanted to repay it that way? He wished he knew.

He slammed up his Occlumency shields as they reached the sitting room they had all started in,
stopping himself from thinking on it further. He saw Luna grab the Floo powder and give a reassuring smile to his mother. It seems he truly was idiotic. Obviously Luna Lovegood had noticed too, and she wasn't around to notice it. He felt very exposed under her gaze before she disappeared in the flash of green flames.

"Dobby, bring some coffee and food please. I shall have mine in my room," said Eileen as Harry stood there, looking vulnerable and scared. His eyes got wider and wider as each person left the room, his security blankets as it were. Before leaving, Eileen then hugged Harry tightly, words were whispered too low for Severus to hear. Kissing him on the cheek, she went up the stairs to her room. Harry's green eyes were filled with relief; he had obviously taken great comfort in whatever Eileen had said.

"Stay there, Harry," said Severus, his voice emotionless and bland as he tried to keep his own emotional turmoil from bleeding through, as he pre-emptively tried to keep the boy from running away.

Harry flinched as if he'd been struck violently. Closing his eyes for a moment, Severus opened them again and gazed at Harry, his eyes softening and showing him without saying anything that he was sorry. Harry just gulped, his eyes showing only resignation as his thoughts turned inward and depressing. Why would he think Severus could have feelings for him? His own parents hadn't loved him. Part of him, even after all these years, still felt he was unlovable. They loved Nick and Roxy just fine, it was only him who was ignored and dismissed all the time. For years he had known it was him, it had to be, or Roxy would have been ignored, too.

Severus cursed at himself as he entered his Potions Lab. He was screwing it up without actually meaning to. Opening up the potions cupboard, he selected a potion from within before closing it and leaving the lab once more. Standing at the door, he once again thought about what he should do. Did he snuff the flame Harry had for him in his heart, let him go and know that's what was best for him? Or, did he be honest and wait? Did he open himself up to being hurt again? He truly did not know what to do. His heart was being torn asunder by his emotions tonight. Unwillingly, his mind drifted towards the kiss, and a small smile found its way his face. Harry may have been drunk, but he was passionate and eager. Groaning, Severus thumped his head against the door. He didn't want to let the opportunity pass. He wanted Harry for himself, damn all consequences. If he had a chance, he was going to have to take it. He'd regret it forever if he let him go, so it was time for him to start living again, despite the war and the fact neither of them might live through it.

"Dobby?" asked Severus as he walked back up the steps into the hall. As he went, he noticed absently that the banners and streamers were all gone. Everything was being put back to normal, but it felt anything but right now. He couldn't hurt Harry, it would devastate them all, and he didn't want to crush Harry's spirit. He couldn't do worse than what his blasted disgusting parents had done.

"Yes, Sir?" asked Dobby, appearing in front of Severus, who automatically shifted to step around the House-Elf.

"I'd like some food and drinks brought to the sitting room," said Severus flippantly as he continued to walk. It didn't take Severus long to enter the sitting room again, and Harry was still standing right where he had left him. He looked defeated and devastated, making him feel ten times guiltier than he did for his earlier words.

"Here. Drink, and sit," said Severus softly, his detached tone gone to be replaced with undeniable exhaustion.

Harry took the vial. He didn't ask what was in it, he already knew. It was a standard hangover
remedy. He almost didn't want to take it, because he knew it would make him feel more awful. Unfortunately he knew he'd have to face it sooner or later. He might as well start now. Removing the cork, he quickly swallowed the potion. It began working immediately, as his headache and 'the buzz' he felt from the alcohol vanished. Sitting down as he was directed to, he refused to look at the black haired man, feeling so very foolish. He finally managed to open his mouth and apologize. "I'm sorry," choked out the boy.

"For what?" asked Severus, sitting himself down opposite the teenager. Before they went any further, he had to know. He needed to know how Harry felt, otherwise it would just complicate everything.

A pop interrupted them, though not for long, as Dobby put the large tray down beside them before disappearing without saying a word. House-Elves heard and saw things, a lot of things, because humans (wizards and witches) didn't notice their presence. They could make themselves invisible and do what they had to do without interrupting the daily lives of their Mistress and Masters. He knew what had gone down today, and he hoped Harry and Severus sorted it out. He really liked them both, and they were magically compatible for one another. Not many wizards actually met someone so magically compatible for them. He liked it here so he hoped Harry would stay, but if Harry went, he would too. Master Harry had saved him, freed him, and now he was able to do the job he loved without fear or punishment.

Harry almost moaned in agony. It seemed Severus wanted to see his humiliation all laid bare. He still couldn't look at him, terrified he'd see the disgust he'd seen all his life from his own parents. He'd never been enough for them, and he wondered if he would ever be enough for anyone. Severus knew everything about him, yet he didn't seem to care. His mind went to his scars. Could it be them that was repulsing Severus? He saw them every day and he still hated them. He often wondered as he showered if he'd get used to them. No potion he could think of could remove them; they had been made with magic.

Finally, he uttered, "You know what," his green eyes filling with tears. He closed his eyes against them, not wanting them to fall, not wanting Severus to see how much he had devastated him. Why had Luna told him things would work out if it wasn't true? No, he had more faith in Luna and her abilities. If so, what did it mean? Did Severus love him or would it come later? He'd never felt this way before, not even for Viktor. Suddenly, he realized he couldn't let this go without a fight.

Severus sighed, not enjoying having this conversation. It didn't help that Harry was obviously getting the wrong impression. He was going to have to be honest and upfront if he was going to get the answers he needed. "How long have you felt this way, Harry?" asked Severus, his voice soft yet enquiring.

Harry's eyes widened at hearing Severus' voice change, and he finally looked at Severus for the first time since entering the house. He could see that Severus was conflicted, but his heart bloomed with hope that not even Luna had been able to instill. "A while now." he reluctantly admitted, his heart pounding away in his chest so hard he began to fear he'd start having palpitations.

"You do realize nothing can happen, don't you?" asked Severus quietly, before adding quickly, "At least not while you are so young and still my apprentice."

Harry felt as though he'd been punched at the start of Severus' statement, his emotions were changing so violently he could barely keep up with them. "Why not?" he cried at the unfairness. He wasn't a little kid, he knew what he wanted. He's be Severus' apprentice for at least another three years, or so he thought. He didn't realize just how quickly he was advancing in the art of potion brewing.
"Do you not realize what would happen if I did…date you during your apprenticeship?" asked Severus. Harry was very smart, he should have thought this through, but love wasn't a thought, it was a feeling. One which people had no control over, evidently, since he had begun lusting after a sixteen-year-old. "You would have no credibility. People would not take you seriously. You would be lucky if you got anything published, as they would be under the wrongful assumption that I had gone easy on you because of our relationship."

"Oh," was all the teenager could say. Harry wondered why he sensed a but, or another reason...He didn't have to wonder long.

"Then there's the fact that I am old enough to be your father, Harry," said Severus, tensing slightly as he finally came to the heart of the discussion. "I do like you, but it's against my better judgement. I do not like the fact that I am attracted to a sixteen-year-old. If this is not a passing crush, then perhaps we can come to an arrangement once you are officially of age." There, he'd said it. He'd admitted it, and it was all down to Harry now. Could the teenager wait a year? And see what they could do together? Or not.

"But I won't be finished my apprenticeship when I'm seventeen," was all Harry was able to say, as his mind screeched at the top of its lungs, dancing around in his head, 'He likes me! He likes me! Luna was right.'

Severus choked—the thought alone was laughable, as apprenticeships lasted two to three years. Unless, of course, they did not create a potion to officially come into their own as an independent brewer. He knew already that this wasn't going to be a problem; Harry had already created a potion which had saved his mother's life! No, Harry was going to do very well and be a successful brewer, and go on to create some very impressive potions. To brew a potion yourself you had to have motivation, an imagination, the will to create and keep at it, pushing it until you succeeded. How Harry had all those things when he'd been repeatedly crushed by his family and brother he did not know.

"Harry, you have surpassed what I could have imagined. Your thirst to prove yourself has paid off. The papers have penned you the next youngest Potions Master, and they are right. By this time next year you will be ready to take your Mastery tests and create your official Mastery potion. I doubt there will be anyone who could hope to take the title from you...not while we are alive." Severus didn't mind giving up the title, not to a worthy individual such as Harry. If he'd simply heard of it, he'd have been furious to have been shown up by a Potter. Things were different though, Harry wasn't a Potter, and the Potters were the ones who were going to be furious.

Harry felt a warm flush spreading across his body. Any compliment like that always made him feel warm and tingly inside. He wasn't used to them, and to hear them from Severus...meant the world. He knew Severus didn't lie, had never lied, and didn't suspect he ever would. He told the truth for better or for worse. He'd be a Master by next year! He could hardly believe it. He could wait, would wait, for Severus. It would be worth it. He didn't just want Severus for his body or mind, but for who he was, how he made him feel. Nothing compared to him, not even Viktor. Although he would always be grateful for Viktor, because without Viktor he would never have gotten up the courage to emancipate himself from his family, nor had the courage, drunk or not, to act on his feelings for Severus. Part of him didn't understand Severus' reluctance to commit until he was older. What difference did a year make? Regardless of whether he understood or not, he'd do it.

"I'll wait," agreed Harry, his face sincere and solemn as he spoke. It conveyed the depth of his love for the man sitting across from him.

"We'll see," said Severus wryly, glad the conversation was over. "Now drink, eat, and bed."
Harry did so eagerly, finding himself extremely ravenous as he dug into his sponge cake and drank his coffee. That was when a thought struck him, and he knew he had to speak his mind or it would haunt him. "You aren't saying this out of pity are you?" he asked, his face contorted in horror.

"Mr. Peverell, do I strike you as a fool?" asked Severus, his nostrils flaring in anger.

"No," said Harry sheepishly. He knew nothing and nobody could make Severus do something he didn't want to do. Despite his words, Harry felt extremely relieved. He had his answer, whether his question had been stupid or not.

"Good," said Severus, his voice still curt, but he had relaxed somewhat. Honestly, did Harry think he was some idiot who wore his heart on his sleeve or promised someone something out of pity? He was relieved to see that Harry felt stupid over his question. Shaking his head in exasperation, he finished off his coffee, eager for bed after the tiring conversation. He had a lot of things he had to think through, including if he'd done the right thing. Whether he had or not, he's made his bed, he'd have to lie in it eventually. He felt Harry deserved better, better than him, a grouchy ex-Death Eater whose crimes were longer than his own arms. Yet, he knew even now that he wouldn't willingly give Harry up. He was a possessive man, and stronger and older men than him wouldn't have been able to say no to Harry. He was, simply put, a delicacy, stunningly gorgeous and so very different from his twin it was laughable to call them as such. Nick looked and acted like a sixteen year old; Harry looked and acted like a twenty year old or older, just to start.

Placing his cup down, he stood up and told Harry, "Go to bed."

"I will," said Harry, smiling at Severus as if he was the sun and moon. Even as a child, his parents hadn't said that to him. They'd ignored him, left him to his own devices and never once tucked him in or read him a bedtime story. He knew Severus wasn't his parents, but someone paying attention was a godsend even after all this time.

"This does not mean things will change between us, Harry. You are still my apprentice and I'm going to continue to push you as far as I can," said Severus ominously, staring at Harry and arching an eyebrow in challenge.

"I look forward to it," said Harry. He had realized nothing would change, at least not right then… Maybe next year. Abruptly standing up, he swallowed thickly. He couldn't have those thoughts in his head right here and now. No, perhaps Severus was right…It was time for bed. He was suddenly all too eager to follow Severus' example.

Severus led the way, opening the sitting room door—and was greeted by the sight of his mother on the other side of it. Staring at her, he shook his head in silent exasperation. What did she think he was going to do, cut him up and use him for potions ingredients? She should know just how possessive he was, even if he was stubborn to the core. No, he wasn't about to let Harry out of his sight. His mind was more than firmly made up, and Eileen positively beamed at him before scampering off before Harry made his way around Severus and up the stairs to bed.

Severus watched him go, his eyes glued to a certain part of Harry's body until he disappeared into his room. Oh no, he wasn't about to let Harry go at all, he thought as he finally made his way up the stairs to his own room. He'd watch but not touch for now. In a year's time, though…in a year's time...

He had no idea just how hard it was going to be to wait that long.
James and Lily's life had been reduced to sleepwalking, or the appearance of it anyway. James wasn't attending work, which was now costing them money. His sick days had been used up, and the Ministry wasn't going to give him money for work he didn't do, not with the war starting back up—they needed all the Aurors they could get. It didn't matter if Nick was the Boy-Who-Lived. Lily, always the level-headed one, had to work to keep money coming in. There wasn't even a choice of overtime, since the children attended their classes and that was that. She hadn't raised the subject with James, just too worried about Nick to care about money at the moment. When Lily wasn't at classes, she was in the hospital wing with her son and husband. She hadn't even spent time with her daughter outside of the hospital setting either, who was presumably feeling very, very neglected.

James was sleeping uneasily in the high-backed chair the Hospital Wing had provided. His glasses had been removed by his wife when she'd come in. James had been very quiet lately, Lily observed—too quiet, really. He normally babbled when he was worried or nervous, as he had when they'd heard the prophecy. It had been how Sirius had known something was going on. Lily was brought out of her musings when a small groan came from her son.

Her green eyes widened and she clutched at her son's hand, hoping he would wake up soon. Her breath was held in anticipation, begging whatever deities she could to return her son to her, that his magic would still be there. The entire wizarding world was holding its breath with her. They believed Umbridge's words, so Nick was even more important than ever. As of yet, no magic had been performed on her son, and the only thing going into him was water and food by muggle means. A single spell could and would render her son a squib, so it had come as no surprise that Dumbledore had warded the hospital tighter than Gringotts warded their vaults.

Lily blinked the sleep out of her eyes as she absently stroked Nick's hand, more out of comfort for herself than for him, grounding her in the knowledge that he was still there, still alive. She yawned tiredly, not bothering to muffle it—everyone else was asleep, so nobody was there to call her on it. The unexpectedness of her son's gaze fixed upon her, dazed and disorientated but still blessedly awake, caused her to stare. Was she dreaming? Blinking again, then pinching herself (which hurt!), her breathing hitched. She was awake, she realized, which meant Nick was finally awake! He'd come back to them. Relief almost bowled her over, her son was awake.

"JAMES! JAMES! He's awake! Go fetch Poppy!" Lily started out shouting, then lowered her volume when her son winced.

"It's okay baby, everything's going to be fine," said Lily, scooting further towards her son, carding her fingers through his hair. Thank Merlin, her son was awake, the relief she felt almost had her crumbling. She continued to soothe her son while waiting impatiently for her husband to return with Poppy. Which came soon enough.

"Move out of the way!" said Poppy demandingly as she began a general examination of Nick, still not using magic. She, as always, didn't get much from checking him, but she did remove the needle from his arm. The tube to feed him was always taken out after, as Lily had hated seeing it in him. Instead, she'd unwittingly made her son suffer further by having Poppy reinsert it every time he was fed.

"How are you feeling, Mr. Potter?" asked Poppy, her personal feelings never interfering with her work.

"Water," croaked Nick, as the events finally began to creep up on him, his parents' actions, his sister's words…then how he'd been with Harry. He should never have listened to Roxy, now look
what he'd done. He'd alienated his brother further, and he almost sobbed as the memory he used for his Patronus replayed in his mind again.

"Here we are," said Poppy, helping the extremely weak now sixteen-year-old drink. There were cards and presents in the cabinet beside her, for him obviously. He wasn't in any fit state to open them yet, though. It would take him a while to get better, especially if they couldn't give him potions.

"Sore," said Nick, grunting in pain, as Poppy put him back down against the pillows. What the Hell had happened? He knew he'd been feeling weak, but right then, he felt ten times worse than he remembered. "Wha—what happened?" How had he ended up in here?

"Shh!" said Poppy as James and Lily began speaking at once, glaring at them angrily, before her eyes softened as she turned to Nick once more.

"What do you remember, Mr. Potter?" asked Poppy soothingly.

For some reason, Nick didn't want to tell them about his conversation with Harry. He didn't want them thinking he was responsible for it—even if he was he owed it to him. As such, he opened his mouth and said, "I remember going into a classroom to be alone and rest for awhile...I sat down against a wall I think...and...that's it...Nothing else after that."

"Why didn't you come to me about your hand? If she had continued, you could have died," said Poppy, her lips were pursed in anger. She hated the thought of any child in pain and not coming to her.

"I tried to tell my parents, but they told me I deserved it. I didn't think anyone else would care, since they all hate me now," said Nick, swallowing the lump that emerged in his throat. He didn't as much as glance at them, even though from the side of his eyes he could see their flinches, could see the pain written all across their faces. Poppy stared at the adults, incredulity written across her face. Perhaps they were failing with more than just one child.

"Why didn't you come to me about your hand? If she had continued, you could have died," said Poppy, her lips were pursed in anger. She hated the thought of any child in pain and not coming to her.

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"We didn't know she was doing this!" cried James angrily, though his face was pale and he was shaken by his son's accusation.

"No, you just believed her over your own son," snapped Nick bitterly, groaning as each muscle in his body protested at his movement. "Can I please get a Pain Reliever?"

Poppy paused, knowing this was probably going to be the biggest blow yet. "You cannot have a Pain Reliever, but I have some painkillers you can have from the muggle doctors," said Poppy.

"Why?" frowned Nick. Why did he have to take muggle medicine? Why not Potions? What the Hell was going on, what were they not telling him?

"Your magic needs time to recuperate, you cannot use any spells or let them be used on you," explained Poppy, making sure she had Nick's attention. "If you do, your magical core could split and it would turn you into a squib." She had to tell him, so he understood and did not break the rules.

Nick paled and choked out in terror, "Why?" What was wrong with his magic? A squib—that thought terrified him even beyond anything to do with Voldemort!

It looked as though Nick Potter had found something other than Voldemort to fear.

"All the magic you have learned has drained you completely. In a few weeks, we will be able to
give you more magic strengthening potions, but until then I greatly recommend not using magic," said Poppy.

Nick nodded his head. He understood what Poppy was saying, this was his parents' fault, too. It was nice to be treated like an adult, Poppy laying it bare for him and not just telling him a little bit. It was very refreshing. Despite that, he still felt devastated and very vulnerable for the first time in his life. He just wanted to be left alone.

"Here, swallow these," Poppy said, helping Nick swallow the small white pills. Muggle medicine was rather odd. She also knew it didn't work right away; it would take an hour to start working to full capacity according to the instructions. She gave him water to help them go down, and judging by his grimace, they were as disgusting as potions...or maybe they actually caused pain going down, being hard?

"Eugh," gagged Nick, painfully swallowing over the pills, not only was it weird, it was disgusting and the aftertaste was awful. He rather hoped he didn't have to take them long. Then he frowned when nothing happened. "They didn't work," murmured Nick, quite confused.

"Muggle medicine doesn't work right away, it takes a while," stated Poppy, plumping up his pillows, helping Nick get more comfortable. No doubt he'd fall asleep again soon, even after sleeping all this time. She realized she should get some food in him while he was awake.

"Bitzy," called Poppy to the House-Elf who was assigned to her to help keep the Hospital Wing in shape.

"Yes, Ma'am?" asked Bitzy, making an appearance. Normally Poppy didn't call for her out here in the main wing. She normally called for her in the privacy of her office, or Floo-called her to get whatever she required.

"I need some soup for Mr. Potter, please, and any dessert that's going. It must be soft," said Poppy.

"We have custard?" offered Bitzy, knowing the requirements of all the patients in Poppy's Hospital Wing as Poppy's and the Wing's personal attending House-Elf.

"That's fine, thank you," said Poppy, helping the teenager sit up, and rolling her eyes at Lily's interference. She knew how to look after students—she'd been doing it since before Lily Evans had even come to Hogwarts.

Bitzy reappeared well away from Nick's bed, then stepped forward with the food, placing it without magic on Nick's tray.

"Thank you," Nick said, surprising James and Lily immensely. Those weren't words Nick Potter usually uttered.

Bitzy nodded, a smile on her face, before she backed away, then popped back to the kitchens.

"Oh, my poor baby," said Lily, finally trying to hug her son, but she was in for one Hell of a surprise.

"Get off me! Leave me alone! I want to be alone!" cried Nick. He was very upset with his parents. This year he'd gotten a dose of what Harry, his twin brother, had been forced to deal with. Stuck in a coma with no choice but to think, he'd realized he hated himself. He had become everything people accused him of being and worse.

"Nick," said James, "You are obviously confused, but don't speak to your mother like that." His
voice was soft but reprimanding.
"I am not confused! Just leave me alone," replied Nick, facing away from them, not wanting to even see them.
Lily sobbed dramatically in her chair, looking as if Nick had just broken her heart.

"Nick," sighed James his brown eyes gleaming with pain at his child's declaration. Perhaps he had not been the only one to have an epiphany about Harry and life in general. Nick didn't know how to deal with it, so he was lashing out. He knew what he had to do, he had to give Nick time to sort his feelings out, and perhaps tonight he'd come back down and have a man to man talk with Nick. Let him know he, too, felt bad for how they'd treated Harry.

What he failed to realize was it wasn't because of Harry, it was them Nick was furious with. He had his own shit to deal with when it came to Harry, but that was an entirely different thing. His own parents had chosen the Ministry over him, Umbridge over him. He wasn't about to forgive them any time soon. It looked as though Nick Potter had found his independence at last. Perhaps there was hope for him yet. Others wouldn't be so enthusiastic about his bid for independence.

Especially not one Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore.

"Okay, son. We'll go shower and have a rest, and I'll come down to see you again later," said James, giving his son the quiet and distance he was asking for.

"James!" cried Lily angrily. How could she make up to her son for what they'd done if they weren't there? She realized what her husband didn't—he was blaming them for the fact that he was nearly turned into a squib, and for believing Umbridge.

"Come on, Lily," sighed James, guiding his wife out of the Hospital Wing, leaving Nick to be fed by Poppy, since he was still too weak to do anything as simple as feed himself.

"They have been very worried," said Poppy softly as she helped him.

"They didn't believe me," croaked Nick, feeling extremely neglected. Any satisfaction at being right didn't come into it—no one wanted to be right about something so horrible. Honestly, he was also more terrified of losing his magic than he was about 'being right'. He didn't like to think about what James and Lily would do if they learned he was a squib. Hell, it didn't matter what they thought! He'd kill himself! He couldn't imagine life without magic, and he didn't want to try, despite knowing muggles got along fine without it. Being without magic just wasn't him.

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True to Severus' words, nothing changed, and he continued to push Harry to his limit in Potions as well as Defense Against the Dark Arts. It was vital that he learned everything he could, should Voldemort find out about him—or Heaven forbid he find out that Harry was the one able to stop him. If he was reading the papers, he should have already realized Harry was just…more everything than his twin. Powerful, determined, a true hero standing guard from the shadows. Harry had no reason to save them all, yet he was doing so, that's what made him a real hero. Harry wanted no part in celebrity, fame, or the world knowing his name. He would choose to forever remain anonymous and skulking around in the shadows. Not that Severus blamed him really, because he was pretty much the same. It had been a week since the incident had happened, and since then nothing remarkable or out of ordinary had happened at Prince Manor.
"Morning," said Eileen cheerfully, coming into the sitting room.

"Not for long," said Severus, passing the newspaper over.

Frowning, Eileen accepted the paper and opened it—and she could immediately see why he was concerned. Nick Potter had finally come out of his coma, and the press were as always digging for a story.

"Idiots, the lot of them," said Eileen, rolling her eyes at the garbage in front of her, although Potter did look like he had lost a lot of weight. In fact, it reminded her of the time Harry had walked into her shop as a child. Of course, she hadn't realized his true age, as Harry was mature and looked older than he actually was. He felt things more deeply than someone his own age would, too.

"Indeed," murmured Severus in complete agreement. Thankfully there was no mention of Harry in there. That would have probably annoyed the young man even more. Any mention of the Potters seemed to turn Harry's stomach, whether it be in passing near or to him, or in the newspapers. Not that Severus blamed him, it turned his stomach too, but he was all too used to the fame that came with being a Potter. James was kow-towed to as well, although admittedly Potter Junior's fame was ten times worse. At least Harry wasn't due at Hogwarts until next Monday, when things would have settled down a bit.

"Hello," muttered Harry, blearily sitting down. Eileen beamed at him, causing Harry to smile back. He didn't know why, but Eileen had been beaming at him like that all week. He was exhausted, and he could barely eat his breakfast through the jaw-cracking yawns forcing their way out of his mouth.

"You didn't sleep well," stated Severus.

"No," replied Harry.

"Nightmares?" asked Severus. He was worried about him, naturally, as being tired and potions didn't mix well together. One wrong mistake and boom, especially the potions Harry was brewing these days.

"Yes," admitted Harry. He didn't know why they'd come back with a vengeance. Maybe it was because Voldemort was becoming more active, and families were being killed. It made him feel extremely bad that he couldn't just go out there and end it. He knew he wasn't ready, and frankly, he doubted he ever would be. He wasn't going anywhere until he was ready; he wasn't going to risk losing. He shuddered at the thought of his friends, his family in all but blood, dying because of his errors.

"Perhaps you should take a Dreamless Sleep Potion tonight," said Severus. Harry hadn't got up and had warm milk like he usually did, so how long had the nightmares been going on for? He was changing his routine so Severus couldn't keep track.

"I think I will," said Harry, stifling another yawn. Three nights in a row he'd been woken with nightmares now. The lack of sleep was really beginning to bug him. He grabbed himself a strong black coffee—the more caffeine the better. His mood took another nosedive when he saw the newspaper. He didn't want them getting to him, so he vowed to forget them and get on with his life.

He'd been trying to do that for years...he still hadn't managed to succeed in forgetting about them, but he would keep trying.

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Edited by snow leopard pasha! Thank you so much for the time and effort you put forth into this story! :)
Chapter 40

Invisible
Chapter 40
Nick's Epiphany
James And Nick Hogwarts Infirmary - Scotland
True to James' word, he did come to speak to Nick after having a shower and rest. James had spiked his wife's dessert with sleeping Potion. She needed it, and he needed to speak to Nick alone. His wife didn't understand what they'd done was wrong, she saw her actions as perfectly alright. Unfortunately Nick was beginning to realize the same thing as him, and it only took what? Fifteen years nearly. He wasn't looking forward to this conversation, especially with how Nick was being. If only he had told him what was going on, unfortunately James hadn't been around. He had been too busy; taking on all hours of overtime he could to keep their privileged life they'd led the same. He'd never had to worry about money before; he was of course still furious that his child had stolen it all from him under his very nose. Too bad they'd never thought to change the old laws, they were mostly forgotten but still in effect. Which he'd found out when he tried to go through the Ministry to get his money back.

He opened the door and found Nick reading a book; he stood there watching him for the longest time. How had he messed up so much? Not just with one child but two? His parents were probably rolling in their graves. Then again if they'd been stricter with him, he wouldn't have been the immature prick he was still. He walked over and sat down, waiting on Nick acknowledging him - which he didn't seem in a hurry to do.

"How are you feeling son?" asked James his tone quiet not wanting Poppy coming in like a hell hound. She didn't like people not sick being in her hospital wing, but he'd done it often enough. He wasn't any brighter than he had been as a teenager; Poppy had wards up alerting her when someone entered. You would think an Auror would realize this, but James was preoccupied with the thought of loosing his last son. The only male left to carry on the Potter line, - heaven forbid Nick do the same as Harry.

"How do you think I feel?" asked Nick angrily, still refusing to look at his father. If anything his anger was greater than it had been before. Sitting thinking wasn't helping his mood any, he really hated his parents right now.

"Have the pain killers not helped?" asked James frowning extremely angry at the thought of his son in pain.

"Actually they are," said Nick slamming the book closed, they'd taken a while but they did work. Half an hour after taking them he'd through they wouldn't, but it had crept up slowly. Poppy told him he had to take two every six hours, no more than that and no earlier.

"Nick, why didn't you tell me?" asked James sadly, his brown eyes regarding his sons solemnly, never backing down when his son glared at him so hatefully. He just wanted things to go back to the way they had been. Merlin he wished he could go back in time and stop it all, treat his sons equally. Unfortunately even magic didn't work like that, hindsight was truly a bitch.

"How was I supposed to do that?" scoffed Nick, "Between the training and you telling me how much a disappointment I was? That I was running the chance of becoming an Auror and failing the Potter name?" he didn't want to be an Auror! He wasn't like Harry, he wasn't brave or smart. He didn't know what he wanted, but he sure as hell knew it wasn't that.
The Potter men had been Auror's for five generations, that they knew of thanks to the portraits. It had become a tradition, and James had pressed his wishes upon his son. Without even stopping to think of what his son wanted. Unfortunately that part of the sentence wasn't what James was thinking about. No it was the training, and nearly turning the 'boy who lived' his son, into a squib. Merlin he hoped his son's magical core stayed steady, and got better. He'd hate to think what the world would think of him if he turned his own son into a squib. They were all already so bitter and disgusted over Harry, without adding this.

James looked away, shame clearly written across his face. "I'm sorry son," choked James, barely able to keep the tears from falling. He hadn't cried since that night he'd nearly lost his family, since Peter had betrayed them.

"I don't accept your apology, I just want you to leave me alone." said Nick bitterly.

"Listen son, you can't let this affect your life; you can't let yourself be bitter about it. Tell me what to do - ill make it better I promise." begged James, he'd do anything in his power to make his son happy again.

"There's nothing you can do, nothing I want." said Nick, staring at the book. A small part of his heart lurched at seeing his father so close to tears. He was always so strong and stubborn; he had been his example all his life. Not any more, he didn't want to be like James, and he made a vow that if he ever had kids he'd always put them first. A bigger part of him was glad to see James so unhinged, at least he wasn't the only one hunting.

"Just think about it son," said James regaining his composure, as he sat there staring at the floor. He wasn't sure what else to say, which was a first. They'd always been like best friends, always chatting away, about Quidditch and prank spells - not that Nick had actually performed any at school just on them well…mostly on Harry actually when he was younger. Until Harry started finding hiding places to get away from them all.

"There's nothing to think about." stated Nick glumly.

"Is this about Harry?" asked James quietly, after half an hour had passed, remembering earlier on. Hopefully if it was they could have a proper talk, and this bitterness his son had would fade and he'd be able to get over it.

"What about Harry?" asked Nick frowning, when did this turn into a conversation about Harry? Did they seriously think that's why he was so angry? He wanted to lean over and strangle his father, was he that dense? He hoped he wasn't like that! He was furious about them believing a stupid ministry official over their own son! This didn't even touch the subject about his brother. No all he'd received was a glimpse of how his brother had been treated all those years, and he felt awful but no this wasn't actually about Harry.

"You are angry about how we treated him aren't you?" summarised James sadly.

"You mean you've actually realized it wasn't normal?" snorted Nick, he had no right to snort really - he'd just figured it out himself. He couldn't help himself though, he just wanted to hurt his father and any way he could do that was just fine by him.

"Nick, stop this right now," warned James, he wasn't used to his kids talking to him like that. They'd always respected him, sure they whined, groaned and grumbled, but what kid didn't now and again? "I realize we screwed up, and Harry paid the price." well actually they had now, considering they didn't have much money to their name.
"Not just with Harry," said Nick grinding his teeth, his anger was getting the better of him.

"GET OUT NOW JAMES POTTER!" shrieked Poppy making an appearance looking ready to kill him. James just stared at her in confusion, what on earth was wrong with her. She was dressed in her night clothes, her hair was messed up - she had obviously been sleeping. Poppy couldn't believe James could be so stupid as to do what he was. He was an Auror he should know to avoid any conversation that might upset him.

"Nick, calm down, your anger is making your magic react, close your eyes and concentrate on breathing." said Poppy, placing a soothing hand on the teenager's forehead. Poppy heard James gasp in shock but she paid him no mind. She couldn't give Nick a calming draught, so he would have to calm himself - if he didn't his magic would react to his strong emotions. Thank Merlin she'd woken up when she did; otherwise she dreaded to think of what could have happened.

"That's it, well done. Now here take these," said Poppy handing him four small round tablets all white again but the two were different sizes. She handed him some pumpkin juice - to help the taste wash away better than water did. His pain killers and she rather hoped the sleeping pills would work - he needed the rest. She sighed in relief when the proximity spell faded, since she couldn't cast it on him, she'd cast it on an empty potions bottle near his bed. It was how she was keeping an eye on him. As they said if there's a will there was away, even if with magic.

James flinched back at the look Poppy was giving him; honestly he was terrified she would gut him. He hadn't meant to make his son mad; he was just trying to sort of their differences. Get his son to forgive him, right now though it didn't seem like it would work any time soon.

"James Potter you are henceforth banned from the Hospital wing for five weeks, unless you are brought in on a stretcher." said Poppy her voice grim and serious, her glace hadn't lost any of its potency. She wasn't trying to save Nick's magical core for James Potter to screw it up. "Lily Potter is also henceforth banned from the hospital wing for the same amount of time." she added for good measure - she had a feeling Lily would probably anger Nick more than James could. Her constant coddling got on her nerves! Merlin knows how Nick felt regarding it.

"Not Lily, she didn't do anything," said James his eyes wide, but he didn't get a chance to hear Poppy's reply as he was magically thrown out of the hospital wing by Hogwarts herself. He stood there gaping at the closed door unable to believe his eyes or ears. All the times he'd gone in when he shouldn't have - why did she choose to do it now?

"Sleep Nick, it's the best thing for you right now," said Poppy, smiling sadly at the teenager. He seemed extremely glad by her actions, grateful really. His eyes closed as he tried to do what the nurse told him. He'd do whatever she said - he wanted his magic to heal. Once she'd dealt with her patient she left her hospital wing, feeling James standing out side her wards still. She had one last thing to say to the stubborn wizard.

"Don't try involving Albus, he has no control over my wards." she said smugly.

"Poppy you can't stop me seeing my son," said James irritated.

"I just did, I'm not doing all I can to save his core for you to destroy my work!" snapped Poppy.

"Look I didn't realize…please," said James tiredly.

"You didn't realize a lot! He needs rest and calmness! Have that conversation once he's well!" said Poppy now the one irritated with the stubborn bloody wizard. Not wanting to have an argument with him, which wouldn't get anywhere she went back into her domain and closed the door. Smug
in the knowledge that he wouldn't get in, Hogwarts wouldn't allow it. She had never had to enforce it before, least of all with an adult. She would do everything she could to help Nick as she said; James and Lily weren't good for him. He was so angry at them, for good reason.

"I hate them," said Nick quietly, staring at the nurse, she was probably the only one that didn't hate him for leaving her brother. Well at least she never openly displayed it anyway.

"Don't worry," said Poppy going over to him, feeling sadness for the child who'd been so wronged. She tucked him in, and sat down beside him, realizing he wanted to talk.

"I screwed up, how do I make things better?" he asked sadly.

"What what?" asked Poppy, regarding her patient shrewdly?

"With Harry, not just once either…I don't think he will ever forgive me." said Nick. "He's so brave, and strong…I'm not like him. When I met you-know-who I thought I'd die all the training I done just disappeared - how could I defeat him? He's so strong and knew a lot more magic than I did. Yet Harry didn't give in, without him none of us would have survived…I should have helped him…if I could go back in time I'd do it. He'd never forgive me for leaving him."

Poppy wasn't sure what she could say, "Sometimes sorry isn't good enough, perhaps its best to let Harry go. Unless you do something that would irrevocably prove to him you do regret it."

"Like that?" asked Nick a frown marring his features, as he thought on what Poppy had just told him. How could he prove to Harry that he was sorry? And that he hadn't meant anything he said at their last confrontation? Let Harry go? Was that what he would have to do in the end? Give up and let Harry live his life without him? It hurt, actually, quite badly at the thought of giving up on Harry. In reality he had been giving up on Harry since they were children. It strengthened his resolve, no he wouldn't give in. He would do whatever he could to prove himself to his brother - his twin brother.

"That I am afraid I cannot answer, that is something you will have to think and do on your own." said Poppy, "Right now you should concentrate on resting, there will come a time when you can do what needs done."

"Thank you," croaked Nick, as Poppy walked away.

Poppy turned back and gazed at Nick, what was he thanking her for?

"For not judging me, for helping all those times you have." said Nick a tear trickling down his face.

"It's my job Nick, I'd do it for anyone." said Poppy smiling sadly at him before she turned all the lights in the infirmary off and disappeared into her own private quarters. Perhaps there was hope for Nick Potter yet. She'd seen the determination radiating from him, she knew one day Nick would find out how to make it up to his brother. It would be no easy task as she'd told him, sorry truly wasn't good enough.

Severus, Harry - outside Prince Manor - Somewhere in England

"Today you will be learning the Fiendfyre spell," said Severus, they were outside today, on the opposite side of the green houses. There was no way they could practise such an untameable, unpredictable spell in the house. Not without wanting the entire manor to burn down around them, with them inside. Tomorrow Harry would be attending school again, since it had started back up.
"Alright," said Harry, he'd read up on it, so he had known the spell they'd be doing today. In fact the entire quiz had been around the spell and how unpredictable it was. The amount of magic determined how erratic the spell could be. The more magic poured into it the more control you had, the less magic they had the more wild them magic burned. They didn't teach that spell at Hogwarts, for that very reason.

"Good, you know the spell, you know what it needs go ahead." said Severus, he'd created a wooden house for Harry to aim at. It was sort of like the one Lily had as a child, her father had made it for her. Spelling the grass impervious to burning, he didn't want the garden to look like a battle ground. Severus stepped back, well away from the line of fire. Watching Harry with a critical eye, his wand at the ready, so he could put it out if need be. Water couldn't stop it, but the air extinguishing spell could. Since fire needed air to breath and spread, without it - it would be like closing a vault door at Gringotts. The fire would be unable to breath and eventually burn out.

"Fiendfyre!" yelled Harry, waving his wand in a complicated motion, and large fierce flames followed its path. He continued trying to control, it but he let it slip and the flames got out of control burning the dolls house he'd had the flames spin around. Before the fire could try and consume anything - Severus had stepped in and it extinguished.

"You did extremely well for your first attempt," said Severus approvingly.

Harry grinned at him extremely pleased by Severus' words, he knew they weren't idly given or platitudes. The spell was extremely potent; he'd underestimated the power needed to control it. He shouldn't have, fire was natures most powerful gift to us. We think we can control it but the truth is - one couldn't master fire for it was its own master. You could only temporary take control to do what you needed to do. There was no way to control it forever.

"Again," said Severus determinedly. He was going to make sure Harry had no doubt about what he said. He was not going to go easy on him, no matter what. He knew what Harry was capable of and would make sure he did do it. It wasn't all because Harry had to be ready to face Voldemort. Another dolls house was created and Severus waited for Harry to cast the spell.

"Fiendfyre!" said Harry determination thrumming through him. The fire swished through the air, Harry having it circle the house, he managed to keep it up for an extra two minutes before the spell snapped and became wild. Harry stood there panting, his hands on his knees as he watched the fire one again reduced to nothing.

"Good, again." said Severus.

Harry breathed deeply, his magical core depleted but thanks to Severus' knowledge he was never in danger or harm like Nick. Severus alternated between brewing and spells so that his core had enough time to refill and of course recharge itself. Considering Harry's core was large, it would take a lot to deplete it extremely. Harry using magic as a child to learn (Wandlessly at that) had made his core more stable and larger than most sixteen year olds.

"Fiendfyre!" said Harry, the spell coming alive, forcing it to do his bidding, coaxing it with magic. Eventually he could feel it taut in anticipation, wanting to break free. He held on for as long as he could as he twirled it around until inevitably his control was lost. It was like striking a match and watching its slow progress before it snapped out of control and you found yourself having to put it out. Only this spell was ten times faster than a normal fire.

Harry fell to his knees panting desperately; sweat coating his entire body his wand slipping in his grasp.
"You alright?" asked Severus once the fire was gone.

"Yes," said Harry standing back up determination brightening up his green eyes.

"Again," said Severus. This time he didn't bother with the doll house, deciding to let Harry do what he wished.

"Fiendfyre," said Harry, pushing his magic through it, too much, which made his control last only a second before it snapped. Harry wiped the sweat from his brow; shaking his head it was going to be hard to master this spell.

"You will never master the spell," said Severus, spookily, as if he could read Harry's thoughts. "It's unpredictable, all we can do is use it for what we need and no more." even he couldn't control it, that's what made the spell so dangerous.

"Okay," said Harry, nodding his understanding.

"The spell I've been using will be next on the list," said Severus, "Now that doesn't take much to prefect." there was no point in teaching him how to create fire if he couldn't stop it when it had done what needed to be done now was there?

Harry just nodded completely exhausted; all he wanted to do was have a nice long bath.

"Go rest for a while, five o'clock we brew." said Severus, his black eyes glinting with pride. He was so happy about the dedication Harry always showed. He was what any wizard or witch wanted in an apprentice. It wasn't often you found a sixteen year old so dedicated to anything. At that age all they could think about was passing their exams with enough passes to please their parents. Getting out of Hogwarts and thinking it was a free pass to lazing around - only to get a rude awakening.

"Yes sir," said Harry getting into the manor as quickly as his legs could carry him. He would have to write to Viktor soon, he'd been forgetting to write in the book. Without Viktor Harry wasn't sure how he'd have survived. He always had good advice waiting on hand, and he'd forever be grateful to him for it. In fact he had advised Harry what to do about Severus, after getting blind drunk and revealing how he felt. Admittedly though it turned out to be a good thing, and a bad thing. Knowing Severus liked him in turn, well he was a teenager at the end of the day…and damn it he just wanted to feel cherished…loved even. Yet Severus was determined to wait until his apprenticeship was over with! Well Harry couldn't wait until it was!

Severus just watched him go smirking, before eventually following Harry into the manor. He had to speak to his mother, find out how the hell she'd known about his feelings. Then again if anyone knew him…it was his mother.

Nick, Susan - Hospital Wing - Next Day

Nick watched Poppy tending to Susan Bones, who admittedly looked very sick. She was two beds down from him, and her wand was locked up in the cabinet. It was just a precaution; after all they didn't want accidents happening. Not that she'd be using it any time soon, she had the flu. Hopefully Nick wouldn't end up with it, that's the last thing he needed. If it had been Wizarding Flu then no doubt he would have been squared away in a separate room. Catching the Wizarding flu truly would be the icing on the cake in his case. The way things were going Nick wouldn't be surprised at anything that happened.

"Are you okay?" asked Nick quietly, he'd spent an entire day on his own - and it was beginning to
grate on him. The silence, while soothing wasn't what Nick was used to.

"Are you talking to me?" asked Susan looking dumbfounded her voice hoarse.

"Yes," said Nick, wondering silently if he'd done something to offend her…probably - it seemed as if he had offended everyone one way or another.

"You've never spoken to me; I tried once when we were five, I came to your party. The second I said most of my family was a Huffelpuff and I'd be sorted there you sneered at me." said Susan bitterly, "It wasn't long after I'd just lost my parents either."

Nick swallowed bitterly, "I'm sorry, I really am." he had been following his father's example as always. Anyone that wasn't a Gryffindor he sneered at as if he was better by just being a Gryffindor.

"Its fine," said Susan coughing violently almost gagging at the violence behind them.

"I know I was a prick," said Nick looking away unable to stare at her anymore. The guilt just kept coming and Nick wondered if it would ever stop.

"Yes you were, but at least you realized you were wrong and apologized," said Susan as if that made everything okay. She hadn't known him so it wasn't as if he'd really hurt her. Well maybe at the time, but once she'd grown up she'd brushed it off. Her aunt had raised her to never let the bitterness of others affect her. To always give people second changes, sometimes they deserved them and it made their friendship stronger.

"What?" gaped Nick Turing back around, "That's it?" it must be a Huffelpuff thing. Gryffindor's would sulk more, Slytherin's would milk it for everything and Ravenclaw's would want something.

"Yes." said Susan simply.

Nick just stared it was…very refreshing this and he opened his mouth and asked her a question. Both of them lay in their bed talking, finally after all those years of attending each others parties as a child - they spoke without prejudice. They were rather surprised by how much they had in common; maybe the houses weren't as important after all.
Roxy stumbled out of bed, last night had been rough to say the least. She'd heard her parents arguing for hours. They must have either forgotten to put silencing charms up or not realized she was there yet. She sighed sadly as she got into the shower, so much had changed lately, and she didn't like it at all. Her mum had gone nuts at her dad, for getting them banned from the Hospital wing. Not only that but according to her dad, Nick was angry at them, very angry. Why would Nick be angry at their parents? It made no logical sense to her. Nick had gotten his broomstick, which his parents promised to get, she was still waiting on her book. Her school things weren't the good quality as she was used to, to top it off she'd gotten her mums old books. Some of them were new, that's only because they were different from the books her mum had to buy for her classes. She didn't have any friends in Gryffindor, all the others were just so different from her. She'd tried to be more like them, she really had tried, but she just preferred reading and fashion, sometimes Quidditch matches. Even Longbottom had found friends, different from her and they barely spoke. Ginny Weasley and her got on, but Roxy didn't like her constant questions on her brother. Every day there was a new one, and she was always staring at him. It gave her the creeps. Finishing her shower she dressed in her Gryffindor uniform. She hadn't got to take the train to Hogwarts this year, she had asked but her parents had just said no, there was just no point. After all Nick was here and unwell.

"Aren't we going down for breakfast?" asked Roxy staring at her parents, who were ignoring each other behind their copies of the Daily Prophet. That was something else she wasn't used to, her parents fighting. They used to be so great, happy, and in love even if it had made her scrunch up her nose!

"No sweetie, we are eating up here," said Lily, putting her paper down, giving her a strained smile. Her red hair was down and messy, she hadn't even straightened it. Her mum always did her hair and makeup, she always looked her best unless she was ill.

"Okay," said Roxy sitting down, and preparing herself some breakfast, which was quite cold now. Why hadn't they woken her up when it came? Sighing softly she ate her breakfast in silence wondering if anything would ever get back to normal. Everyone will have slept in the dorm last night, she had come up here to avoid it all.

"How are you feeling sweetie?" asked Lily, breaking the silence.

"Fine," said Roxy automatically, her parents had enough to worry about, plus she couldn't tell her what was really wrong. She couldn't admit she regretted not getting into Ravenclaw like the hat suggested. She spent a lot of time in the library, and there were always groups of Ravenclaws around. She could have been one of them, but she wasn't, and only because she hadn't listened to the sorting hat. She did wonder who the hats first mistake was though.

"Did you do all your homework?" asked James giving his daughter some attention.

"Yes," said Roxy, "It was easy."
"Good," said James before he hid behind his paper again.

Roxy then stared back down at her breakfast plate, feeling very sorry for herself.

"Where are you going?" asked Lily as soon as her daughter got up.

"Library," said Roxy, at least there she felt a little more at home, and she could forget her worries for a while, absorbed in a good book. She disappeared out of the rooms before her mother could ask any more questions. She did start off in that direction, but before long she found herself off track. Instead she found herself outside the hospital wing. She hadn't been banned like her parents, at least she didn't think so. With some hesitance she opened the door, walking in slowly, as if she was expecting to be catapulted from the ward. Nothing happened she breathed in relief. She really should be getting read for class, but it was still early she could make it in time.

Her brother was sleeping, a few beds down from him was Susan Bones, the Hufflepuff if she remembered correctly. Her poor brother had been stuck with nobody but her for company! She was so dull and proud to be a Hufflepuff of all things, she was nothing like her aunt who was awesome and had a great job in the Ministry. That was the only reason Bones was here, her aunt was so busy that she'd dropped her off here in Poppy's care. St. Mungo's had enough to take care off, without someone coming in with a cold. Roxy took a seat next to her brother, hoping he would recover. Maybe then her parents would stop fighting and they could be happy.

"Roxy? Wazzit?" murmured Nick, making Roxy jump she'd been so lost in her thoughts she hadn't seen her brother stirring.

"How are you feeling?" she asked, Roxy attempted to smile but it came out a grimace. Her brother had always been her hero, she'd looked up to him for so long. Who wouldn't? he had stopped You-Know-Who as a baby. He was going to be so strong and powerful one day, and she wanted to be a part of it. Seeing him so weak made her, perhaps for the first time, see that her brother was only human.

"Tired," replied Nick licking his dry lips, he'd not had a good night. His mind had gone over everything that happened, and everything he could do to make it up to his brother. Unfortunately he was drawing blank, he truly had no idea on how to make amends for all his horrific actions. He wanted to be angry at Roxy for pushing the final confrontation, but he just didn't have it in him. He was drained, not only magically but emotionally also.

"Would you like me to bring you some books?" asked Roxy, "That way you can avoid her." she stated throwing a gesture towards the sleeping Hufflepuff.

"No," said Nick his voice going cold, throwing a withering glare at his sister, honestly there was worse things happening than house pride right now. He knew when he was better he'd have to train again, not something he was particularly looking forward to. Maybe that would be a way to make it up to his brother. Train and maybe, if he was extraordinary lucky, he could defeat Voldemort and make a peaceful world for his brother.

"What's wrong with you now?" asked Roxy exasperated, she just couldn't keep up with anyone these days! Everything she said and did seemed wrong. Something had to give at some point! She didn't know how much more of this she could take.

"Roxy there's more to life than houses, have you even spoken to Susan?" asked Nick.

Roxy blinked, the name Susan wasn't lost on her, "No," said Roxy screwing up her nose.
"Then do not say anything about her until you have a reason!" snapped Nick, ensuring he didn't make himself too angry. He wanted his magic back thank you very much. He wouldn't and couldn't let himself get angry enough to destroy what was left of his magical core. He did wonder how it was doing, and how long it would take to reconnect. If it did how would he know? How would Poppy know?

"Alright, Nick, just calm down." said Roxy hastily.

"Do me a favour Roxy, stop trying to be like me or our parents, it will lead you down a dark road - one you may not be able to get out off." said Nick, his haunted eyes pinning his sisters, letting the gravity of the conversation dawn on her, yes he was serious. He meant every word, and he wanted to stop her being anything like he had been. Unfortunately Nick didn't think he'd get through. She was only twelve years old after all.

"I'll try," said Roxy, feeling shocked to the core, what had Nick gone through to feel this way? It had to have been something really bad. Then again perhaps loosing your magic could make him feel that way. Maybe once he was better he'd stop being so weird with her. "Did you see your presents?"

"Presents?" asked Nick confused.

"Yes, its passed your birthday, mum and dad got you a new broom!" said Roxy her awe evident, not just any broom but the newest on the market. It was the best broom she'd ever seen, she almost wanted to fly it herself. "I got you some sweets."

"Thank you," said Nick smiling softly at her, realizing she'd spent her pocket money on him, when he knew she was saving up for her new fashion book. Too bad Hogwarts didn't have those kind of books in the library, otherwise she wouldn't have had to save up. It was times like this that made Nick realize she wasn't a total loss. He could still save her from going down his dark road.

"Sirius and Remus have been visiting too, they left a present each!" said Roxy, she knew because she had been there all day on his birthday. Even Professor Dumbledore had brought him something. It was nowhere near what Roxy was used to her brother getting, normally he was surrounded by presents and people each year. His parties were always the best! So many things to do and the cake was always the best.

"Really?" asked Nick perking up looking hopeful.

"Time for your medication Nick," said Poppy coming bustling in, with breakfast tray's. Filled with all sorts of foods, nothing greasy as Poppy didn't allow it. While they were in her infirmary they stuck to food that was good and nutritious for them. She placed the tray on his lap, standing over him until he took the painkillers. Nodding in satisfaction she bustled over to Susan using a diagnostic charm to ensure she was well. Still unwell, but with Pepper-up Potions she'd be as right as rain in no time. She didn't want to wake her up, so she placed the food on the stand next to her bed. It would remain warm until she touched it, a handy charm she'd learned by her Mistress while taking her Mastery in Medi Magic.

Nick opened the newspaper which was beside him, before his hand flew to his mouth in shock. "M-madam Pomfrey?"

"What's the matter?" asked Poppy immediately going over thinking something was wrong with the teenager.

Nick stared at her before handing over the paper, her reaction was pretty much the same. She
quickly went over to Susan and removed the paper, she did not deserve to find out through that. The poor girl was now truly an orphan in every sense of the word, Amelia Bones had been killed in an attack in London. "Poor dear," said Poppy trying to remain professional, it was hard to believe she'd just spoken to her yesterday.

"Do not speak of this, I shall tell her." said Poppy in warning, her voice grave and filled with no small amount of dread. She eyed both of them, who nodded in silent understanding. Nick felt guilty, he didn't know why, but he did. He felt as though it was all his fault, maybe if he'd helped Harry in the graveyard she'd still be here. Maybe together they could have destroyed Voldemort before he killed anyone.

"Today we will learn the spell to dispel the Fiendfyre, the words are Aeris, literal translation air. Now without oxygen the fire cannot breath, inevitably it will die out." said Severus. "Are you ready?"

"Yes sir," said Harry gripping his wand, his face filled with determination. He knew he could do it, anyone could do anything if they put their mind to it. He would be at school in an hour, Monday and Tuesday he was always at school. It was going to be great seeing Luna again, he hadn't seen her since that night he'd made such a fool of himself. Although if he could go back, he wouldn't change a thing. He was determined to make Severus proud, pass his mastery and then get what he wanted. Which happened to be the man in front of him, hopefully Viktor had some advice for him. He'd written in the journal, all he had to do was wait for his reply.

"Go," said Severus, before flames danced around merrily, to the beat Severus was demanding with his 'Fiendfyre' spell.

"Aeris!" snapped Harry, willing his power out, encasing it around the flames, he watched in pride, as his spell worked correctly the first time. The flames were put out, and Harry smirked smugly.

"Very good, again!" said Severus this time making the flames longer and larger. It may look like he had more control over Fiendfyre than Harry, truth be told it simply wasn't the case. He just had more experience, and he was more powerful than he let on. So he simply just made it look a lot easier than Harry knew it was.

"Aeris!" shouted Harry, he could feel it, the power Severus had put into the spell, it took him longer and much more magic to eradicate the flames. Yet he did it, Severus was right, it wasn't taking as much of his magic as the Fiendfyre spell had. By the second time he cast that spell yesterday he'd been on his knees.

"Good, one more time." said Severus, casting the spell, it was by sheer willpower he was still on his feet. There was a reason this spell was not used a lot, and why nobody could control it - it took a hell of a lot of power. The Death Eaters liked to try and use it, in the end all that accomplished was fire damaged and destroyed buildings.

"Aeris!" said Harry, smoothly goading his magic through his wand, and eliminating the flames once more.

"Very good, I think perhaps breakfast is in order now," said Severus putting away his wand, which as always was at his wrist, the easiest access place to have it. Both of them walked back into Prince Manor, it was rather chilly this morning. So they were grateful to be back inside the warmth that always permeated Prince Manor. "Did you sleep well last night?" he asked the sixteen year old as both of them took their seats.

"Yes," said Harry, the tip of his ears went red something that wasn't unnoticed by the resident
"Good," said Severus, feeling a little hot himself, he had, had the best night sleep in a long time. Admittedly he had no control over his subconscious, so he couldn't be blamed for what his mind dreamed while he was asleep. It wouldn't have changed anything either if he could, because whether he liked to admit it or not, Severus was deeply attracted to Harry. He just wished Harry wasn't sixteen years old.

"Good morning boys," said Eileen, "Has the post been delivered yet?"

"It should have been here by this," said Severus as his eyes found the clock on the wall, they had been outside, perhaps it had come by then. "Dobby?" enquired Severus loudly.

"Yes sir?" replied Dobby appearing before Severus, dressed in the normal clothes that adorned all house elves that stayed in Prince Manor.

"Has the post been?" asked Severus, he was never one to beat around the bush.

"Yes sir, I'll go get it," said Dobby disappearing, there was silence for a few seconds before Dobby reappeared with the mail. Harry froze when he saw a letter for him, from the Ministry. He had been expecting them, he would be taking his exams, which would pre-approve him as having passed his mastery. He had to make a potion, no not make, create a potion before the Potions community accepted him as one of their own. Harry was way ahead, after having learned there were two potions he was working on in his spare time. Which admittedly wasn't much, but enough for him to scribble ideas, and have a basic idea of what ingredients he needed. It was just a matter of how to brew it to get his desired results.

"It's here good," said Severus, in truth he didn't want Harry going to the Ministry alone. Any day now Voldemort could gain control over it, and Harry would be a sitting duck. He passed Harry his mail, as he contemplated everything. At least Harry could defend himself, and he had two Portkey's to get away if the need arose. The sooner the written part of Harry's exams were done the better.

Harry ripped open the envelope, his heart thumping a mile a minute. This was the proof he was ready to pass his mastery. He truly hadn't believed Severus when he said he'd be finished before he was seventeen. Yet here was the proof, two more steps then he'd be a Master in Potions. He looked down the list, calculating how long it would take by the dates. Three months, before he'd take his final written exam. He had four months to finish the potion, he prayed he could do it in time.

"Six Mondays, three Tuesdays, the rest are all fine, what do I tell the teachers?" asked Harry apprehensively.

"The truth, you are taking your exams. They will understand and also be proud of you, nobody else has taken their Mastery exams so early in life." said Severus. Teachers should always be proud of students taking the initiative and deciding what they wanted to do with their lives.

The next letter was his O.W.L results. With less enthusiasm he opened the results, not really caring about them as much. It wasn't as if his O.W.L results mattered - he was still going to become a Potions Master. However, Harry did take pride in all his hard work, holding his breath he began reading it.

**ORDINARY WIZARDING LEVEL RESULTS**

Pass Grades: Outstanding (O) Exceeded Expectations (E) Acceptable (A)

Fail Grade: Poor (P) Dreadful (D) Troll (T)
Eleven owl passes, and all Outstanding. Harry grinned extremely pleased with himself. He had even passed the classes he hadn't been taking. Such as History of magic, Divination, Astronomy and Herbology, but one picked up a knowledge of herbs when brewing potions like he did.

"How did you do?" asked Eileen in anticipation.

"I passed, I received eleven owls," said Harry happily handing over his results, now that was something else he had to be proud of.

"All outstanding! I'm so proud of you Harry," said Eileen, she truly was in awe of him. Eleven owls and he managed to surpass what Severus expected of him in his mastery! Added to the fact he'd created a potion to help save her life too. He had to be the most amazing sixteen year old she'd ever met. She knew Harry was perfect for her son, they would be very happy together.

"Thank you," said Harry his face flushing in pride, a long time ago he would have wished for those words to be said by his parents. Yet it wasn't, blood meant nothing to Harry anymore, he loved Eileen more than his own mother. So he couldn't believe blood meant anything.

"You have done well," said Severus, nodding his head, his onyx eyes were gleaming with triumph and pride.

Harry smiled, as proud as he felt he still wasn't used to praise like this. It was different when Severus said well done when he did a potion. He didn't know why, but this just meant so much more. This was his family, this was what he would fight for.

"You best get going, otherwise you will be late for class," said Severus catching the time.

"Take something in with you," said Eileen, Harry was a growing boy he needed to eat - especially a breakfast. It was the most important meal of the day, something she had made sure her son understood.

Harry grabbed a three pieces of bacon, and two slices of toast from his plate before running
towards the Floo. His bag was at the side, where he always left it, so he didn't end up forgetting it. After a while he'd gotten so used to not lugging a bag around with him, he'd forgotten a few times to take it with him. He hastily ate his sandwich, he couldn't take it through the Floo with him. Not without it tasting like ash at the other end.

"Hogwarts, Headmaster's office!" yelled Harry, and he was off. Zooming through the Floo network, gait after gait until finally his destination beckoned. The Floo spat him out, but Harry landed gracefully on his feet. He was used to the Floo now, having been using it for a long time. This time was different, the Headmaster was actually in his office, and boy he looked old and aged.

"Ah, Hello Harry," said Dumbledore, his face strained in a polite smile, his eyes though were missing their customary twinkle. "How are you and Severus of course?"

"Er…fine sir," said Harry he'd never be used to talking to Dumbledore. He had redeemed himself a bit in Harry's eyes during the Chamber fiasco and when he allowed him to come to Hogwarts. It didn't mean Harry would ever like him, he was slightly manipulative, and had his entire family wrapped around his finger. It didn't help that he hadn't seem to care about him just Nick because he was the so called Boy-Who-Lived.

"Good, good," said Dumbledore distractedly as if he hadn't truly listened to his answer.

"Bye sir," said Harry making a beeline for the door, he didn't know how to deal with a depressed Dumbledore.

"Have a good day," said Dumbledore his voice still strained.

Albus watched the child leave, wondering about him as he always did. He had created a Patronus before Nick, which was no easy feat. Perhaps he should ask Harry if he'd like to join the Order. Nick would need all the help he could get to destroy Voldemort. The war was starting up so much sooner than even he anticipated. The Dementors had already joined Tom's cause, and he'd openly attacked Muggle London. Which by the way, the Ministry had, had a very great deal of difficulty covering up. Especially with all the advanced Muggle technology, portable cameras on mobile phones, had proved to be a real challenge. Poor Amelia and Vance had died, in the attack. Poppy had been tasked with telling Susan Bones she was an orphan. No doubt the first of many to come, he thought with dread. He remembered the last war, every time the owls came, there was always one in a black envelope. Each student flinched as it neared them, praying it wasn't going to fall down and be theirs. He had prayed himself that it wouldn't happen again after that Halloween night. Yet all his praying was for naught, the war had started back up and he was tasked to seeing it end.

Nick looked over at Susan solemnly, she had been told, she had broken down into hysterical sobs that Poppy couldn't stop. She had given her a calming draught and let the sixteen year old cry herself hoarse. It was no surprise when she'd fallen asleep. Nick had wanted to comfort her, but Susan as emotional as she was, could accidentally use magic on him. So he had watched from afar hurting for her, even he didn't understand why. He'd never been so affected by anything before.

She'd just then Nick felt a burning sensation in the pit of his stomach, it got fiercer and fiercer before spreading outwardly. Nick cried out in alarm, as his body began to become feverish and sweat. Buzzing could be heard in the background, nothing else at all, and Nick felt as though he was dying. Why wasn't Poppy coming? Surely she could hear him screaming? Was he screaming? If he wasn't why? He was certainly in enough pain he should be! Then he felt it, a cool hand on his feverish burning skin.
It was at the height of irony that Harry had just entered the school, perhaps there was something on the twin bonds than people realized.

Someone though it all, he understood three of Poppy's words, 'Magical core reconnecting,' as she did he began to calm down. He was better, it was the most relieving news he'd heard in a long time. Then the fire stopped, leaving him feeling suddenly full, his magic was back and Nick felt …awful. He began shivering in cold, he was wet! How had he gotten wet? Nick opened his eyes shivering.

"W-what's happening?" asked Nick desperately, the bed was shaking with the force of his shivers.

"Your body temperature has just rapidly risen and dived, it will take a few minutes, don't worry." said Poppy, as she banished and had a new pair of pyjamas appear on the sixteen year old. A warming charm was cast, she was very grateful to be able to use magic near Nick again.

The shaking slowly died off, as Nick's body began to get readjust after the abrupt assault on his person. Poppy placed his cover over him, and smiled as he began to calm, his magic once again reasserted its dominance.

"How are you feeling now?" asked Poppy after a few moments.

"Better," said Nick nodding his head.

"Drink these," said Poppy, handing him over six potions he would have to drink.

Nick didn't even groan, in fact he was extremely happy to see the potions. He didn't care that they tasted like dirt. He'd take them, and never for granted, now he knew how long it took for Muggle medicine to work. He swallowed them one after another, surprised by how many of them he actually recognized.

"Can I open my presents now?" asked Nick, with them being magical he hadn't been able to before.

"Of course, your owl results have come as well," said Poppy, placing the letter in his hands.

Nick swallowed nervously, his eyes wide, taking a deep breath, praying he'd passed most of his classes. Undoing the tab, he took out his results, and then turned them over. His eyes filtered across the page, a huge breath of relief passed his lips. He'd done better than he thought he would, but his potions grade - was unfortunately no surprise.

ORDINARY WIZARDING LEVEL RESULTS

Pass Grades: Outstanding (O) Exceeded Expectations (E) Acceptable (A)

Fail Grade: Poor (P) Dreadful (D) Troll (T)

NICK SIRIUS POTTER

Astronomy: A

Care of Magical Creatures: EE

Charms: EE

Defence Against the Dark Arts: O

Herbology: A
Divination: P
History of Magic: A
Potions: D
Transfiguration: EE

Seven owls, he had failed two, Divination and Potions, he flushed at the fact he'd gotten a dreadful though. Then again it was better than troll, well, that was being an Auror totally out of the window. Not even his father could interfere with owl scores, and Slughorn would never accept him back into class with a 'D' score. His parents knew he was bad at Potions, his mother had vowed to help him. Yet nothing had ever come of it.

"Poppy can I go to breakfast and class?" asked Nick.

"As long as you eat in moderation, your stomach isn't used to much anymore," said Poppy. As she busied herself by getting rid of all the potion bottles, and as always keeping her infirmary spotless.

"Am I allowed to attend classes?" asked Nick hopefully.

"Do you feel up to it?" asked Poppy, she wasn't sure if it was a good idea.

"Yes ma'am," replied the sixteen year old immediately.

"No magic," said Poppy immediately, "If you are going take at least two of these with you, one after lunch and one after dinner understood?" she finished sternly.

"What are they?" asked Nick curiously.

"They will boost your magical core," said Poppy, magic replenishing potions.

"Okay," said Nick nodding vigorously realising how important it was.

"I shall let your parents know you are attending classes," said Poppy, and also inform the headmaster that his core had once again reconnected, they no longer had to fear he was a squib. Especially James Potter, he had admittedly been terrified at the prospect, no doubt blaming himself. Well it was his fault, he had stupidly been training his son all year around. It surprised poppy it hadn't happened sooner, which meant Nick had a bigger than average magical core. If he hadn't been so powerful, there would have been a chance the core wouldn't have reconnected. Poppy shook of her thoughts as she Floo called Albus.
Chapter 42

Invisible

Chapter 42

READ - Harry's written exam isn't when it ends, think of it like a theory/written exam before you can pass your driving test. He will spend four/six months taking written exams (if he passes and we know he will) then he can proceed towards his mastery it will take around the rest of the year before Harry will then have to create TWO potions to present to the Potions community to be considered a MASTER in the field. Now many potion apprentices don't have the smarts to actually CREATE a potion from scratch. That's what I tried to convey when I said some of them had been at it for four years (it doesn't mean ALL of them did just a few). The Potions Harry has already created DONT count to his Mastery pass because one - The first one was created BEFORE he begun his mastery. The second reason - Harry and Severus CO-CREATED the Potion. Harry has to come up with TWO by himself WHEN THE TIME COMES!

As for the OWL SCORES AND LETTER WITH THEIR SCHOOL SUPPLIE LIST READ THE CHAPTER AND FIND OUT WHY :D there I think that's everything people were asking about answered! onwards to the story which I hope you are all still enjoy! please review ;)

I Was Invisible To Everyone

Harry ran towards the classrooms, he was rather late after all, especially if Dumbledore was back from breakfast already. He normally came in time to avoid the Headmaster altogether, which was just the way he liked it. He stopped when he realized he had no timetable, he balled his fists up and groaned in irritation. Veering off, he descended the steps, and the castle, if sensing his urgency helped him along the way. Well no staircase seemed to go in the opposite direction, as it liked to do - especially to the first years. The castle had a sense of humour, that much was pretty evident, teasing the new students as it did. He took a deep breath and hoped that Professor Slughorn was nothing like Professor Snape when he is interrupted. He knocked loudly on the door, it opened automatically, must have been a spell, mused Harry as he entered the potions classroom. By the look of it, it was a first year class, and they were all simply writing. The cauldron's weren't set up, weird, he must be different. Severus had them brewing straight away, a potion to cure boils if he remembered correctly.

"Can I help you?" asked Slughorn still not looking up from whatever he was doing, he was irritated Harry realized that.

"I don't have a timetable sir, I cannot get to my class." said Harry respectfully, you drew more flies with honey than vinegar.

"Ah," said Slughorn his eyes lightening up, as he finally looked up to identify the person in his classroom. He hadn't dreamed he would be here, not even for a minute. The boy was too good to be classed with even the seventh years. "Follow me. Continue writing the instructions class."

"How is your Mastery going Mr. Peverell?" asked Slughorn his voice filled with very genuine curiosity and awe. He had read upon the two potions he had created already, and he was simply astounded with the work this sixteen year old had done. The first one was impressive enough but the second, he had been asked to brew for St. Mungo's. Harry had not Patented it, which meant he couldn't solely make the money for it. Which really was too bad, Harry could have made a rather big fortune with it. Then again, thought Slughorn a smile twitching at his lips, he had taken the
entire Potter fortune from under his biological parents noses. He only wished he'd been here sooner, to think it could have been him taking Harry under his wing. Unfortunately he was no Potions Master, and thus unable to really take on an Apprentice.

"I'm in the processes of starting my written exams at the Ministry," said Harry grinning widely, he was proud of himself and why not? He had every right to be.

"Indeed? Well I must say congratulations, I have no doubt you will pass with flying colours." said Slughorn proudly, if his inventions were anything to go by, he would pass as he'd told Harry. It was just too bad that he couldn't use those to pass his Mastery, they wouldn't count. Only after his written exams anything he created would be counted towards passing his Mastery in the Potions community. Then again it wasn't often anyone did that, could do that, create potions before the end of their Apprenticeship. "Can I ask why you didn't patent your newest creation?" the man who had created the original Wolfsbane Potion, Damocles had patented his for two years. Afterwards anyone could brew it, when it was finally listed. Not only that but he had received the order of Merlin, he was genuinely surprised the Potion Harry created, hadn't earned him one. Severus Snape had gone on to make modifications, which had made it easier on the werewolves transformations.

"Because people need it now. I don't have the time to deal with all the requests I'd surely get." said Harry honestly, perhaps after the war he'd start doing it. Right now the world needed all the help it could get.

"Very true," said Slughorn nodding his head, judging by the requests he was getting it would do well. He wasn't the only brewer either, no doubt Severus Snape had gotten his share of demands for it. St. Mungo's unfortunately couldn't afford a Potions Master like Severus, hence he was being asked. "Ah, there we go." he exclaimed having found what he was looking for. He handed it to the teenager, who admittedly acted more mature than most adults.

"Thank you, sir." said Harry, before leaving the office and the classroom, ignoring the curious stares he was getting. Looking at his timetable, he had Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday on his timetable. Obviously they hadn't been able to fit him into the two days again, well that sucked. He was only here half day today, then tomorrow was a full day, and only an afternoon class on Wednesday. He had transfiguration right now, thankfully that wasn't too far to go. It was on the first floor, not far from McGonagall's office.

Harry bolted up the steps, jumping away from one in particular, something all the older students did. The step trapped you in it, sinking your feet straight through it, if you happened to stand on it. He made his way past McGonagall's office, and another jog down he was finally at the Transfiguration class. He stopped outside, regaining his bearings and breath before he knocked and entered.

"Sorry I'm late Professor McGonagall, I did not receive my timetable and had to retrieve it from Professor Slughorn." said Harry in explanation. He stood there beside the door, after closing it, waiting on his teacher speaking.

"No problem, why don't you take a seat." said Minerva, withholding a smile, it was obvious to her he'd been spending a lot of time with Severus. He was even beginning to speak like him, and yes he had spoke like that during his years at Hogwarts. Most teachers realized it was because Severus didn't have many friends. He'd been around adults so often, he spoke like them. The only friend he'd had for five years had been Lily, before he'd gotten in with the wrong crowd. Even if he was late often there was nothing to be done, Harry wasn't staying at Hogwarts, he wasn't a student of any particular house now (even if he had been sorted). He attended only a select few classes, which
by the way he didn't wear the Hogwarts uniform for.

Harry nodded before he took the only seat available which happened to be next Granger. Despite being mocked for the past six years, she had remained the same annoying know-it-all attitude. She thought she was better than everyone else, even the teachers at times, totally contradicting them. Harry could only hope she remained quiet though this class, otherwise he wouldn't be responsible for his actions.

It wasn't going to be his day, thought Harry, as Granger's hand rose straight in the air. Harry rolled his eyes, scooting his chair away from hers as far as he could. Placing his hand on his ear, in hopes of muffling her irritating know-it-all voice. "How are we supposed to work? We have no books!" insisted Hermione looking devastated. "Our O.W.L scores were late!"

Harry placed his hand over his mouth, hiding his rather amused grin which had slid across his face. Judging by McGonagall's suddenly pursed lips she saw his amusement and was trying to stop her own from showing. Just for the hell of it Harry calmly removed his transfiguration book from his bag. He bought nearly every book he could, it wasn't just Potions. So he had all the books he'd need for his classes. "I do." said Harry smugly, rapping his fingers on his new book.

"Everyone else is in the same boat," said McGonagall disapprovingly, wondering how the girl could be so thoughtless. "As you all know, there is a war going on outside these walls, many people we know have unfortunately passed on. Merlin rest their souls, which means there was a very serious delay with not only just the O.W.L's but also the distribution of the letters."

Hermione suddenly found the tabletop very interesting her face going cherry red at the unconcealed reprimand.

"I got a copy from the Library," said Neville flushing red at the attention he got.

"At Lunch time, we will hand out owl orders for your items, and you will have them before tomorrow. The owners of the shops have been warned in advance for the sudden flux of owl orders they will receive." stated McGonagall calmly.

Hermione's hand shot up into the air once again.

"Yes Miss Granger?" asked McGonagall barely able to conceal her irritation at the constant interruptions. She had to remind herself she only had two more years before she was free of the infuriating girl. That day could not come quick enough for her.

"What about the first years wands?" protested the sixth year, looking appalled.

"Mr. Ollivander has been taken," said Minerva strained, as had Fortescue come to that. "The wands were burnt in the carnage. We are bringing in an overseas wand-maker this morning for the students." the students all nodded solemnly, they had read the newspaper and had been as shocked as everyone else. It brought to home, for many of them, that a lot of people were going to be dead before the war was over - assuming they'd win. If they really had to depend on Potter, then they truly were screwed. The teenager had left his own brother, his bloody brother, to save his own skin. "Any more questions?" this was said directly to Miss. Granger.

"No ma'am," said Hermione sitting back happy now, that all her questions had been answered. She was eyeing Harry's book with jealousy, she didn't have that one. She'd gone through all her books to find them but no, no such luck.

"Today we will be learning about Animagus' and transforming who can tell me about it?" asked
Minerva standing there observing her students. Many hands went up, Granger's shooting into the air before she'd finished speaking.

"Mr. Peverell," said Minerva, nodding in his direction.

"It's the ability to transform oneself into an animal at will. It's exceeding difficult to learn, and takes serious consideration." said Harry, taking a breath, as Hermione stuck her hand in the air thinking Harry was thinking. "You need to meditate, to find what animals are open to you. Then you have to choose the one you like, the one most suited to you. Not everyone can transform, it's nothing to do with power levels either its almost like Metamorphmagus, you have it or you don't. It also requires a great deal of concentration and determination. You should always have someone with you while attempting it. Otherwise you may transform but be unable to revert back, thus you'd end up stuck until someone cast the counter curse - this is assuming anyone knows or thinks about that likely scenario."

Hermione Granger was sitting there fuming her hand lowered once more. She hated people outdoing her at anything. She liked to be the superior intellectual one in the class giving out proper answers and not just one sentence. Even worse the teacher was impressed, it should be her getting looked at like this.

"It isn't just that particular aspect that's dangerous, depending on one's form they could wreak havoc and get away with murder if they chose to do so. Which is why the Ministry requires all Animagus' to be registered. If you are found out to be one, and failed to register you could end up in Azkaban and animal bound for a certain period of time. The last time this happened they got one month in Azkaban and one year suspension of being able to turn into their animal. He, if I'm not mistaken was a tiger." finished Harry, trying to remember everything he knew about Animagus but found he'd told her all he knew.

"Well done, Mr. Peverell, your explanation was very well thought out." nodded Minerva, "As he said, its not something to be attempted alone. It takes a year perhaps two to master this particular transformation."

Hermione's hand shot up.

"Yes, Miss. Granger?" asked Minerva getting very exasperated by her.

"How long did it take you to master the spell?" Hermione asked her eagerly. She wasn't the only one curious, the others were all sitting forward interested as well. She had an entire episode to waste, with them not having the necessary essentials to work with.

"As you all know I have a Mastery in Transfiguration, it was one of the first I was taught. It took me only six months to complete my transformation and with it the ability to turn into my form at will." said Minerva before staring sternly at them, "I had an affinity to Transfiguration, so it was easier for me to accomplish this, so please do not attempt this at home or in the dorms where nobody can watch."

Another hand went up.

"Yes, Mr. Potter?" asked Minerva, regarding the teenager.

"We would be allowed to do it with a teacher present?" asked Nick.

"Yes, during the Transfiguration club sixth years are allowed to try if they want to. As its been said it's not for everyone." said Minerva.
"Yes, Miss. Patil?" asked Minerva as yet another hand raised in the air.

"The Transfiguration club is on at the same time as the Charms club, we can't attend both its not fair!" said the Ravenclaw quietly, she rather liked the thought of changing into an animal.

"Not this year, the club schedules have been shifted, check the common room notice board and you will see this." said Minerva, "I believe the Transfiguration club is on at the same time now as the Gobstone club." With only fourteen teachers, it was inevitable that such after school activities collided, they not only had classes to teach, after school clubs to run but students to look after especially four Professor's in particular. Slughorn, herself, Spout and of course last but no means least Flitwick. To make things worse, the actually had the core classes that all students had to take in their seven years at Hogwarts.

A few groans could be heard, evidently they were members of the Gobstones club. With that Minerva began explaining in a greater detail about Animagus', possible forms, how it felt, how long it took on average to accomplish something. She magically wrote information on the blackboard behind her and asked them to write everything down. Afterwards they were allowed to speculate which animal would suit them best and why it would.

When the students all left, Harry hung behind, now that he knew his timetable, he knew exactly what classes he'd miss and when.

"Can I help you Mr. Peverell?" asked Minerva curiously, as she sat down at her desk, mentally preparing herself for the next class. Knowing without a doubt she'd be facing the exact same questions as before. She fixed the register and marked Harry as present as he had been.

"These are the classes I'm going to miss this semester," said Harry handing over a small piece of parchment with each date on it.

"Can I ask why?" enquired Minerva accepting the parchment curious. Harry was constantly in the paper, Slughorn constantly went on about him during intervals at the teacher meetings and even during lunch and dinner. As a Transfiguration Master, she knew the dedication Harry was putting forth was astonishing. She only wished other sixth years...no fifth years since Harry had begun then would show that initiative as well.

"These are the dates I have to be in the Ministry for my written exams." said Harry quietly.

"I believe a congratulations are in order then Mr. Peverell, well done, this is no small feat you have accomplished. I believe everyone is impressed with the initiative you have shown, as a teacher it's a blessing to see students fulfilling their potential. The fact you are also remaining at Hogwarts is astounding, if you ever need any help, then please do not hesitate to ask." said Minerva, this was probably the first time she'd told him that. She should have offered last year, nobody had ever stayed at Hogwarts and been an apprentice before. Students asked the staff, the ones with Masteries anyway, unfortunately life as a teacher was too hectic to want to take an apprentice on. She knew Pomona Spout was actually thinking of taking on Neville Longbottom. He may be just above mediocre in most classes, but Herbology truly seemed to be his calling.

"Thank you Professor," said Harry his green eyes wide with astonishment, the only teacher who had ever wanted to help him was Severus. He was really surprised by Professor McGonagall's declaration.

"Just remember what I said," replied Minerva nodding her head, her brown eyes filled with pride as she regarded Harry. All the teachers were proud of him, she couldn't help but think, at his wide eyed wonder, they should have told him before. She was going to speak to the other teachers about
"Go on, you don't want to be late for your next class."

"Yes, ma'am." said Harry before turning and leaving, taking a look at his timetable once again. Ancient Runes, which unfortunately had Granger in it too, if he got there quick enough hopefully he wouldn't be stuck sitting next to her.

Harry entered the classroom, the teacher wasn't there yet, he slipped into a seat at the back. Well away from Granger, not many people took Ancient Runes, last year they'd combined two classes together. It was why Luna had been able to have classes with him, it didn't look like this was the case this year. That was because the O.W.L's had been at an all time low for Ancient Runes, because one side of the class knew it all, the other didn't.

"Good morning class," said Professor Babbling entering the classroom, there was a very subdued reply of 'Good morning' by some of the students. "As you are no doubt aware, there has been some difficulties this year. So I think we will just go over information we learned last year today." she said, ignoring the groans coming from a few of her students.

"Tell me the translation for this Rune," said Babbling with a flourish making a rune from her wand and displaying it for her students. Hands immediately shot up into the air.

"Miss. Granger," said Babbling.

"It's Demiguise the creatures invisibility represents zero," said Hermione as always giving a text book answer.

"Indeed, now this one." said Babbling, her wand making rapid movements and a hydra head appeared. Harry as well as everyone raised their hands, Hermione almost shooting out her seat, her hand was so high in the air.

"Mr. Peverell?" asked Babbling, pointing towards Harry, they had learned very quickly not to call him Potter. He refused to respond to it upon returning to Hogwarts after emancipating himself. Given the information that had been brought to light following it, she couldn't blame the child for doing so.

"The Hydra has nine heads, hence it represents the letter nine." explained Harry.

"Which symbol is shrouded in mystery?" asked Babbling.

"The symbol for number seven, due to it being a magically powerful number is still a mystery to everyone. The best Ancient Rune masters have studied and even tried to dig up all known information about the subject to no success yet." said Harry.

"You think they will?" asked Babbling curiously, not many believed that, they thought it would always stay a mystery.

"Our world is advancing every day in each subject, Potions, Transfiguration, Charms if not then we would be at a standstill." said Harry. "I believe one day the entire language will one day be completely open to interpretation."

"Indeed, well done." said Babbling, "You will all be pleased to know that Mr. Peverell was the only student to gain an Outstanding in his O.W.L exam." Harry laughed out loud at the look off utter outrage and fury on Hermione Grangers face.

"Now what is this one?" continued Babbling, another Rune appeared before them.
"Well done Harry," said one of the Ravenclaw twins…Patil Harry couldn't remember her name very well. He knew it started with a P and it was an unusual name.

"Thanks," said Harry surprised.

"You wouldn't help me with Ancient Runes would you?" she asked hesitantly.

"Me?" asked Harry surprised his eyes going wide, at the same time Hermione went "Him?" at they stood outside the defence classroom.

"You are the best," said the Ravenclaw bluntly.

"Er, I only stay until lunch, I suppose if you want I can help you over lunch before I go home someday." said Harry, everyone was aware that Harry didn't stay at Hogwarts now. It was easy to spot he wasn't a proper student either, he never wore school uniform. He had really stylish clothes on with a travelling cloak on his shoulders. Actually his cloak was in his bag, not on his shoulders right now. Hogwarts warmed up quickly, especially when it wasn't winter. Their winter cloaks was thicker, keeping them warmer from the winter chill clinging to the old castle.

"That's fine!" said Padma immediately, realizing how lucky she was he'd even agreed at all.
"Thank you." she said giggling as she went straight to a group of girls and began talking to them in very hushed tones. Harry became alarmed, quite naturally, if she was asking just to try and 'hook up' with him she'd be sorely disappointed.

Harry noticed Nick was there as well, oddly enough he was beside Susan Bones. Who looked like her world had ended, he knew why though he'd read the paper. Her aunt had died in the battle of London it was being called. Personally Harry thought it was stupid, it was no battle, it had been a massacre. He hoped Nick wasn't being a dick to her.

"Hey Harry," said Neville "How have you been?"

"Hey Neville," grinned Harry his thoughts of Nick Potter fading immediately. "I'm good, I'll be taking my written exams for the next few months!" he boasted proudly, and among friends that was allowed.

"Oh brilliant!" exclaimed Neville, "Well done!"

"Thanks, how are you guys?" asked Harry.

"Me and Luna are good," nodded Neville quite happy, in fact he looked smitten.

"Glad to hear it, who's the defence teacher?" asked Harry.

"Professor Lupin is back…I'm actually going to learn something this year!" said Neville, "It's great isn't it?"

"Not for me," sulked Harry, he had been ignored by Lupin all year during his third year and he hated him for that - plain and simple.

"Oh, sorry Harry." said Neville realizing his mistake.

"It's okay." said Harry shaking his head, he knew Neville liked him as a teacher anyway.

The door swung open revealing the teacher, and true to Neville's word it was Professor Lupin back again. He told them to all come in and sit down, the desks were there which meant it wasn't a
practical lesson - at least they didn't think so. The register was called and once it was complete he stood up.

"With the war being ongoing, I think the first spell I'd like to try and teach you is the Patronus Charm." said Professor Lupin. "Who can tell me about it?"

"Yes Miss. Patil," said Professor Lupin nodding to the Ravenclaw.

"The Patronus charm can protect you from Dementors," she said.

"Indeed, anything else anyone would like to add?" asked Remus. "Yes Miss. Granger?"

"It's a very complex charm and it takes a lot of power to cast." replied Hermione beaming proudly.

Remus nodded as if he was happy with the information being learned. "Anyone else?" asked Remus. "Mr. Po.. Peverell?" he knew Harry could cast the spell, Severus Snape had quickly and proudly advocated that.

"The Patronus spell needs the right emotion and memory not just power to perform at its best. Without emotion you will be lucky to achieve mist. Only those purest at heart can perform it, those who kill and murder like the Death Eaters are unable to conjure it. They cannot master the purest emotion to cast the spell because their memories and magic are tainted by death. The Patronus takes on the form of a guardian, the literal translation for the spell is I await thee or I await protector. It will be something from your life, or a representations of someone. Ranging from an Animagus form to their protectors or lovers own Patronus form. It is also effective against Lethifold's." replied Harry.

"Mr. Potter? Anything to add?" asked Remus.

"It doesn't just have to be a guardian or life partner it could be family, brothers or sisters." said Nick quietly, everyone strained to hear him. "Once you find the best memory you can think of, the charm can be learned very easily. The form of your Patronus can change, to suit your emotions and someone you call protector. It can also take commands, if you tell it to attack it will. Normally it takes up to six weeks to produce anything from the mist practising the charm. To create a fully fledged, if they even can succeed can take up to four to six months. Its magically draining, the spell, and shouldn't be attempted every day." his voice had changed saying this, it had turn accusatory.

Unnoticeably by the rest of the class bar the twins in birth only, Remus winced as if he'd been struck unexpectedly. "Well done, you knew information I did not expect you to regarding the Patronus charm. Raise your hand if you can cast a fully fledged Patronus."

Harry raised his hand, as did a few others, Nick raised his last and almost reluctantly. Harry was getting curious about Nick's change in character, had being almost reduced to a squib and put in a coma changed him that much? By the looks of it, it seemed his answer was yes loud and clear.

"Mr. Potter why don't you demonstrate for the class?" asked Remus, quietly.

"I can't, Madam Pomfrey told me I wasn't to use magic today," said Nick quietly.

"Mr. Peverell?" asked Remus nodding at Harry next.

"Expecto Patronum!" said Harry firmly, and out leapt a beautiful silver panther, which patrolled the classroom almost proudly. Leaping from the end of the classroom, he appeared once more before Harry and bowed low. Harry smiled at it, aware of what it represented, what it had always
represented - Harry's love for Severus Snape. The Patronus disappeared, it wasn't needed after all.

"Very well done Mr. Peverell." said Remus proudly. "Do you know what your forms are?" he asked the others who had accomplished the spell also.

"Mines is a Boar," said Ernie Macmillan a Huffelpuff Prefect.

"Impressive," said Remus nodding his head.

"I don't know what mine is yet," admitted Cho Chang, "I think it might be some sort of bird."

"Good, very good." said Remus, "Why don't we all try and cast the spell? See if we can form some mist today?" he said trying to cheer those that hadn't cast it before.

So Remus broke them off into pairs, magically making the tables and chairs, line up at the sides of the room. Those that had already accomplished it just sat at the side of the platform they'd created bored.

"Neville you have to think of a really good memory, one that makes your heart fill up with love and happiness. Some memory you couldn't live without, something that would leave a hole in your heart if it was removed or Obliviated." said Harry quietly to his friend, helping him he might as well do something useful since he already knew the spell. "It can be something made up, something you dearly wish to be true that makes your heart long for it."

Neville listened to Harry his heart filled with doubt, "But I'm not powerful enough to cast this spell Harry. I only learned the disarming spell recently and it's a fourth year spell!"

Harry blinked, "Listen to me, you aren't a squib, magic is a living thing inside us. It can realize intent, you believe you don't have magic so it will always be the case. Believe in yourself and your magic and you will do well. Hogwarts doesn't accept near squibs, only those who have a lot of magic can get in. Those with low magic don't, especially Muggle born's they never know what they are capable of. Hogwarts has only so many spots for students, and those with the power get accepted."

"How do you know that?" gaped Neville surprised.

"Unedited copy of Hogwarts a history from the founders time, Salazar Slytherin cast the spell to find magical children." said Harry simply.

"Really?" asked Neville astounded.

"Yeah," said Harry, "So you can do it, you just won't that's the problem. I bet if Luna was here you'd have no problem doing that spell."

"Maybe." said Neville flushing bright red.

"No maybe about it!" laughed Harry.

For the rest of the class the students continued to try, Nick had taken to trying to help Susan Bones. Ernest was trying to help the others in his own house. Harry had only helped Neville, he cared not for the rest of the students. Remus went around helping everyone, Hermione Granger was extremely outraged when she couldn't get it. In the end Professor Lupin spent most of his time trying to help her. She was after all making the most noise about it. For most part everyone could produce a mist from their wand.
"Professor Lupin?" called one of the students.

"Yes Miss. Patil?" asked Professor Lupin curiously, they were all finished for the morning now.

"Is the Defence club going to be restarted?" the Gryffindor asked hopeful.

"Due to the circumstances, the defence club will be twice a week. When I am unavailable as before Sirius Black will be taking my place as substitute teacher." explained Remus. "Now everyone is to go straight to the Great Hall, no trips, you all need to sign the forms and get your orders as quickly as possible. Is that understood?"

"Yes, Professor Lupin." called the students.

"Great. Have a good afternoon everyone." said Professor Lupin as they all left the classroom.

"So are you going to teach me today?" asked Padma as they met up outside the classroom, Neville who was walking beside him was surprised. He stared at Padma before he suppressed his laughter. Padma fancied Harry, he had heard her talking about him. He knew Harry preferred his own gender - too bad for the fashion frantic Ravenclaw.

"No, I can't until Wednesday, I'll come half an hour into lunch and we can study in the library until my afternoon class." said Harry honestly, if she wanted to learn then he'd do it, if not then she'd get her marching orders. He wasn't wasting his time for someone that wasn't serious about studying. He wasn't just trying to keep up with schoolwork, homework but also his apprenticeship, work Severus gave him, potions, and of course defence lessons Sev was giving him too. He had hardly any free time, and he must be mad to give up his time to her. Yet he had, and he sincerely hoped she wasn't wasting his or her time. Especially considering everything she knew he was doing. Everyone did, it had been in the paper. He felt a warm glow just thinking about Professor McGonagall's and Slughorn's declaration. That's when he remembered he hadn't told Lupin.

"Hey Nev, go down to lunch I'll be there in a minute, I just have to talk to Lupin." said Harry, before drifting off from the group going down the stairs, once Neville had nodded he understood.

He didn't see Patil pouting or Nick staring at him with longing written all over his face.

"Come in," called Lupin, from where he sat at the teachers desk putting paperwork into his desk and tidying it up a little.

"Oh, Harry, come in!" said Remus his amber eyes filled with hope and a little desperation. "What can I do for you?"

"Here, these are the dates I won't be at school," said Harry handing over the paper.

"Oh," said Remus looking downhearted. "I see, can I ask why?"

"My Written portion of my Potions Mastery." said Harry simply.

"Congratulations Harry, I'm proud of you," said Remus quietly. "Sirius will be over the moon to hear it as well. He's been keeping track of all your mentions in the paper. In fact he has them on the wall."

Harry blinked and remained quiet, but part of Harry, a very small part was warmed. He remembered Lily and James doing that every time Nick was mentioned. He wasn't sure if they still had them up, but they probably did. Did that mean Sirius actually cared? Or was it out of a guilty conscience? If he forgave him would he just go back to the way he had been? Invisible to him his
"Everyone is proud of you, despite what your parents did…you rose above it and made something of yourself. Your professors talk about you a lot, wondering how you are doing with your apprenticeship. Especially with the fact you are also attending Hogwarts. You are the talk of a lot of staff meetings, wondering how you can turn in such quality work and pass your Mastery too." said Remus a proud gleam in his amber eyes. "I am sorrier than you will ever know that…I neglected to see what was right in front of me. I know I have no chance of reconciliation so I wont pretend that. I just wish you the best in your new life and career."

"What you neglected to see was me, I was invisible to everyone, do you know what that's like?" asked Harry angrily. "No matter what I did my so called brother got the bloody praise for it! And I…I was shoved aside. James couldn't even spare three minutes so I could get a owl! Its not as if I could get it on my own since I've never gotten pocket money from them ever!"

Remus took it without saying anything, just sadly staring at Harry as if he could see into his soul and really understand him. So that's why Harry wasn't giving them money, he was giving them something - a taste of their own medicine. He understood Harry's childhood more than the boy would ever know. He decided to reveal something about his past not even Lily or James knew. Perhaps that would help them get to understand one another better.

"Yes Harry, I do know how it feels to be invisible, I was invisible to my own parents from the age of eight. Creatures aren't exactly looked kindly upon, and my parents were terrified the wizarding world would find out. They were more concerned about their image than me. I vowed if I had children I would never let it happen again. You may not be mine biologically but my wolf and I both considered you my cub. The bond is still there, and will always be." said Remus quietly, his amber eyes glowing with the sincerity of his words.

Harry stepped back as if what Remus was saying was physical blows to the barriers he'd put up to protect himself from heartache all those years ago. "Then why did you ignore me when you finally came back to Hogwarts? You didn't even look at me once, or even ask me how I was. It was like I didn't exist."

"I honestly do not know, it was as if you had put a notice me not spell upon yourself." said Remus he had thought back often enough, wondering WHY he'd never thought about him, or even looked at him. Yet he couldn't say, even in his memories he could see Harry there but it was like a blur really. "But no, that's not probable."

Harry frowned it might not be probable but it was possible…what if he had unconsciously cast it on himself? He had been ignored his entire life, then at Hogwarts, what if he'd wanted to be ignored by everyone and cast unconsciously…accidentally? To stave of disappointment that someone would actually care. Even if he had cast a spell like that, it didn't matter because they had been ignoring him long before that. "It doesn't really matter if one had been, you were ignoring me long before that." stated Harry calmly, forcing himself to stop thinking about it. It did no good to dwell on the past, Harry knew that.

"We were, and I don't expect you to forgive us for that. You are your own man now Harry, independent and brilliant. You will go places, and you know what? Nobody else deserves it more than you. All your dedication and hard work, it will pay off and ill always be proud of you. Know that." said Remus. He had never forgiven his parents, so he had no reason to think Harry would forgive him.

"Thank you," said Harry stiffly.
"You are very welcome, I'd wish you good luck, but I do not think you need it." said Remus, watching Harry leave without saying another word. At least Harry didn't outright hate him, perhaps one day they would be able to talk to each other without the past interfering. That's if he survived this war, there was no guarantee. Not for any of them, but he'd do his part to make the world a safer place.

Harry went down to the lunch hall, only to tell Neville he was just going to Floo home. Lying and saying he had some potions to brew. Considering he was doing his mastery in that subject it wasn't hard to buy. He also waved at Luna as he walked away, seven minutes later he Floo'ed from Dumbledore's office to Prince Manor.

"Hi Eileen, where's Severus?" asked Harry curiously.

"He's in the lab," said Eileen beaming at him still so proud of him, he'd gotten so many owls and doing his mastery too.

"Thank you," said Harry grinning as he dropped his bag beside the fire as he always did. He didn't need it any other time, only if he got homework. If he did he'd take what he needed, the books were always just left there. He'd read them five times already anyway, he knew them all by heart. He slid into the lab, watching Severus concentrating on his brewing.

"Need any help?" asked Harry quietly, as not to startle him since he was pouring something into his potion.

"It's on the bench," said Severus wryly, as if he'd suspected Harry would come down and ask. Harry looked down and noticed it had been the potion they created together. It was hard to brew, and took a lot of concentration. One he'd had taken great delight in being able to brew successfully the first time. Considering the importance of it, he had prayed it wouldn't fail. Eileen wouldn't have lasted much longer, and because of them her life had been renewed. It was a truly wonderful sight to see her so alive and full of life. He had been able to repay her for caring about him when no one else had. As he brewed he continued to look up at Severus.

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What ya doin' tonight I wish I could be A fly on your wall

Are you really alone

Whose stealin' your dreams

Why can't I breathe

You in to my life

So tell me

What would it take

To make you see that I'm alive

If I was invisible

Then I could just watch you in your room

If I was invincible
I'd make you mine tonight
If hearts were unbreakable
Then I could just tell you where I stand
I would be the smartest man If I was invisible
Wait, I already am
Saw your face in the crowd
I call out your name
You don't hear a sound
I keep tracing your steps
Each move that you make
Wish I could read What goes through your mind
Oh baby Wish I could touch me With the colours of your life
If I was invisible
Then I could just watch you in your room
If I was invincible
I'd make you mine tonight
If hearts were unbreakable Then I could just tell you where I stand
I would be the smartest man If I was invisible
Wait, I already am
I am nothing without you
Just a shadow passing through If I was invisible
Then I could just watch you in your room
If I was invincible
I'd make you mine to night
If hearts were unbreakable
Then I could just tell you where I stand I would be the smartest man If I was invisible
If I was invisible
If I was invisible
Wait, I already am
(Invisible- D-Side)
Chapter 43

Invisible

Chapter 43

A New Year And Loosing The Plot

Lily sighed as she looked over properties that were situated at the back of the Daily Prophet. None of the properties, that she could afford anyway, were good enough, well nothing they were used to. In fact with the money they actually had in their vault they’d only manage to get a two bedroom house in Knockturn Alley. She would rather sleep outside in the forbidden forest than purchase such a place. It was in dire need of repairs! And who knew what creatures she’d have as neighbours. How she wanted to strangle the boy, this was his fault she was so stressed and worried all the time. She’d never had to be like this, she’d listen to others going through it, but she’d always been very financially secure.

Until a few years ago, not only that they’d lost their standing in the wizarding world. Not just socially, but also within the Ministry, the seats James had on the Wizengamot now belonged to the silly little brat. Closing her eyes, she breathed deeply, trying to get her anger to recede. Snarling, she scrunched up the newspaper and flung it into the flames. She took some sense of satisfaction, watching the paper burn, until it was nothing more than a pile of ashes. What was she going to do? She couldn’t take much more of this. She’d never worked; she’d married right out of Hogwarts and had children. Sure she did some housework, looked after the kids, but that was nothing compared to the workload she had now. It was exhausting, she could not quit. Otherwise they wouldn’t have anywhere to stay, James always stayed here at Hogwarts, when he wasn’t working of course. The war was truly starting up, people were dying, and if she or James died…their kids wouldn’t have anything to their name. She had to do something; they would have to screw the nut even further. No more anything, a house had to be the first thing they bought. Despite the fact she and James were angry with one another at the moment, it doesn’t mean they didn’t see eye to eye when it mattered.

This mattered. Having a home for their kids mattered. A safe heaven from the war.

“Are you going to forgive me yet?” asked James as he came out of their shared bedroom, speaking quietly out of habit. His daughter had slept in the next room all summer, so it was going to take some getting used to it just being them. His Auror robes were already ironed and on. He was currently fastening his wand holster to his wrist. All Auror’s chose to wear them; it stopped their opponent from being able to summon their wands.

“There’s too much war and destruction going on outside these walls to fight among ourselves.” said Lily tiredly, suddenly feeling very drained. She hated fighting with James; it wasn’t something they normally did. Everything had changed and she didn’t like it at all. A sigh left her weary lips as James came to her, wrapping his arms around her giving her the comfort he thought she needed.

“Hey,” said James softly, “Don’t worry about it, Lils. Everything is going to be fine you’ll see.”

Lily remained quiet, she wanted to believe him, and she really did. Unfortunately the optimistic part of her had died out along time ago. Her family was in ruins; no matter how much they held it together it was never going to be the way it was. Nick wasn’t talking to them, Roxy was barely around, and secluding herself in the Library every second she could. Every time she tried to talk to
her, she got short answers then all she saw was her daughters back. She’d never been a very popular girl, but she’d always had friends. Severus mostly during her childhood with her sister tagging along with them. At Hogwarts she had remained with Severus, until her fifth year. The feeling of being called such a bad name by her only friend still stung after all those years. He had been her only friend, part of her had been jealous though, with him making friends with purebloods. She had been loosing him, so she decided to be the one to break all ties first. James had been there for her, when she’d been so lonely, friendless, and that had been her. She’d gone with the first person to show her attention during her lonely years. She’d made friends with the people James hung around with; it wasn’t until two years ago she realized she didn’t have a single friend in the world. What she wouldn’t do for someone to talk to, to give her advice and sympathise with her situation. Oh how she wished her mum was still alive, she could have gone to her. Talking over a cup of tea, she’d always taken her side no matter what.

“Lils?” said James his voice filled with concern.

“You will be late for work if you don’t go,” said Lily, noticing the time, she would need to get dressed herself, she had classes to teach.

“Lily,” sighed James, wanting to say more but knowing they never seemed to have the time. “I love you and I’ll see you tonight.” he decided upon as he quickly grabbed the Floo powder and got himself to work on time.

Lily shook her head, this should be a relieving time for her family, Nick had recovered and his magic was whole again. Yet she just felt awful all the time, and angry. She quickly got dressed, and donned her cloak as she made her way down to the great hall. She noticed her robes were looser on her than ever before, she was loosing weight, little wonder she wasn’t eating much these days.

She took her seat, and nobody so much as looked at her, same as every day. She wasn’t well liked. Lily took some food, you’d think she’d tortured and killed someone, the way everyone was treating her. Sure she’d forgotten to hire a tutor for Harry, but it wasn’t as if she’d done it out of maliciousness. He just wasn’t as important as Nick was.

“How are you Lily?” asked Dumbledore, speaking to the red head, he did feel sorry for her. She looked sick and tired, most did though, and war would do that to anyone. Not only that, but from what he’d learned, Nick was very angry at everyone. He would need to speak to the child soon, get things back on track. Much as he’d like to give the child a break, he couldn’t. Nick had the sole responsibility of ending this war; he needed to know everything he could teach him. The quicker the better, since he didn’t know if he would survive.

“I’m fine,” said Lily automatically, she didn’t even think about her answer before giving it. Dumbledore probably couldn’t care less about her problems. Even if he did, there was nothing he could do. He had a war to stop, Order to run, a Wizengamot to run, as well as a school; she certainly wouldn’t want to be him. The man probably never got much rest.

“Of course, would you bring Nick up to see me after the end of classes today?” enquired Dumbledore finishing of his plate of food. Hogwarts always served the best food, even better than his lemon drops, not that he’d ever admit it mind you. He adored his lemon drops, and would be devastated not to get them anymore.

“Okay,” said Lily quietly. Moving her food around, not really seeing it or eating it. She just wanted to get on with her classes then get to her quarters. Perhaps she could feign sickness? How she’d love to disappear from view for a while. Then she stiffened completely, when THAT name came up. She wanted to glare, scream, shout and leave the room but she was rooted on the spot. The awe she could hear in McGonagall’s voice stunned her. Now McGonagall never, EVER, outwardly
showed any favouritism or feelings towards her students. She was the most professional teacher in the school; she went harder on her lions if they were caught wrongdoing just to prove it.

“Harry’s taking his written Mastery exams,” said McGonagall, her entire face lit up in a way that Lily had never seen before. She looked…proud? What on earth was going on with everyone? He’d been ignored by everyone and suddenly he was everywhere admired more than Nick had ever been - even after saving the world.

“Really?” asked Flitwick his eyes wide with wonder.

“Yes, I almost couldn’t believe it myself, then again Severus isn’t one to fool around, he gets straight to the point.” said Slughorn nodding his head, a piece of bacon falling onto his robe, at his loud statement. Slughorn had always had a thing for famous people; it was different with Harry though. For one he hadn’t been part of his slug club and hadn’t met him. Yet he spoke about Harry as if he walked on water.

“I’m still amazed that Severus willingly took on an apprentice!” said Sprout reaching for her goblet an amused look on her face. He had hated teaching, all of them wondered just why the hell he’d become a teacher. Of course none of them had voiced it out loud to him, they wouldn’t have dared. Even to the teachers, Severus, for most part had been stern and unapproachable. He had a wicked sense of humour though, and the most maddening way of speaking.

“He was an apprentice himself once,” said Slughorn in defence of the brilliant but dour man.

“He was indeed,” said Albus entering the conversation, “We were all proud of him for succeeding. It’s at the height of irony that he would choose one who’d go on to surpass him.”

“Yes, very true.” said Slughorn a smile stretching across his face. Noticing the bacon he swiped his hand down getting rid of it. “I only wish I had the opportunity to teach Harry, as I had done with Severus. No doubt he puts most seventh years to shame!”

“I bet he puts most people to shame!” said Flitwick, “I do hope he doesn’t miss many classes doing his exams - it’s an important year, not compared to next year though.”

“Well he will miss five of mine, but I’ve told him he can come to me if it gets too difficult…you should have seen the look on his face.” said Minerva quietly, shaking her head as she put her cutlery down on the table. “He looked so stunned and baffled by my offer, it made me realize we haven’t really given him the support he needs. How many sixteen year olds do you know that’s taken on so much? A few minutes of our time cannot hurt.”

“That’s very true,” said Vector, her spine straight as she ate her breakfast. She was extremely strict, and could have passed as Severus Snape’s sister. Both in looks and in her no nonsense attitude. Although she did not berate the students, they either failed or passed and that was it. Not many people elected to Arithmancy, for those facts, strict, likes to give out near impossible homework and took no mercy on her students. Which was okay, since most career paths didn’t tend to have Arithmancy pass on it, but Potions…well that was on nearly all career path choices the students could take. “Perhaps I should make sure he knows I’m here should he need help.” it wasn’t often someone found a student that actually wanted to learn.

“Very true Septima, I doubt he will accept it, but the fact that offered will mean a lot, you never know he may surprise us.” said McGonagall, replying to the Arithmancy teacher.

“Oh the boy has been doing that for years!” said Slughorn wryly, “I cannot wait to see which potions he decides to create to pass his Mastery.” whatever they were they were sure to be
groundbreaking. The young man was going places; there was no doubt about it.

“You have to create potions to pass?” enquired the Ancient Runes teacher, Bethesda Babbling. She had mastered and studied Ancient Runes, but that didn’t require creating anything, since the language was already done.

Half the teachers turned to stare at her, half incredulity half surprise. “Of course, to pass Masteries you have to prove your worth in the community, I had to create two spells for my transfiguration mastery.” said Minerva once her brain began working again, she hadn’t expected that question, especially not by a teacher…Hagrid maybe not her. Then again one couldn’t create Ancient Runes, it’s something you study.

“Yes, it was quite difficult, but my charms helped me win my duelling championship!” boasted Flitwick proudly. They couldn’t defend themselves against something they didn’t know after all. New spells didn’t have counter spells; some were able to be dissipated using the basic ‘Finite’ spell or Finite Incantatem. That spell was useless against strong powerful and dark magic unfortunately.

“Yes, I was there and it was an impressive sight!” said Albus. He was nearly one hundred and seventy years, he’d gotten around. Contrary to popular belief he didn’t stay at Hogwarts all the time.

“I’ll bet!” said Slughorn amused.

No one so much as stopped their conversation or looked away when Lily stood up and left. They didn’t notice she was the same colour as her hair, or that she was fuming mad. She would have resembled Severus, the way her robes billowed around her, but she lacked his flair.

“It’s not only potions he’d talented in, he’s very quick with charms.” said Flitwick, as he moved his plate to the side, feeling pleasantly full. He made himself a cup of coffee; he’d definitely need it for the classes today. First years was his first class of the day, it was always the worst one. There was always one mishap or another in the class.

“Is there something he is not good at?” asked Albus amused, wondering what on earth was happening. Nick Potter was the one that needed training that needed to set an example, to be better than the rest. He had a war to end, as much as Albus didn’t like it - there was nothing he could do. He would end Voldemort’s reign himself if it was possible, unfortunately prophecies were not to be ignored. Nick must take the devastating blow to end the Dark Lord.

“I guess we shan’t find out,” said Slughorn laughing in amusement, ah, it was going to be a good day he could feel it.

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Severus knocked on Harry’s door and entered, before abruptly closing the door again. If one looked hard enough, they would have seen his pale face, going slightly red. He bit his lip, and reigned in his wayward reactions. He was only human, and seeing someone, who wanted him, in such a state of undress well, who could blame him? Harry was very good looking, and extremely self conscious as well, unlike anyone caught undressed he did not cover his nudity. No instead he had immediately tried to cover his scars. He didn’t see anything wrong with Harry, but Harry felt ashamed by them. Why he would Severus did not know it was a show of strength, of character. He had survived what the Death Eaters had done to him, and remained relatively intact. He had dealt Voldemort quite a blow, his snake, the most wanted wizard alive, Peter Pettigrew - who had eluded the battle hardened Auror’s for years.
Severus let out a breath when his reactions finally ceased, Merlin this was going to be more difficult than he’d ever imagined, especially now. Against his will, his mind kept trailing back to what he’d just seen. This was wrong; he was sixteen years old, a boy and not yet an adult in the eyes of the wizarding world. He groaned, why did the boy have to be so young? And why on earth did he like him of all people? He couldn’t stand here; he had to get away from that room before his baser instincts came out again. Do what his body was urging him to do, and go back in that room and have his wicked ways with him.

He slumped on the seat in the living room, feeling warm all over.

“What’s the matter Severus?” asked Eileen, making her son jump. She had a pair of gardening gloves on, and a basket full of flowers on her arm. She must have been out in the garden; he had assumed she wasn’t awake yet.

“Mother, don’t do that.” said Severus straightening his spine, unable to believe he had actually jumped. If that had happened during his tenure as a spy, he’d have been killed on the spot. If he couldn’t relax in his own home then were could he let his own guard down? The answer was quite simple. Nowhere.

“Is everything okay?” asked Eileen, regarding her son through worried eyes; he was acting rather odd right now.

“I’m fine,” said Severus, “Have you had breakfast?” changing the subject always worked.

“Yes I have.” said Eileen, aware of what her son was attempting and letting it happen. He would tell her what was wrong in time, or she’d get it out of him soon.

“Did you need me?” asked Harry coming into the living room, his face flush with what could only be embarrassment. He’d just come out from the bathroom, completely naked when the door knocked. He hadn’t had the chance to shout, the words had been horrifyingly been stuck in his throat. Part of him had been so very grateful that it hadn’t been Eileen - or he would never have been able to look at her again. Yet the bigger part of him had been dismayed that Severus was able to see his scars. Harry hated them; he often wished he could make them go away. Unfortunately that wasn’t possible, magical scars couldn’t be healed properly, not when they were made with magical daggers or knives. Such items weren’t used often anymore, but the purebloods did have quite a collection of them in their manors or vaults. They were seen as heirlooms now. Most swords or daggers, even knives were either won in duels, specially made for duels or won by other means.

Eileen’s lips twitched, putting two and two together, and with a distracted look on her face left both of them to it. Going through to the kitchen, she needed a nice vase to put her roses in after all. She kept her ears open, listening for any sound coming from within the living room. She couldn’t help herself, she just felt so happy for both of them. It had taken Severus along time to notice what she did, that Harry loved him. She did approve of the idea of Severus waiting; he was a tad bit young. She knew true love when she saw it though, Harry would wait for however long Severus needed. If it hadn’t been true love, she wouldn’t have even thought of dare interfering. She would never allow harm to come to her son. Not after being such a bad mother during Severus’ childhood. She hadn’t protected him as she should, but now, they’d face the full wrath of a free Eileen Snape if they tired to so much as look at her boy wrong.

“I am brewing the Wolfsbane potion for Lupin, I was going to ask if you should like to join me.” said Severus, Harry hadn’t brewed that particular potion yet, and he had been curious to see how he’d deal with the challenge. He had screwed up the first time he had brewed it. It was extremely difficult, one single wrong move and the potion was useless. The worst thing about it, you didn’t figure it out until it was finished, it wouldn’t go the colour it should. He would have time, he only had one class on Wednesday, charms he thought. Which by then the first stage of brewing would
be over with, giving him time to attend charms, the next stage wouldn’t be needed until five thirty tonight, just before dinner.

“Lupin?” asked Harry screwing his face up, he hated thinking of any of them. He didn’t care about the conversation they’d had, or the fact the werewolf had apologized or was proud of him. It didn’t change the fact he had been abandoned by everyone, ignored to the point that Harry had felt invisible. He had been invisible. Until he was fourteen, when he began having to prove himself to the world, only then had he been recognized.

“He’s teaching at Hogwarts, he must have the potion. I will not sit idly by at the thought of him infecting another.” said Severus his lip curling at the thought; he had almost been victim of it himself. The thought of anyone coming across the disgusting thing was horrifying to him. He might not like children in general, well teaching them, it didn’t mean he would stand by and see anything happen to them. He wasn’t a total bastard, despite what the general population thought. “It’s entirely up to yourself should you wish to brew it.” he knew Harry already had a lot on his plate, but he had proposed an interest in brewing this particular potion before.

“I’d love to!” said Harry his green eyes lightening up at the anticipation of brewing such a difficult potion. He would have loved to have met the man who brewed it; unfortunately he hadn’t seen him at any of the conventions. He seemed like a recluse, but if he was inventing potions, well it made sense really.

“Finally,” said Severus wryly, getting up, he led the way to the dungeons; his traitorous mind wasn’t on the potion though. No it was on the young man currently following him. If Harry hadn’t been so used to hiding his emotions, there was little doubt he’d be jumping up and down right now. His eyes though, were glowing with such fervour there was no doubt he was truly excited about this latest challenge.

“I’ve wanted to brew this since I heard about it,” said Harry as he grabbed a cauldron getting ready to brew. “If it can stop the dementia in werewolves, what else can it do? If it’s changed or tweaked?” stated Harry as he began gathering two sets of each ingredient they needed. Passing one set onto Severus’ table then his own, which was opposite Severus’. Before long both of them had the required ingredients before them, at least for stage one of the potion. For the first time in a long time, Harry opened a book to read the instructions. He put the book so it was laying half way, so he could read the ingredients without bending over to see. He was slightly envious of Severus, who was already grinding away, obviously very familiar with this particular potion.

“What are you thinking?” enquired Severus once they’d begun preparing the potion.

“What do you mean?” asked Harry as he went to clean his knife, he didn’t want the ingredients contaminated. He had to wash all residues off; otherwise the potion would probably blow up in his face. Something you normally didn’t learn until you got to your seventh year in Hogwarts. When the potions were particularly volatile, and easy to mess up.

“You have thoughts of a potion to cure dementia?” reminded Severus, it was a curious thing, and it just might be plausible. His own mind was going over its ingredients before he could help himself. There was a reason people were secretive about these sorts of things, especially creations and inventions. Telling someone about it was just asking to be stolen from. Severus, fortunately, wasn’t like that. He also believed it wasn’t really possible, but it was a very good idea nonetheless. No doubt people before Harry had thought of it, but had not been able to accomplish it. Neither magic nor potions were miracle workers unfortunately.

“Maybe,” said Harry, “I’d need to think about it.” something he couldn’t do while brewing this potion.
“Indeed,” said Severus, he just knew Harry was going to create groundbreaking, world changing potions. Especially if he kept up the way he was going, he didn’t seem to comprehend that there was limits. Limits to what was possible, which maybe was a good thing. After all Harry had created a potion in a few days to help his mother, well they had co-created it; it didn’t really matter either way. He wouldn’t have come up with the crucial ingredient for the potion to blend together. It was thanks to Dobby that Harry had come up with it. That’s why the house elf had been promoted, he was co-head house elf.

“What is the first written exam like?” asked Harry, trying and failing to hide his worry. Every time he thought about it, his stomach felt as though it was doing a dance. Butterflies going off inside him, making him feel so very nervous. He hadn’t even felt like this taking his O.W.L’s.

“Easy, it’s the last few that get extremely difficult; it will be like starting your apprenticeship again. You go straight back to the beginning, so yes, the first few will indeed be easy, the later ones will get to you, trip you up if you get overconfident.” said Severus wryly, he should know, he had fell for it as well. He had stupidly thought he’d pass them with ease. Thankfully though he had passed them all with flying colours, making a few silly mistakes here and there.

“Oh,” said Harry relaxing slightly, that was a relief, as he poured water into his cauldron with a quick ‘Aguamenti’. It was better using purified water, rather than the water from a tap. Considering it was for a werewolf, the purer the better. Although there was an argument that unpure water was best, that it would help them overcome certain bacteria’s as an adult but it was unproven. No wizard or witch would allow it to be tested on their children. Children in the wizarding world were deeply cherished, most probably because most families elected to only have one heir, sometimes having two. The Potter’s and Weasley’s were evidently exceptions, course one could argue the Potters only had two now.

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“I have to go,” said Harry looking at the time on the mantle, he had agreed after all, to teach her Ancient Runes. That’s if she wasn’t wasting his time needlessly. He rather hoped she wasn’t, he couldn’t do it on a Tuesday so he elected to do it today, a Wednesday.

Severus eyed Harry curiously; it was lunch time at Hogwarts, why would he need to leave now? He normally had lunch with them before going.

“I agreed to help Patil with her Ancient Runes,” explained Harry when he noticed the curious looks he was receiving.

“Doesn’t she realize how busy you are?” asked Eileen clearly astonished, also irritated at the thoughtfulness of the girl. Harry didn’t have time to himself as it was without adding tutoring to it. She was rather proud of him regardless, and hoped this Patil wouldn’t take advantage of Harry’s kindness.

“Er...yes?” said Harry blankly, evidently not sure how to respond to it. “I really have to go, bye!” called Harry as he Floo’ed out. Taking only his charms book and a self inking quill and some parchment with him, since he didn’t need anything else.

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“No, that’s not it, see look at the index and look at it properly,” said Harry feeling exasperated, how had she survived in class this long if she was that...never mind he shouldn’t insult her. “The picture always gives a clue as to its meaning. This was all covered in class!”
“It was?” she asked looking rather shocked.

“Have you missed lessons?” asked Harry; perhaps she had been ill when that particular class had been on. He wouldn’t know because he didn’t speak to many people.

“No, I attend all classes,” said Padma.

“Then how did you miss this?” asked Harry, shaking his head in frank astonishment.

Padma blushed, “Um…well I like to look at my magazines,” she loved fashion, and wanted to be directly involved with in when she left Hogwarts. Maybe even open her own business one day, making her own clothes.

(Of course,” sighed Harry shaking his head at her, “You’ll never pass if you keep doing that. Seriously what’s wrong with looking at the magazines in the dorm? It’s not like you have anything better to do then anyway.”

Patil had nothing to say to that, so remained quiet feeling chastised by a boy her own age.

“Let’s try again,” said Harry, “Go through them and name them.” he looked around the library, there was only three Ravenclaws at the other side, pouring over books. Seventh years by the look of things, studying for their N.E.W.T’s. Madam Pince was putting books back onto the shelves. Taking great care while doing so, she loved her books; you could tell by the manner she did so. Hogwarts had so many books, all of them what was considered ‘light’ the dark ones had all been taken away, and the ones too valuable to destroy had been placed in the restricted section. He listened to her going on with half an ear, not truly paying attention to her.

At least she was studying that was something. “Why don’t you find something in the picture you can relate to, like fashion, right? Add it to the picture and memorize it, it might help.” said Harry, not sure if he was explaining it properly.

Twenty minutes had gone by before she spoke again. “Now I get it,” said Patil looking relieved, it truly was simple now that Harry had explained it. Way better than the teacher had by the way, but using analogy’s she’d remember it did help.

“Great, just in time for Charms,” said Harry, he knew there and then he’d never be a teacher. It was far too exhausting trying to explain something for somebody to understand. Especially when he understood it, and found it hard to get others to understand what he knew the same way. Just then the warning bell went, letting those still eating lunch they need to get a move on, that class would begin soon.

“Thanks Harry,” said Padma quietly as she packed her things away.

“No problem,” said Harry, he’d warmed up to her considerably since the beginning, it looked as though she had truly wanted his help. It hadn’t been a ploy to get his attention, he wouldn’t have been happy at all if it had been just a ruse.

“Bye!” said Padma rushing off; weighed down by the amount of books she currently carried around in her backpack.

Harry sighed as he slumped his head on the open book still in front of him. He was actually really hungry, and it was too late for anything now. Oh well, he was sure the house elves would get him something when he got back. They loved cooking, not that he’d demand much. Just a sandwich to stop the hunger pangs till dinner. He picked up his charms book, as well as the library’s Ancient Runes book and placed it back in its appropriate space. Out of the corner of his eye he noticed
Madam Pince nodding in approval. No doubt wondering why not all the students were more like him. She wouldn’t have half the work she had to do if that was the case.

He walked out of the library, making his way to Charms; Professor Flitwick didn’t like people being late. Just then a voice rang out, angrily, and filled with revulsion. A voice he knew all too well, and wished he didn’t.

“YOU!” snarled Lily Evans, the subject of her anger standing right in front of her. Somebody had to teach the brat a lesson, one she should have taught him long ago. She withdrew her wand; furious with the fact the boy didn’t even seem bothered or scared by her actions.
Chapter 44

Invisible

Chapter 44

What To Do

Harry turned around hearing the voice; he knew before he turned who it was. It wasn’t a voice he’d ever forget. Unfortunately the worst abuse someone could suffer was actually emotional abuse as apposed to physical abuse. Harry may seem, poised, confident and happy, but part of him would always remain unhappy, part of him would always feel invisible to those around him. Even more he’d always feel he needs to prove himself to everyone. Harry was able to control it, so he wasn’t doing it for others but actually himself. He didn’t so much as twitch when Lily removed her wand, he wasn’t sure if she’d even have the nerve to actually say a spell. Still he kept his wand hand ready, should he be wrong.

“Yes?” enquired Harry, blankly, wondering what on earth the woman could want from him. It never ended well, when they tried to confront or control him. She couldn’t be stupid enough to try again surely? All that happened was more information got out, information the Potter’s surely would want kept secret. Like the events in the Great hall during his fourth year. He felt his lips twitching just remembering Lily being cowed by Eileen. She hadn’t tried anything; she must have known who she was.

“You…” she said, unable to articulate what she wanted to say, panting as the anger continued to leech off her. “You ruined my life!” she finally shrieked at the top of her lungs. Her voice echoing down the halls of Hogwarts, as if she’d cast a sonorous charm on her.

“Right back at you,” said Harry bluntly, his green eyes, similar to the woman in front of him, a strong reminder of who his mother was, were filled with ridicule. Honestly she was such a bloody hypocrite. “The only thing different is the fact you had a family, I was alone.”

“Nick is more important! Why could you never understand that?!?” she shouted her nostrils flaring. She could barely believe this was her son, a boy she’d given birth to. She wished more than anything she’d given him up, that way her life would be perfect.

“I’m not interested in speaking to you,” dismissed Harry, “I am late for charms. So Professor move aside please.” he couldn’t have squeezed more sarcasm into those two words if he tried. Merlin he’d forgotten how irritating she was when she shouted. Even worse, he couldn’t believe she had been allowed to become a teacher. She had no experience; she had done nothing since leaving Hogwarts. It wouldn’t surprise him if that’s why she’d married Potter. Status, money, and people forgetting she was just a Muggle born…what wasn’t to like for someone like her? She’d never have to work (not that she’d have got a job in the wizarding world, it was very difficult for Muggle born’s to get jobs here), good life, respect from her peers.

“I should have gotten rid of you the second I gave birth to you,” she said viciously, not moving aside. Probably the biggest mistake she would make.

Harry laughed bitterly, “Maybe you should have, but you didn’t.” he couldn’t care less what they said to him. He’d hated them for so long, that nothing they said could hurt him. It would be like bursting into tears if Voldemort said he didn’t like him. Completely inconceivable was pretty much the only word to describe that happening. He’s spent his entire childhood sad he refused to dwell
on anything they said anymore. He walked away from her, heading in the direction for Charms, and then he heard her. Despite his shock and surprise at her spell choice, he automatically fell to the ground, and swiftly erected the strongest shield charm he knew to keep him safe. The training Severus had instilled in him was not for nothing after all then.

“Cruciamentum.” Lily wasn’t thinking straight at all; she was just so angry and furious at how the boy was. That he was doing better than Nick, how he was getting all the acclimation despite the fact he stole from his family. How he didn’t seem the slightest bit guilty about leaving them penniless. The fact she was struggling by and he was the easiest and most understandable target there. The two years of fear, worry and embarrassment was coming forth. The spell absorbed into Harry’s shield, to think that was a legal spell. It was an equivalent to the Cruciatus curse; it caused torment rather than ‘torture’ hence why it was allowed to still be used.

“Stupefy!” snapped Harry, flinging his spell at her. He would only use a defensive spells on her, she wouldn’t get away with trying to use that spell on him. He owed her nothing, and he would see her sacked before nights end. He couldn’t let her away with it, goodness know who she’d use it on next in her anger.

“Torqueo,” hissed Lily, her green eyes filled with viciousness, if someone saw her they’d be sure she was possessed, unfortunately she wasn’t. She was feeling nothing but pure and utter rage, the conscience part of her, making her aware of her actions was nowhere to be seen.

“Incarcerous,” said Harry, it was extremely difficult not to show her just what he was capable off. Unfortunately all spells were recording within Hogwarts; there were alarms that would go off when ‘Dark’ spells were cast. He did wonder if the spells she’d cast were considered dark, and if the warning spell had already alerted Dumbledore…then another question rose within his mind - what if they weren’t alerted when a teacher did it?

“Crucio!” snarled Lily, feeling all the rage that had been building up, leaving her along with the spell from her wand. Belatedly realizing where she was…and what she’d just done, causing her eyes to widen in shock, she hadn’t done that surely?

Harry knowing there was no shield spell to stop that curse, he lined himself up against the wall. The spell missed him by a mere whisker; he couldn’t help but stare at Lily in shock. He truly hadn’t thought she had the nerve to do anything, never mind cast an unforgivable at him. He watched the horror of what she’d done wash all over her face, just as another voice boomed down the hall.

“What is going on here?” demanded Minerva McGonagall, lips pursed, a sure sign she was extremely pissed off.

Harry stared at Minerva as if she wasn’t there, raising the Scottish woman’s worry. She immediately went over to him, checking him for any spells, only to find him in shock. “Harry can you hear me?” asked Minerva, cupping Harry’s face trying to get his attention. Lily on the other hand was just standing there, her wand clattering noisily to the floor. Then she fell unconscious her body slumping to the floor. Nothing, he wasn’t even reacting, or blinking come to that. She knew there would only be one person, who could get through to him. She cast a Patronus message, sending it off to Severus wherever he was. Then sending one to Poppy, not wanting to risk moving him. He wasn’t aware of what was going on, she didn’t want him lashing out.

“Ah, Minerva, I assume you know what happened here?” asked Dumbledore appearing upon the scene. His face was missing its customary twinkle, leading Minerva to realize something was
wrong. What had she missed? Her probing look caused a disconcerting look to cross his face.

“What is going on?” asked Minerva her attention on Dumbledore, seeing Dumbledore so serious, she knew she had come across more than just Lily and Harry arguing. She had heard the shouting an entire floor up, and went to investigate.

“Someone has cast an unforgivable within Hogwarts wards,” said Dumbledore, prying Harry’s wand from his rather tight grasp. He didn’t for a second think Lily would cast such a spell, and was wrongfully thinking it was Harry.

Minerva gasped, but she was consoled with the fact that neither looked as though they were suffering the well known after affects of such a curse. It had missed, which would be the saving grace from a life in Azkaban.

“What’s happening?” asked Poppy, running towards them, she’d grabbed her emergency supply kit when she heard from Minerva’s Cat Patronus Message. She had no students in her hospital, thank Merlin for small mercies. She went to Harry first realizing the symptoms of shock without needing to cast a spell. “Shock, what happened here?” she repeated. She was currently raking through her bag to find the potion she was looking for.

“I’d like to know that as well,” said Severus his voice would have scared the living day lights out of anyone. It certainly caused everyone there to jump, including Albus Dumbledore. “I will give him the potion.” he told Poppy getting his own kit out and getting it before Poppy would even find hers. She really should have kept the bag in order. She was supposed to be the Medi-Witch after all. He was itching to do it himself, messes like that irritated the hell out of him. Well unless he was engrossed in a potions project. He would have done, but he as too worried about Harry.

“Someone used an Unforgivable in the corridor.” said Minerva, explaining the situation to both Poppy and Severus. Severus froze for a millisecond before he continued to feed Harry the calming draught. Harry hated Lily but he’d never attempt an Unforgivable, not here, he was too smart for that. He prayed he was right, but even he had a niggling doubt. He watched Albus use the Prior Incantatem spell on a wand he knew all too well - Harry’s. His nostrils flared; of course Dumbledore would think it was Harry. Heaven forbid should his precious Order member be guilty of anything.

One by one, the spells he’d used that day came out Contego (Shielding charm) - Incarcerous - Stupefy - Aguamenti - Contego. Severus relaxed, he’d been right Harry hadn’t used such a spell on Hogwarts grounds. Then of course the implications hit him, Lily Potter had used an Unforgivable on his apprentice/soon to be lover. He was not happy, and she had better be grateful she was unconscious otherwise he’d have killed her.

Albus stood there with Harry’s wand, feeling as though he’d been transported to an alternative reality. Taking a deep breath, he returned Harry’s wand to his ‘Master’ before walking towards an unconscious Lily. Praying that the wards had somehow malfunctioned, that he wasn’t about to have to have Lily arrested.

“Prior Incantatem!” said Dumbledore with more confidence than he felt.

Minerva and Poppy were watching just as closely as Severus, as the spells Lily Potter had used began to form out of her wand. It would have amused Severus to no end, at the look of horror on their face if he’d not been so furiously shaken himself.

Crucio - Torqueo - Cruciamentum - Scourgify - Alohomora.
“You do something about this Dumbledore I will.” snarled Severus, his face twisted in the most disgusted scowl they’d ever seen on the Potions Master’s face. He didn’t care she had been his one time best friend, didn’t care that at one point he would have given her the world. She had been the only person in his life for so long, and he’d mourned the loss of her friendship as he descended into the darkness that was Voldemort. Nobody hurt Harry, and got away with it, no way on this earth. If he interfered Merlin help him, he’d use all means at his disposal to get revenge on Potter himself.

“She cannot possibly be in her right mind,” sighed Dumbledore, looking ten years older, his hands looked as though he was holding bricks rather than a slender piece of wood. The knowledge was too much for him to accept, he couldn’t stop the law from doing its job. Come what may, Lily had apparently gone too far, and she couldn’t blame Harry, since he’d been sending only spells to stop her, not to cause her any harm.

“You cannot be the judge of that.” said Poppy, “A qualified Mind Healer will determine that.”

“I agree,” said Minerva, “I think we should move this along to your office Albus.” noticing the students standing at the corridor mostly out of sight. They were probably close enough to know what was going on. Her heart sank, everyone would know, there was no hope of containing it. A teacher attacking a student, its not news Hogwarts can stand.

“I’m taking my apprentice home.” said Severus immediately, no doubt that spell had brought memories Harry had tried very hard to suppress.

“He needs to be here for the Auror’s Severus,” said Albus his voice soft and soothing. Acting as though he didn’t want anger Severus more than he already was. Which was probably true, Albus had a soft spot for Severus, always had.

“Damn it Albus, this has probably brought up memories he’d just gotten over. Or are you all too eager to forget he was tortured by the Death Eaters? Did you not see the memories he gave to the Ministry to prove what happened?!?” snarled Severus hoisting the seemingly unconscious sixteen year old into his arms.

Albus took a step back, looking slightly guilty, he had forgotten actually. Unfortunately it didn’t change anything; he would be needed to give his testimony of what happened. The press and the Ministry were going to have a field day with this. He was going to have to tell Rose and Nick their mother had been arrested as well. Then the bell went, indicating classes were finished, he quickly levitated Lily’s unconscious form.

“Go on home then, I shall explain what I can.” said Albus quietly, the evidence pretty much explained itself. She’d probably be spending the night in holding cell at the Ministry. He knew she didn’t have the money to get herself out on bail, so until her trial she’d find herself stuck there. His face weary and old, Albus went up to his office, not passing any students thankfully, as Poppy and Minerva, as well as Severus with an unconscious Harry in his arms. He said nothing when Severus used his Floo, he didn’t know why but he had a feeling Severus blamed him for what happened.

“Prince Manor,” shouted Severus with one hand, trying to keep a tight grip on Harry so he didn’t end up hurt any further than he was.

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Eileen paced the floor beside the Floo network, she’d come through from the kitchen, after telling the elves what she wanted for dinner, to find Severus running through the sitting room as if the grim was on his heels. Shouting in Hogwarts’ Headmaster’s office as he went. The first thing that went through her mind was that something had happened to Harry.
Her cup of coffee was lying there untouched, as she worried about her boys. Just when she felt as though she was going to go stir crazy, or go through and demand answers herself the Floo flared up spitting two figures out. Harry was in Severus’ arms unconscious, her heart sank. Her black eyes flashing with fear for the boy she loved as a son. “What happened?” fearing the worst. “Have Death Eaters infiltrated Hogwarts?”

“Oh, only if they have red hair and go by the name of Potter.” said Severus his voice cold and angry.

Eileen’s eyes narrowed “What did she do?” the mama bear part of her coming out, her claws were extended she wanted blood and she didn’t even know what the woman had done yet.

“She tried to cast the Cruciatius Curse on him,” said Severus inhaling sharply, “I’m going to take him to his room.” he walked up the stairs and Eileen, who had followed him opened Harry’s room door, making it easier for Severus. He removed Harry’s shoes, backpack, and cloak before sliding him under the covers. He was asleep for the moment; Merlin knows how long the calming draught would last. He had given him a rather large dose, of a powerful draught, level nine, used for extreme trauma cases.

“Where is she?” asked Eileen her face filled with the need for revenge.

“Probably the Ministry,” said Severus suddenly feeling tired, drained, and nothing had happened to him. “Do not do anything mum, Harry would never forgive you if you did.”

“Dumbledore didn’t try and hush it up?” asked Eileen, like he’d done with the werewolf incident. Oh how she wished her son had told her, unfortunately she hadn’t been told until years later. Severus had ended up having to stun her, to stop her from throttling Dumbledore. She had managed to get through the Floo and into his office. Dumbledore had been too stunned by the abrupt entrance to even reach for his wand. Severus had followed her through, for as long as he lived, Severus would never forget the confused/concerned/horrified/weary look upon his face. She had sure given him a dressing down he’d never forgotten. He’d been so cowed by Eileen Snape; there was no forgetting she was Severus Snape’s mother. He’d known from that moment on, where Severus got his lethal tongue from.

“Do you serious think I would have let it be?” asked Severus bluntly, rubbing his eyes tiredly. The morning had been a good one, Harry getting his first try at the Wolfsbane potion. The afternoon couldn’t have gone worse; he only hoped Harry could snap out of it soon.

“No, no I didn’t think that at all,” said Eileen, Severus knew the sting of injustice, and would never let it happen to anyone else. She knew her son had forgiven Dumbledore, but he hadn’t forgotten. Severus didn’t forget anything, if anything he held onto his grudges in silence.

“Either Dumbledore or the Ministry will probably be Flooing within the next hour.” said Severus. They wouldn’t be able to get in, there was only a few people connected to the Floo network to receive full access to his Manor. Dumbledore wasn’t one of them, nor were any of the Ministry workers. They would only be able to talk to him through the Floo.

“I will speak to them Severus, do not worry,” said Eileen, knowing that Severus probably wouldn’t leave Harry. She didn’t want to either, but unfortunately somebody had to do the talking.

“Thanks mum,” said Severus. He would have to leave the room at dinner time; he would have to add the ingredients to both the Wolfsbane potions. They couldn’t be wasted, rich or not he didn’t like wasting ingredients or screwing up potions.

“No problem Severus,” said Eileen placing her hands on his shoulders, giving him some measure
of comfort. Unfortunately her son didn’t care for big shows of affection, probably due to his childhood. He’d never received much comfort from either her or Tobias. She’d been too afraid to show him much comfort, terrified of what Tobias would do should he realize she loved her son more than him. She stared at Harry for a few minutes, worried about his state of mind. Was he back at Malfoy Manor reliving those horrible days? Merlin she hoped not. She hoped and prayed he came back to them soon.
Chapter 45

Invisible

Chapter 45

Dealing With The Consequences

Minerva quickly changed into her Animagus form, knowing she’d be quicker on four legs. She sprinted up the stairs, making her way with determination towards Gryffindor common room. The students had all been told to make their way to their common rooms immediately, five minutes ago. Hopefully they’d all done as they were told, and she’d get them before any of the rumours reach the children. It wasn’t something you should hear from fellow students. She was completely stunned and chilled just thinking of it, she dreaded to think what her poor children were going to say or do. How do you react when you are told your mother had just cast an Unforgivable? Even with Albus’ influence Lily was in a great deal of trouble. Trouble she shouldn’t be able to get out off, as much as it hurt her to think it, it was unfortunately true. What Lily had done, was beyond redemption, beyond her understanding as well. With one movement, or rather jump, she was once again in her human form. Standing outside the Gryffindor common room.

“Password?” droned the Fat Lady, staring at Minerva, obviously not even going to let the Head of Gryffindor in without it.

“Wattlebird,” said Minerva waiting impatiently for the Fat Lady to open the portrait. It was a good job she had such a great memory, otherwise she wouldn’t have been very happy with the portrait at all. As it was, it had been changed only yesterday, so thankfully the word had been stuck in her mind.

Minerva entered the common room, everyone was chatting loudly, some fearful, a great deal were just curious. Why had they been sent to their common room? Was there an attack on the school? Was everything going to be okay? Were the Auror’s on the way? Were just the few of the hundreds of questions, Minerva was able to decipher, from the bombardment of statements, from her students from first years upwards.

“SILENCE!” shouted Minerva, and at once the students fell quiet, not wanting to evoke their head of houses wrath. When she was angry, she took points, and yes, even from them. It’s something they’d all learned early on in their Hogwarts education. In fact she was tougher on them, it made them feel rather put out sometimes. Yet as they got older, they felt respect for their head of house.

“Mr. Potter, Miss. Potter, please follow me.”

Everyone turned to stare at Nick who, had reluctantly as he’d been told returned to the Common Room. They all stared at him curiously and a little angry, assuming he knew what was going on, and why they’d been sent here instead of the Great Hall. Nick passed them all, his face devoid of any emotion, a side they’d recently come to know about Nick Potter. They didn’t pay any attention to Roxy, they never did really. Before long the Portrait was closed again, and they could hear nothing, once Professor McGonagall was gone, the noise once again started back up. This time Nick Potter was being mentioned, all of them wondering why out of everyone, they’d taken him.

“Professor what is going on?” asked Nick after five minutes of silence, as he and his sister were led towards the other side of the castle. Roxy didn’t seem in any mood to ask any questions, either that or she was too worried. It didn’t take long for them to realize where exactly they were going. As the Headmaster’s office seemed to loom before them all too quickly. Neither child paid attention to
the password, as their hearts were filled with dread. Both of them being summoned to the Headmaster, could not, and would not be good news. Both of them stared at each other, probably seeing one another properly in a long time. In unison they stepped onto the moving gargoyle, their hearts beating wildly as they stepped into the very Gryffindor looking Headmaster’s office. If nobody knew all they’d need to do was look at his office to know where Albus Dumbledore had been placed in at Hogwarts. As it was, there wasn’t a child who didn’t know Albus Dumbledore. Even the Muggle born’s read upon him before stepping foot in Hogwarts.

“Please sit down,” said Albus looking as though he’d aged ten years since breakfast. He didn’t like this part of being a Headmaster; only thing worse than this, was informing parents about their child’s death. Even before his tenure as Headmaster he’d been forced to do it. The previous Headmaster Armando Dippet had actually left him to tell poor Mr. And Mrs. Myrtle about their daughter. Needless to say, it hadn’t gotten any easier over the years. “Lemon drop?” he offered them, wearily, trying to stall it for as long as possible.

“Thank you Headmaster,” said Roxy accepting the sweet, she unlike the rest of them actually loved sour sweets. She always bought them when she could, mostly lemon bon-bon though. Her brother though declined the sweet, shaking his head mutely; he’d been like that for a while now.

“What’s going on? Why have we been called here? The professor wouldn’t say.” said Nick, dissuading Dumbledore’s attempts of trying to delay the inevitable. Minerva’s lips pursed slightly at the disrespect, but considering what was going to be revealed, there was just no point. The poor dears were going to be in hell on earth, but they’d do as much as they could to help them overcome it. If such a thing could actually be overcome.

“I have some rather upsetting information to share with you,” said Dumbledore clearing his throat, swallowing the bitter lemon drop, before he explained further his face pained. “There was an incident at Hogwarts today, involving your mother and…your brother.” Harry was still their brother, and he should be treated as such. He didn’t like to see siblings falling out the way Roxy and Nick had. He knew from personal experience it could destroy you, he and his own brother had never really been able to say kinds words to each other, not since his sister…no he refused to dwell on that. No matter how many years went by, the guilt hadn’t eased. He wished he and Aberforth had a decent relationship, like others he’d seen over the years. Wishful thinking unfortunately, Aberforth had never forgiven him for his lapse of judgement.

“What happened?” asked Nick sitting up straight his eyes narrowed, what on earth had happened? “What did he do?” asked Roxy, already assuming it was Harry’s fault.

“Harry did not do anything, he was the victim of the attack, and I do not want to hear a word said against him is that understood?” said Minerva sternly; she had only just bet Dumbledore to it.

“Harry isn’t to blame for what’s been happening Miss. Potter, he isn’t an adult, he is a young boy, your brother, a boy who was raised in the same home as you since you were born. I do not know why or how you can blame everything that happened on him, but it must stop.” said Albus his twinkle noticeably absent. “Your mother and father are wrong to have blamed it on him, but unfortunately sometimes, someone just has to have someone to blame for their misfortune and it breeds hatred.” he should know, he’d lived through it.

Roxy gaped at him, unable to believe what he was saying. Yet the hat’s words crept into her conscience, she could have been placed in Ravenclaw. Deep inside she’d always feared being an outcast like Harry. Did that truly mean her parents were wrong? If they were wrong…it meant she should have listened to the hat. She should have gone where she was supposed to. Such a powerful wizard couldn’t be wrong, Professor Dumbledore wouldn’t lie. It was a punch to the gut to hear
those words, and she finally understood Nick’s words from before. The rose tinted glasses she’d always wore, were shattered into a million pieces as the truth, the real world finally sharpened into focus.

“What happened? Is he okay?” asked Nick, staring at Dumbledore almost urgent for news on his brother. Emancipated or not, head of his family line or not, Harry was his brother. Someone he had let down more than any brother should have. He knew Harry would never forgive him, and he couldn’t blame him. It didn’t stop his new feelings from emerging.

“He wasn’t physically hurt,” said Dumbledore choosing his words carefully, “I am afraid it’s more mentally than anything.” okay, he was drawing it out now, and Minerva was glaring at him in exasperation. If he didn’t tell them soon, he knew she’d butt in and tell them herself. Minerva could be rather…blunt when she wanted to be, so he hastened on.

“Mentally?” asked Roxy staring blankly at Dumbledore, not understanding what he was talking about. They seemed to forget she was just twelve years old, only in her second year at Hogwarts.

“I am afraid your mother, has been charged and taken to the Ministry pending an investigation.” said Albus putting as much soothing as he could behind his words, hoping to ease the blow.

“What happened?” asked Nick standing up, getting rather irritated at the run-around they were currently being fed by Albus Dumbledore. His mum was arrested and Harry mentally hurt, what could be bloody worse than this? And there obviously was if Dumbledore was still talking.

“Your mother, I am afraid to say tried to use an Unforgivable curse within Hogwarts walls. She tried to use the Cruciatus curse on Mr. Harry Peverell exactly thirty five minutes ago.” said Minerva, she’d given Dumbledore enough warning and time to tell them. She didn’t believe in coddling them; well not unless they needed it.

“Tried to? So she didn’t hurt Harry?” asked Nick, well that was something at least. It meant Harry hadn’t been hurt, and his mum just might get off lightly. Even Nick didn’t understand the full extent of the punishment that awaits people who use the Unforgivables. Then again why should he? For nearly all his life he’d been shielded by the ugliness of the world. He’d had his first taste of it when he was fourteen years old, not just by Voldemort but everyone when his actions had been disclosed.

“No, Harry managed to move out of the way,” said Minerva seeing as Dumbledore was currently sulking.

“So why is he hurt mentally?” asked Roxy.

Nick closed his eyes at the stupid statement by his sister, but she was young, she’d learn. Sooner or later, but judging by the events that were happening, it was going to be a lot sooner than even he wished upon his sister. He opened them to see Albus and Minerva staring at her, in a way that screamed ‘I can barely believe my ears’.

“Roxy, your brother was just about hit with a spell that would have caused him an unimaginable amount of pain. Pain you could only dream off and pray you do not ever experience. A pain your brother is regretfully all too familiar with. As you are no doubt aware he was cursed by Lord Voldemort and by his Death Eaters when he was held captive for three days, before he miraculously managed to get away.” said Albus staring at the girl over his half moon glasses, which were as always perched on his overly large nose.

“Why did she do it?” asked Nick warily, why would she do that? How could she do it? His parents
had always been so light, and so strong with great values. They had always been against any spell not considered ‘Light’. Even he hadn’t been taught any spells that were considered dark yet. His parents wouldn’t allow it; he could barely believe how far his mum had fallen.

“I am sorry Nick, that is unfortunately one question we cannot answer, only your mother can.” said Minerva, regarding them solemnly.

“Does everyone know?” asked Nick cringing at the thought of what people were going to say now. The papers were going to go crazy, was he going to be hated again? Although truthfully he couldn’t care less. He’d learned all too late that the people he’d thought of as friends actually weren’t. No they’d hung around with him for his fame, and the attention it would bring them.

“I am afraid some students know I do not know if they oversaw everything or just the end results. I can tell you that it will be in the newspaper, even I do not have the power to stop this from getting out.” said Albus.

Minerva gave Dumbledore a look that spoke volumes; she wouldn’t have let him keep it quiet. She had seen what it did to Severus all those years ago, it led him down a path that was dark and inevitably led him to becoming a Death Eater. She had not thought of the repercussions of her decision to support Dumbledore, in ensuring Severus kept quiet about Remus. She had learned from her mistakes, and she refused to see it happen again. She would never let that happen to another student, no matter their house or reputation. Someone as powerful as Harry, well she dreaded to think what he could do at Voldemort’s side. She was grateful he seemed to have solid values, especially for a sixteen year old. She would need to Floo Severus and find out how the teenager was.

“What’s going to happen to my mum?” asked Roxy her brown eyes flashing with fear and dread.

Albus sighed sadly, staring at the children with pity, “I do not know the punishment for using the Unforgivables is Azkaban.” both students shuddered at the word, and all students reacted that way. Azkaban was not a good place to be; in fact it was hell on earth. Hardly anyone came out of it with their sanity intact.

“NO!” cried Roxy in denial, a tear sliding down her face, no matter how much she was angry at her mum and dad right now. It didn’t matter because at the end of the day they were still her parents.

“I am so sorry my dears,” said Albus, and he truly looked it. “Would you like to spend some time with your father?” he wasn’t going to be allowed anywhere near the case, and his children would need him.

“Can I leave?” asked Nick standing back up his eyes were wild, for the first time in his life he felt Claustrophobic, like the walls of the Headmaster’s office were closing in around him. He had to get away, he couldn’t stand much more of this, his life was going from bad to worse yet again.

“Of course,” said Albus sadly, watching the sixteen year old run from the room. As if the grim was on his heels. No doubt both children needed time to come to terms with this latest blow. He would need to speak to all the students, ensure that they understood to leave Roxy and Nick alone.

“Come on Miss Potter, I’ll get you back up to Gryffindor Common room,” said Minerva sadly, the girl looked so lost and lonely, her heart was breaking for her. None of it showed on her face, she wasn’t one to ever show her emotions.

“It’s okay,” croaked Roxy, blinking away tears, “I’ll find my own way.” before getting up and
leaving. Only she had no intentions of going back to her Common room. No, she was going to go where she felt safest, the library. It had become a refuge for her, ever since she’d stepped foot in Hogwarts. She encountered nobody on her way there, everyone was probably still in their common rooms.

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Next Morning - Snape Manor

Severus Snape had only managed to get a few hours sleep, napping when inevitably he fell asleep beside Harry’s bed. He’d never spent so much time in this room before, Harry’s room. He was tired but not overly so, used to long nights and only getting a few hours sleep some nights. The rays of light filling into Harry’s room had woken him half an hour ago. Right now he was just finishing his second cup of coffee brought up by Dobby, who was just as worried as him about the young man. Dobby adored Harry, worshiped the ground he walked on, because he’d saved him from certain death and abuse. He had no idea if the Ministry had been; he hadn’t left Harry’s room or seen his mother.

Just as he was placing the cup on the bedside cabinet, Harry finally began to stir. Once he’d gotten Harry home, he’d given him a Dreamless Sleeping Potion. The least he deserved was a night without horrible nightmares. He could have cursed Lily Potter for what she’d done. How dare she try and use such a curse on her own child? It didn’t bloody matter if he was emancipated he’d still come from within her. He was the only child with her eyes, making it more than obvious who his mother was. Green eyes like Harry and Lily’s weren’t very popular.

“How are you feeling Harry?” asked Severus, as Harry’s green eyes blinked open, confusion momentarily on his features before it was replaced with shame. Shame at what Severus did not know but planned on finding out.

“I’m sorry,” said Harry self disgust coating his voice. He couldn’t bring himself to even look at Severus. His face was filled with defeat as he gazed at his bedroom covers, wondering when he’d be told to leave.

“What are you sorry for Harry?” asked Severus quietly, realizing this wasn’t the time to be sharp with him. At least not until he figured out what was bothering him. Although he certainly wouldn’t hold it in, if Harry was apologizing for Lily Potter’s actions. He knew Harry had problems with confidence, despite options to the contrary. He didn’t think Harry would outgrow them, Harry had thought he’d be kicked out just for kissing him. That he, of all people, would be disgusted with Harry for his affections. He’d never seen anyone with confidence issues as deeply as Harry’s. He’d spent his entire life ignored and overlooked; only coming out of the shadows a few years ago. Harry still didn’t know how to handle people, or the thought of them wanting to be his friend. He couldn’t even deal with sympathy; all it did was make him defensive. Go figure he’d fall for someone just as anti social than him, maybe more so. He had some friends and was content with that, they’d been his friends before he’d become recognized which was probably the only reason they were still friends in the first place. He noticed tears on Harry’s face and immediately sat on the bed beside him, wiping them away he’d never seen Harry cry before.

“Harry? Tell me.” said Severus gently turning Harry’s face back around so they could look at one another. He wiped away yet more tears that were insistently pouring down his face. It seemed as if a dam had broken, as Harry’s face became flooded.

“I’m sorry for being weak.” said Harry, his voice shaky unable to keep his emotions at bay, no matter how hard he tried.
“How can you think for a minute that you are weak?” asked Severus, removing the covers, sitting Harry up. Harry was strong, one of the strongest young men Severus knew, and he was in awe of him.

“I froze,” replied Harry, unable to help himself, as he turned to the comfort being offered by the man he loved. A man he felt as though he’d let down badly. How could he fight Voldemort if he frozen when someone shouted the Cruciatius Curse?

“Harry, you went through something extremely traumatic, something nobody should go through. You aren’t weak for that, you are strong, very strong to have gone through what you did and survived.” said Severus, removing Harry’s shirt, causing the teen to stiffen and shield his bare chest. “These aren’t something to be ashamed off, in fact when I see them I am reminded just how resourceful and powerful you are. Harry I love all of you, there is nothing about you shameful or weak.” he told the teenager, his fingers trailing over the scars reverently, showing him how much he meant his words.

Harry bit his lip, unable to help himself at the way he was reacting; it had been so long since someone touched him. Nobody had touched his scars, not even himself, he’d felt so ashamed of them, it was a constant reminder of what had happened. Yet as Severus spoke he found himself seeing them in a new light, of course it would take more than one conversation for him to feel the conviction. A guttered moan tore through Harry’s mouth when Severus’ lips kissed at his scars. Each and every one of them was given the same treatment.

His eyes half lidded, he watched as Severus seemed to realize or think he’d gone too far. He withdrew immediately, but his eyes, expressed a great deal more than the man probably liked. Severus wanted to continue just as much as he wanted him to. Severus opened his mouth to say something, whatever it was, Harry did not know. He wrapped his arms around Severus, bringing them closer together, kissing him desperately, and needing it more than he needed air to breathe. Using the moment of surprise, to gain the upper hand.

“Harry, Harry stop,” said Severus ripping his mouth away, but seemed incapable of pulling himself off Harry completely. “You’ve just been through a very tough ordeal, you aren’t thinking straight. I will not do anything with you that you will regret later.” it was a flimsy excuse and he knew it.
“ You are vulnerable right now, I’d never be able to forgive myself.” this excuse however, was the truth. He bit back a curse as Harry arched into him, pressing their hardness together. He felt like such a teenager, but how else could he react when someone was gorgeous as Harry was wreathing beneath him desperately.

“Please, please, please, don’t stop, please,” murmured Harry his green eyes filled with desperation. Why didn’t Severus understand he needed this? Wanted this? He needed to feel wanted for once in his life. He wanted to be taken care off, cherished, Merlin he just needed someone to take care of him for a while. He was so sick of everything, right here he could be himself, and for the first time Harry realized this. For the first time since he was a child, he’d shed tears, and Severus hadn’t thought him weak.

Harry could see Severus’ resolve weakening, so he added one thing that might guarantee him being able to finish what they’d started. “We don’t have to go all the way, just love me…please.” he begged once more. Staring straight into Severus’ eyes, conveying all his emotions into one smouldering, desperate look.

Once Harry uttered that single statement, he knew he couldn’t deny Harry something he obviously needed. Throwing cautions into the wind, unable to deny himself the treat under him. Who was wreathing so desperately for him, begging him for more? Taking Harry’s lips in a desperate, hard,
claiming kiss, swallowing his moans, as he grated his hips against Harry’s as hard as he dared. He was glad he had self control, otherwise the mewing and begging Harry was doing would have sent him over the edge long ago.

Harry felt as if he was in heaven, he always preferred to bottom. Receiving instead of giving pleasure. It made him feel special, wanted, and cherished, all those things he had been so desperate to feel. He’d topped a few times with Viktor just to see what it was like. While there was little doubt it had been pleasurable topping, it was nowhere near as mind-blowing as being taken. Harry wrapped his legs around Severus, as they both tore away to reclaim their breath. He wanted to remove all of Severus’ clothes, but he didn’t want to risk him stopping so he refrained. Instead his arms just crept inside of Severus’ nightwear. Feeling his orgasm looming, just hearing Severus’ moan at the skin on skin contact. To see Severus this debauched, all because of him, made him feel as though he could fly to the moon without a broom. This is what he loved best about it; it made him feel good about himself, and even better that someone cared enough to want it.

Harry desperately kissed at Severus’ neck as far down as he could go without clothes obstructing his actions. Closing his eyes, stiffening completely as he felt himself climbing, he bit into Severus’ shoulder, muffling his moan of ecstasy as he lost himself with the man he loved. He didn’t stop moving, despite the sudden exhaustion, wanting to see the look on Severus’ face when he came too. His fingers tugged at Severus’ nipples, causing Severus to groan and find his lips again. Their kiss this time was frantic, possessive, and then Severus moaned, their foreheads joined as Harry got to see the look of bliss on Severus’ face. It changed his entire features, softened them, afterwards all that could be heard was the sound of their laboured breathing.

Severus lay down on the free side of Harry’s bed, his control once again nearly back. He cast a cleansing charm on them, knowing how irritating it could get if it remained there too long. Harry wasted no time in curling himself around Severus, seemingly still desperate for contact. Severus couldn’t deny him anything, not after the recent scare.

“You didn’t deal with what happened did you Harry? You just suppressed it.” stated Severus, his fingers automatically running through Harry’s long strands of hair. It was longer than his and less manageable, yet Harry looked stunning with it. He wouldn’t admit it to anyone, but to finally be holding Harry like this was a relief. He was so tired of fighting his feelings and the issue if Harry’s age didn’t seem to rear its ugly head. He had always thought it would, that it would make him feel disgusted. Harry was only sixteen after all, and he was practically twice his age. Perhaps it was because Harry knew what he wants, he was old enough to know, and he had waited for him made him realize this. He had no intention of going any further than he was, if Harry was still around when he was seventeen, an adult, then yes they would but only then.

“It’s the only way I know how.” admitted Harry quietly, he felt so happy, despite their conversation. After nearly two years, he had the man he loved exactly where he wanted him. He could only hope that Severus didn’t regret it that would hurt him more than Severus saying no to begin with.

Severus mutely nodded his head; it seemed like Harry didn’t know how to deal with anything. So he just shut it away, locked it in the back of his mind, refusing to think on it. He needed to speak to someone, someone who could listen to him without interfering let him get what happened out. He needed a mind-healer; he wasn’t sure how to broach that subject. Harry may think there was something wrong with him, everything that was said was evidently analysed and taking literally. Then he realized something…”Harry did you replace your memories after the Ministry were done with them?”

“No,” replied the sleepy yet sated sixteen years old.
Severus closed his eyes in exasperation, it was little wonder he hadn’t been able to cope with it. He hadn’t put the memories back, he hadn’t dealt with it. You couldn’t deal with it if you only felt ghostly emotions and feelings associated with the memories that were missing. It was no bloody wonder he froze, he would have to replace them, but right now perhaps wasn’t the best of times. “Sleep Harry,” said Severus, staring down at the young man, who loved him. His heart lurched seeing him this way, he looked so innocent, angelic even, not at all broken or hurt by the world around him. Yet he was, badly, more than he had thought. He would always be there for Harry when he needed him, for as long as he wanted him.

Clutching Harry to himself possessively, wanting to keep him safe from the horrors of the world yet unable to do so. His eyes grew heavy as he watched Harry, until he too succumbed to the great need for sleep. After a mostly sleepless night, on Severus’ part, arm in arm, Harry slept peacefully free of the turbulent emotions that plagued him. Safe in the arms of the man he loved above all else and beyond anyone’s imagining. It wouldn’t be an easy journey, by the end their love would be tested beyond all limits, beyond endurance. The biggest question is, was Severus strong enough for both of them to see it through? Was Harry strong enough to do what needed done so they could have any hope of a future? Was there a future for the lovers? Those questions didn’t matter right now for the figures asleep intertwined in each others arms. One day they would, and only time would be able to answer them.
Chapter 46

Invisible

Chapter 46

The Consequences

Lily woke up, finding herself in a tiny cell, the small bed she was on, was black, dirty and just all around disgusting. She immediately panicked and tried to get out. Thinking she’d somehow been captured. Shaking at the bars on the door hoping it would miraculously open. They didn’t, they zapped her. They must have magic in them to stop anyone escaping. That was of course, until she remembered everything. Paling drastically, she slumped back against the metal bed shaken beyond belief. She could barely comprehend her own actions, yes she hated Harry, but the anger over everything had built up. She had wanted to hurt him, and she had gone too far. She brought her arms around her legs and clutched them close, as she continued to tremble. Rocking back and forth, her mind replaying the last thing she remembered over and over again. She was in the Ministry, which meant she was going to end up in prison. Azkaban was what happened to those who performed those spells without a permit. Her wand was gone, that didn’t surprise her, actually everything she’d had in her pockets were gone.

The hours ticked by, she refused to eat the slop they’d left her for lunch. Would James come? Would he forgive her? What about her kids? What would happen to them? She’d tainted the Potter name, James and the kids would pay for that. Oh, Merlin, what had she done? Making the Potter name light had been everything to her and James. It’s why they’d given money to the Order over the years, and joined vowing to do their part in bringing Voldemort down. When her son finally defeated Voldemort for good, they would forgive him for her actions…she hoped.

Just after her uneaten dinner disappeared hours later, the door finally opened emitting James and another wizard she didn’t know. He had unspeakable robes on, and she doubted anyone knew him or what he did on a daily basis. They were equivalent of CIA in the Muggle world, from what James had said about their job. They went everywhere; using false ID’s and had all manner of nifty gifts.

“James!” Lily cried her green eyes filled with relief and fear.

“Ten minutes,” said the unknown wizard seriously.

“I know,” said James stepping in, and the door was slammed shut behind him, locking him in with Lily, a woman he’d loved since he first saw her in first year at Hogwarts. A woman he would never have imagined being in this position, ever. When Dumbledore had told him he had refused to believe it. He’d immediately turned to the Ministry and found it was indeed true. He’d gone straight to see the kids, made sure they ate something, now here he was visiting his wife, in the holding cells in the Ministry of Magic.

“James!” she repeated throwing herself bodily at him, shivering and crying.

James held onto her, but didn’t comfort her; he was barely clinging to reality as it was. His life had gone to hell a few years ago, and continued to do so over the course of it. His best friends since he was eleven had barely spoken to him since, and he was closed off from all he cared about except his kids and wife. Then he’d realized the wrongs he’d committed against his second son, now this…he was tired, not just physically but mentally. He’d never had problems before; he’d always
had money, friends, wife and loving children. He’d had the best of everything for so long, now he was having to work all hours and was friendless. It was a glimpse of the harsh reality everyone else suffered, and it had humbled him. Perhaps if he’d been given a wake up call earlier in life, say at the age of eleven, he might never have teased Severus for his lack of wealth.

“What were you thinking Lils?” asked James after a few minutes of her sniffling.

“I don’t know,” she said before she began crying again.

James closed his eyes, hearing her crying was causing his heart to ache fiercely. She’d always been so strong, capable and independent. Such a fiery hell cat, she could hold a grudge, and he’d though she could hold her temper, but evidently it wasn’t the case.

“What’s going to happen to me James?” Lily asked, trembling in fear and cold still hugging her husband close. Not caring that his glasses were digging into her face, she just needed someone to comfort her so desperately.

That’s exactly what James had stopped himself thinking about, what was going to happen to his wife. Taking a deep breath, James reluctantly spoke, no doubt confirming to Lily what she suspected. “You used an unforgivable Lily, the punishment for that is always Azkaban.” his voice became hoarse just staying the word.

“I won’t be able to survive in there,” said Lily, her voice muffled by her husband’s cloak. “Is he pressing charges?” for once the ‘he’ she was speaking about didn’t get scorn sent their way. Maybe nearly curing her son had woken the woman up to reality at last.

“It wasn’t Harry who pushed for charges,” said James quietly. “It was Albus and Snape.” both of them had demanded full charges pressed against Lily. As Headmaster there was nothing Dumbledore could do, he had to uphold the law, his hands were tied. Snape on the other hand, had surprised him; he’d always loved Lily, much to his consternation. He’d hated it, and when they no longer spoke he’d jumped in joy. Yet the snake had told them about Voldemort coming after their son, repaying the life debt between them. Now Snape was doing his best to destroy them, using his son, who was angry at his childhood enough to go through with it.

“Albus?” parroted Lily her voice filling with hurt. She couldn’t believe Albus would do something like that. Why would he tell? She was an Order member, and Nick’s mother…he knew her, he knew she didn’t normally do things like that. She wasn’t a dark witch or a Death Eater…she’d just gotten so angry. Ever since he’d revealed everything to the press, she’d been unable to think of him without being furious. She was even more hurt by Severus’ actions. She knew Sev had always loved her, it was obvious. The only time Sev had come close to threatening her was four days after the tournament ended. When Nick was captured and almost died but successfully managing to get away from Voldemort. He’d changed after that, became cold to her like he was with everyone else.

“Lily…why?” asked James sounding so depressed and wary. He wanted an answer, the ‘I don’t know’ before didn’t count. They had nowhere to stay; Lily wasn’t working at Hogwarts anymore. They were homeless, he would have to get a loan from Gringotts and buy a property. Not only that but he’d need to get a lawyer for Lily, it was going to cost him a lot of money. He had nothing to mortgage, or sell. The interest Gringotts would be extortionate; he would do it only as a last resort.

“I just got so angry James; he has all our money, our houses! And it’s his fault we have to work so hard and not able to get the kids what they want. Nick won’t talk to us and it’s all his fault!” she said her earlier anger returning.

James closed his eyes, listening to the angry words leaving Lily’s lips. He too had felt exactly the
same some time ago. Unfortunately the reality had hit him, apparently Nick too. “Lily, Harry isn’t at fault; it’s our actions that caused this. If we had loved him as we should have, he wouldn’t have done this.” James replied tiredly, “We loved Nick and Roxy, we neglected Harry, and this is our punishment.”

“How can you say that? We didn’t neglect him!” protested Lily angrily.

“Times up!” said the unspeakable banging on the door loudly.

“Please don’t go James,” said Lily tightening her hold on James, her anger evaporating.

“You have a trial in one week; I’ll need to see about getting you legal representation. I’m sorry Lily, but I have to go.” said James regretfully, his heart wrenching when he had to pry his wife’s hands from him. Sitting her down forcefully on the bed, he couldn’t stay with her. Swallowing thickly, he kissed her on the forehead and left the cell. He was escorted back up with the Unspeakable, feeling as though he’d left his wife to the gallows not awaiting trial. No doubt the newspapers had already got wind of what Lily did and it would be in tomorrow’s edition. Nick was having a tough enough time; this was going to be the icing on the cake.

James was escorted all the way back up to the atrium, he was meant to be working overtime, but he couldn’t. He needed someone to talk to, someone to help him, and if he had to beg so be it. He didn’t want some idiot pro-bono lawyer trying to help Lily and not doing their job properly. He had to give her the best defence he could, it left him cold inside, but he knew regardless of lawyer, his beautiful wife would end up in Azkaban. It’s just a matter of how long she got, he prayed to Merlin and every deity that it wasn’t a life sentence. Stepping outside the magical side of the Ministry, he Apparated to the only person he knew who could help him at a time like this.

James looked around before running up the stairs and knocking on the door.

“James? What are you doing here?” asked Remus upon answering the door. He was surprised to see him, he’d never darkened Sirius’ doorstep for years. He’d sent a few letters, taking the cowardly way out.

“Is Sirius here?” asked James, knowing Padfoot would be Remus wouldn’t be here himself if Sirius wasn’t. His brown eyes begged Remus’ he was so exhausted, so tired of everything he just wanted his best friends back. Sod his pride; it didn’t matter when it came to his family or friends.

“Come on in,” said Remus, opening the door to the brightly lit home. They’d refurbished it and it was really welcoming now. Ten times safer than the flat Sirius had bought with his uncle’s money. That was of course, before the Black’s all died leaving Sirius the sole male heir of the Black fortune.

“What are you doing here?” asked Sirius bitterly, catching sight of his once long time best friend. “Just because I came to see Nick it doesn’t make us friends James.”

“I know,” choked James. He had never felt more alienated from everything and everyone in his life. “I am so sorry, I’m sorry.” he repeated.

“James what’s happened?” asked Remus alarmed, catching his friend before his legs bucked and sitting him down. It was a good job he was stronger than most wizards, otherwise he’d have been on the floor along with James.

James cringed, “Lily’s in prison,” he said his voice raspy.

“On what charges?” gaped Remus his amber eyes wide with astonishment. He was almost tempted
not to believe his own ears.

“Attempted use of the Cruciatus Curse.” said James tears filling his eyes but refusing to fall. He had yet to tell them the worst of it, and once he did he genuinely feared for their reaction.

“Against a death eater?” asked Remus, Sirius was just sitting there eyes narrowed in on James taking no pity on his Ex-best friend.

“No,” choked James tears falling now, “Harry.”

“She did what?!” roared Sirius furiously. Destroying Harry’s childhood hadn’t been enough she’d attempted an unforgivable on him? Years ago he wouldn’t have believed James or Lily capable of such a thing. Now though he didn’t think anything could surprise him anymore.

“We have nowhere to stay, I need your help Sirius, please, I’ll pay you back I promise.” choked James grabbing Padfoot’s hands he squeezed them, eyeing him desperately. “If not for me then for Nick, they need somewhere to stay…”

Sirius stared at James, old feelings arising; James had never begged anyone for anything before in his life. He’d had no need to, he’d always had everything. Parents who adored him, that was proud of him, money, looks and charm. He had nearly everything as well, apart from parents who loved him. James’ parents would have been utterly disgusted with their son. They’d taken him in and loved him, he hadn’t even been family. Well actually that was a lie; James’ grandmother had actually been a Black. He’d do it, knowing James’ parents would have wanted it, and for Nick and Roxy. They didn’t deserve to suffer for their parents mistakes. Well any more than they already were.

“Fine, I’ll get to Gringotts tonight.” said Sirius, still not letting up his glare.

“Thank you,” said James clearly relieved. “Thank you.” he repeated with a little more composure. He hadn’t expected Sirius to agree, he had thought he’d have to go to Gringotts and try and get a loan. He wasn’t sure if he’d have been successful; he owned nothing worth selling for the goblins to agree.

“How’s Harry?” asked Sirius, no doubt shaken! Even his own mother, hag that she was hadn’t done such a thing. She’d probably thought about it a lot; well…maybe not it wasn’t something he liked to think about. In fact he didn’t think about his mother full stop. Not unless she was screeching when the silencing spells stopped working.

“I don’t know,” admitted James quietly, “Snape took him away.” according to Dumbledore anyway.

“You can stay here tonight, there’s plenty room.” said Remus ignoring the glare Sirius sent him. He wasn’t about to let James sleep on the streets, no matter how angry they were with him.

“Are you both sure?” asked James warily, he didn’t want Remus and Sirius at odds. He’d already destroyed his relationship with both of them, it was his own fault, he didn’t want them arguing over him.

“Just one night,” added Sirius grudgingly, he wasn’t happy about it but he wouldn’t see him on the streets either. James’ parents had taken him in when he ran away, so he had to return the favour.

“How are Roxy and Nick?” asked Remus. “Albus has told me he’s starting up his training again next week…is he well enough to start again?”
“No he’s not well enough,” frowned James, “Albus hasn’t mentioned this to me and Lily didn’t say anything!” his son wasn’t going to begin training again, not until he was better. Both physically and mentally, being nearly killed and turned into a squib had severely scared him. No Nick needed attention, not attacked or forced to train.

“Are you going to support Lily?” asked Remus.

“I have to, she’s my wife, it doesn’t mean I approve of what she did Remus,” said James. He still didn’t understand what she’d been thinking, it broke his heart but it was probably the end of them. How was someone supposed to recover from the fact their wife had done something against the law? Trying to curse a child, their child, no matter how they felt, with unimaginable pain? He’d had that spell cast on him, several times, and he didn’t wish it on anyone, never mind his son, even if he had left him penniless.

Sirius got up and left the room without saying a word, leaving Remus and James to fall into an uncomfortable silence. Not that James wanted to talk, he just wanted to take a dreamless sleeping potion so he didn’t have to think…to feel. His life had turned into a meaningless pile of crap. Roxy had changed, Nick wasn’t talking to him and he wasn’t going to mention Harry.
Chapter 47

Invisible

Chapter 47

The Trial Of Lily Potter

There were around fifty plum coloured wearing Wizards and Witches, with the letter W stitched on their robes. It was gold and didn't go at all with the plum coloured robes. Harry knew all this, remembering it from the last time he’d been in this very room. There was a few notable differences; Madam Bones with her monocle was absent. No not absent, she’d been a victim of the Death Eaters. She had seemed like such a formidable witch, but no, that wasn’t right, Harry knew the Death Eaters moved in packs. You could be the best of the best, but surrounded say four to one - you didn’t stand a chance. Fudge too was absent, and dead by his own hands. Harry was watching the new Minster of Magic curiously, he hadn’t seen anyone quite like him before. There were streaks of grey in his mane of tawny hair and his bushy eyebrows, he had keen yellowish eyes behind a pair of wire-rimmed spectacles and a certain rangy, loping grace even though he walked with a slight limp. There was an immediate impression of shrewdness and toughness. He was tough from what he’d read in the paper he had been an Auror, rising in the ranks becoming head of the Auror office. He was what you could call a battle hardened veteran like Alastor Moody, minus the injuries.

Severus and Eileen were with him today, keeping him sandwiched between them. He hadn’t really wanted to come, but Severus had insisted. According to his Potions Master/lover he had to let go of the past, he had to move on otherwise it would continue to affect him. Harry had replaced the memories from the days he’d been tortured, with great reluctance and with both Snape’s help he managed to overcome them. He no longer flinched when that spell was cast; it was never cast on him just said without a wand, to see how he’d react. Harry didn’t want to freeze again, it was just too dangerous. Not only that, but he’d been successful at casting non verbal spells, and completed the first stages of the Wolfsbane potion. Despite what his biological mother had done, Harry was thriving. Showing it was more to do with the spell, than the fact Lily had tried to curse him.

Lily was brought in, shackles weighing her down as she was taken to the lone seat in the front of the courtroom. Her hair was messed up badly, and her green eyes were wide and fearful. She was sat down much kinder than she deserved, and the Unspeakables stood at the side of the room. Just in case anything happened and they had to subdue the prisoner. This is exactly what Lily Potter was today.

"Very well," Rufus Scrimgeour standing proud and tall, his yellowish eyes regarding everyone like a hawk. "The accused being present let us begin. Are you ready?"

“Yes sir,” said Percy Weasley, quill poised at the ready, he transcribed all the words heard in the courtroom. He was their scribe, as well as the Ministers undersecretary, and he was very proud of his position. He had more political ambition than any Weasley ever had, and he was determined to succeed. He wanted to be able to support any family he had. Wanted them to grow up with the things he hadn’t been able to. New toys, new clothes and new stuff for school, not the second hand stuff he’d always had to take from his parents. He’d always got Bill or Charlie’s stuff, the only thing he hadn’t had second hand was his pet rat scabbers. Which he wasn’t quite so proud to admit to anymore, knowing it had been Peter Pettigrew all along. It positively turned his stomach; in fact he had been sick when he first learned about it. It wasn’t wrong to want money, status and happiness was it? So why was his family so against it? Damn it he just wanted respect and the
ability to buy any child he had proper stuff and he’d succeed.

Severus was barely able to meet Lily’s eyes, despite what she’d done…his mind kept wandering to their childhood. The innocent naïve little girl he’d introduced to the magical world. Unfortunately she was long gone; in place was a very angry bitter woman. Something he’d never imagined Lily being, even when he’d told her about his parents she hadn’t lost her…youthfulness. He knew he was doing the right thing; she couldn’t get away with it to try again. He could only hope that someone, this would get through to her and she’d realize what she did.

"The trial for Lily Calla Potter nee Evans on the fifteenth of October,” said Scrimgeour in a soft commanding voice. “For the use of an Unforgivable curse against Harry Peverell an emancipated sixteen year old at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.”

James was sitting with his eyes closed, next to the lawyer he’d hired to defend Lily. He had told his children under no uncertain terms were they coming; this wasn’t a place for children. He didn’t want his kids to see their mother led away by Unspeakables and sentenced to Azkaban. He had however, allowed them to see her, which had just resulted in a disaster. Nick had just upset Lily a great deal, and Roxy had just remained quiet as she always did. His sweet little innocent girl was going through the same thing as him, only so much earlier. She was being introduced to the real world, and how it worked. She was only a child; he should have been able to protect her from it.

Lily had been seen by the Ministry’s Medi-witch, who was also a qualified mind healer. The results were simple; she hadn’t been drugged, influenced, spelled or cursed into doing it. She had done so in her own free will, and she was perfectly sane and aware of her actions. Needless to say, she couldn’t claim she didn’t know what she was doing.

"Interrogators: Rufus Scrimgeour, Minister for Magic; Kingsley Shacklebolt, Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement; Percy Ignatius Weasley Senior Undersecretary to the Minister and Court Scribe." said Scrimgeour clearly.

"So the charges!” Said Scrimgeour unrolling a piece of parchment. ""That he did knowingly cast an Unforgivable Curse, the Cruciatus curse on a child at Hogwarts.” Yes he was repeating himself, but he had to for the sake of appearances. Normally there were other charges under it, but it was the only thing Lily Potter had done wrong, thankfully.

“You are Lily Potter currently teaching and residing at Hogwarts school of Witchcraft and Wizardry are you not?” asked Scrimgeour eyeing the witch with disgust.

“Yes,” said Lily, her green eyes flashing over everyone in the room, there was no kindness to be had in any of their eyes. She felt so tired and hungry; her anger had left her, having spent an entire week in the cells. James had only visited twice, once when she was arrested and the other with the lawyer. It didn’t look good, and she knew, just knew she’d be in Azkaban by tonight and it terrified her. She even caught sight of the boy, no anger stirred in her just seeing him this time.

“Mrs. Potter tell me how you felt when you found out your own son left you penniless?” asked her lawyer, Robert Sutton, standing up taking over.

“Angry, scared, depressed and extremely hurt, I couldn’t provide for my family, we couldn’t take anything and we struggled to get anything for the kids even their things for Hogwarts.” said Lily quietly. “All that we had access to was our son and daughters trust vaults.”

“You had to use them to pay for their Hogwarts equipment and uniform?” asked Robert staring around the room.
“I did,” said Lily nodding in agreement.


“I had to get a job; I accepted the opening for Muggle Studies at Hogwarts just so I could get bills paid and a home. We needed somewhere to stay, especially for the summer holidays, somewhere secure where Nick would be safe.” said Lily.

“I see,” said Robert “Nothing further.”

“You like to mention Nick a lot do you not?” said Christopher ‘Chris’ Curtin standing up himself now, he was defending Harry.

“He’s my son, of course I do.” said Lily stiffening defensively.

“Indeed, but Harry was as well was he not?” asked Chris regarding Lily with thinly veiled disgust.

“Yes,” whispered Lily cringing, as she made herself smaller.

“Yet you spoiled one and completely neglected the other?” asked Chris.

“Objection, we aren’t here to discuss the past!” said Robert.

“Yet you did during your questioning.” said Chris bluntly.

“I will allow the questioning to continue,” said Scrimgeour, what Chris said was true, Robert had indeed brought the past up.

“Thank you Minister, please answer the question Mrs. Potter.” said Chris inclining his head to Scrimgeour before he regarded Lily once more.

“I didn’t neglect him,” said Lily her face pale and sweaty as she realised her entire past was going to be dredged up.

“No? You denied your son an education; he had to fend for himself, learning what he could in order to survive. You never gave him pocket money, he didn’t even get a familiar which most wizards and witches receive upon entering Hogwarts especially those of magical parents.” said Chris. Familiars were important right of passage in the magical world.

Lily just bowed her head, unable to meet anyone’s eyes as her shame was bared for all to see.

Unbeknown to Lily, James had reacted in pretty much the same manner, only flinching harshly as he was reminded of his failures.

“Then he takes everything from you, you were as you said angry…angry enough to cast an unforgivable against a student in a school where you were teaching.” said Chris.

“Objection its speculation!” snapped Robert.

“Withdrawn.” said Scrimgeour sounding bored, but one look at him you could see he was very alert. He was watching what was going on with curiosity, but very professionally. Everyone had been solemnly quiet, even Albus Dumbledore who was always quick to give his opinion.

“Here are the results of Lily Potters Mind healer evaluation; it states clearly she is very aware of right and wrong. She wasn’t cursed or hexed in any way, she cast that curse on her own free will.” said Chris ignoring Robert’s words. Passing the results to Percy Weasley who then copied them and passed them to the closest Wizengamot member who promptly took a copy and passed it on.
Scrimgeour took one himself, his hawk eyes quickly reading everything on the paperwork. He could see from her answers she was extremely bitter towards her youngest son. It was curious, how could she hate one twin and love another? It couldn’t have anything to do with the boy who lived, since Roxy had both her parents love…or did she? Who knows what went on behind closed doors? There might have something to do with her being the first female Potter in the family in eight generations. That being said, if he remembered correctly she hadn’t bore any children and died young.

“I call upon Kate Bennett,” said Chris, the woman in question stood up and moved to the centre of the room. Where a chair was brought in for her to sit on, and she did so gratefully. No matter how many times she was called, she still found it extremely nerve racking.

“Mrs Bennett can you tell me the last spell used on Mrs. Potter’s wand?” asked Chris, the formalities were killing him. He knew she did it, unfortunately she was allowed a defence.

“The Cruciatus Curse,” said Kate without emotion, answering the question without prejudice.

“What other spells did you find had been cast that day?” asked Chris.

“From first thing that morning she used Alohomora, Scourgify,” said Kate before continuing on “Then there were three curses cast that caused some concern…Cruciamentum, Torqueo and the Unforgivable Cruciatus curse.”

James gaped completely horrified; their lawyer threw him a quick sharp look. He hadn’t known Lily had used those spells, it made it completely different. It hadn’t been one snap anger judgment; she’s truly wanted to cause their son harm. He wanted so badly to run from the courtroom. He couldn’t take this, he couldn’t hear everything they were about to say. Unfortunately his lawyer, who sensed his feelings kept a tight grip of him.

Albus just looked at Lily with sadness, none of this was news to him, and he’d been the one to cast the spell first. He could barely understand it, Lily had always been such a light witch, and he hadn't known she knew those spells never mind having the ability to cast them. It took real anger and hate to cast those kinds of spells. He’d been thinking on and off about this all week. Yet he wasn't any closer to understanding it. He knew deep down he never would, no matter the explanation.

“Three torture spells?” asked Chris.

“Yes,” said Kate.

“All cast in rapid succession?” asked Chris.

“Yes within a minute.” said Kate.

“Did you also examine Mr. Peverell’s wand?” asked Chris.

“Yes,” said Kate nodding in affirmative.

“What spells were cast from his?” asked Chris.

“Contego which is a shielding charm, Aguamenti, Stupefy, Incarcerous and Contego again.” said Kate.

“All defensive spells, which wouldn’t have defended him from the Cruciatus curse if he hadn’t successfully managed to sidestep it.” said Chris, “Which of course not many can do, at the horror of such a spell being thrown at you.”
“Exactly, the spell was only attempted, which means she shouldn’t receive a life sentence.” said Robert standing up.

“It’s why she should be, if we let her away with it then we might as well take the sentence off altogether and let everyone cast it.” Chris argued adamantly.

“Enough,” said Scrimgeour standing up, he didn’t want the trial to turn into a pissing contest with the two lawyers. It was exactly where it was heading; he had bigger things to worry about. Like a war going on everywhere, admitted as of yet, it had been smaller attacks not large scale ones. That’s only because they’d tightened the security around Azkaban. They’d then asked Unspeakables to try and break in, to test their security. So far the tests had been thwarted, tonight was the last one after that they’d be put back on alert. The Unspeakables had temporarily reassigned to watching suspected Death Eaters, guarding Azkaban and waiting on call outs. “I think its time for the Wizengamot’s decision, if there is no further evidence?”

“No Minister,” said Robert shaking his head negatively.

“No sir,” said Chris respectively, nodding in reassurance to both Snape’s and Harry.

“Very well,” said Scrimgeour facing the Wizengamot “All those in favour of conviction?”

It was obviously a very divided group, yet more than half raised their hands immediately, others soon following until all of them had their hands raised. As much as it pained them, they knew she had to pay the price, Boy who lived’s mother or not. Harry hadn’t been aware he was holding his breath until Severus gripped his shoulder. Letting it out, nodding that he was fine, before relaxing. Harry didn’t know what he would have felt if they let her off. He’d half expected it; she was a Potter, the mother of the so called ‘hero’ of the magical world. It was nice to see justice could still be served. The fact they’d also sided with him surprised him, he still wasn’t used to it. For so long he’d been ignored, invisible really, but now…everyone was offering their help, congratulations and thinking he was the best. They might say it but Harry deep down didn’t believe it.

As soon as it was done, the lawyers spoke to the wizengamot members in private. Placing a silencing spell, not even the Minister of magic was privy to their passionate plea or diatribe depending on the Auror.

“Lily Potter made a horrendous grievous mistake, one she regrets deeply. She allowed her anger to override her common sense, just one time. She doesn’t deserve a life time in Azkaban prison. Community service and anger management classes would be best served in this situation. Especially with the delectate situation of her being Nick Potter’s mother. If we imprison his mother…he might not take kindly to it and his anger might make him unwilling to fight for us.” was Robert’s plea to let Lily off the hook. He was a lawyer for a reason, he knew how to push people’s buttons and make them do what he wanted to. He sat down next to James once he was finished, eyeing Christopher with competitive anger.

“If you let Lily Potter get away with this…the public won’t respond favourably. There was an outcry that shocked the entire British magical community at their actions a few years ago. I can only imagine how they’d respond if we let her go. During war the last thing we need are riots and people thinking they have the right to take the law into their own hands. How many people do you think will attempt these spells when they know she got off? How many times will it be used that she got off and others didn’t? If you have no intention of giving her a life sentence, I deeply think she deserves some prison time. We have to set an example…NOBODY. IS. ABOVE. THE. LAW!” Chris said to them, enunciating each word clearly to have a deeper impact. With his bit said he took his seat giving the Wizengamot time to deliberate.
It took longer for the wizengamot to reach a decision, only one hour of deliberating in which everyone took a break. After getting something to eat everyone packed into the courtroom again, refreshed and curious at the outcome. The only people that remained had been Scrimgeour, James Potter, the two Unspeakables and Lily Potter. James refused to meet his wife’s face; his hands remained covering his face hiding who knows what.

“I am to assume a decision has been made?” asked Scrimgeour once everyone was once again sitting down. Especially Percy Weasley who was of course expected to write everything down.

“There has,” said Albus Dumbledore speaking as Chief warlock, he had been made to swear to judge the case individually otherwise be taken off. It seemed Scrimgeour was taking his part as Minister seriously. He was going about things right despite the situation of war, he was rather proud of the man. He was more proud of people he’d underestimated more than people he’d expected lately. “It’s been decided that Lily Potter will be sentenced to one year of minimum security at Azkaban prison. This is only because she didn’t successfully cast it on anyone. Once released she will be put on parole for a further four years, and where upon, she will have to come to the Ministry and have her wand checked to ensure she doesn’t attempt something like this again. We have also decided she will attend meetings with a mind healer and get help she obviously needs starting from this week and in future years. Only once the mind healer is satisfied will they stop.”

Dumbledore also had ‘Merlin’s law’ to think about, if she had gotten away with it, there would have been the probability of her loosing her magic. Merlin’s law was unpredictable, it’s why it was only used in dire circumstances as it was meant to - ironically enough to protect apprentices from their parents or anyone wishing them harm. Apprentices were actually revered back in the day, it was vital back then to have someone to give your magical knowledge to so it wasn’t lost. This was before and after Hogwarts, until things were mass published and distributed. Even to this day, information had been lost that the magical world would never get back. Many things had been stolen, burnt and destroyed during wars the magical world had. Merlin’s law had been information that was cherished. It was kept in one of the lowest vaults in Gringotts, heaviest security and barely anyone was given permission to see the real thing. It punished the person under it, whether by pain, magic loss or even loss of life depending on how bad the magic felt the person had been. Magic was a living thing, flowing through everything, and gifting individuals with it when it wanted to. Nowhere had more magic imbued into than Hogwarts, and even she was unpredictable. Moving stair cases was just one example of her sentient ability, nobody usually thought about it, just assuming it was just a spell.

“So be it,” said Scrimgeour, “One year sentence to Azkaban prison, take her away.”

“James!” cried Lily, as the Unspeakables led her away, transporting her straight to Azkaban.

James just looked up his face a picture of defeat as his wife was led away. He made no attempt to help her, knowing if he did, he’d be cursed quicker than lightning. If you thought Auror’s were tough, Unspeakables were unbreakable. They were lethal, and he couldn’t risk it, his kids were all they had left. He wasn’t going to have them end up with his wife’s Muggle family. This wasn’t strictly true; Sirius was their godfather so they’d go to him before that.

“Are you sure you wish me to do this?” asked Severus regarding Harry pensively.

Harry nodded with a grimace; he certainly didn’t want to see him. He had to get on with his life, and this way he’d never have to think about them again. He could have used an owl but the letters and paperwork had just come the second they were leaving Prince Manor. Eileen held onto him, giving him the silent strength to get through this. The three of them were strong enough to help each other through anything. Severus had helped his mother past her abusive husband, and start a
new life. She had been there to encourage him and love him. Harry had brought them together again stronger than ever before. They were for the first time, having a normal mother son relationship with no dark cloud handing overhead. Both of them had saved Eileen’s life, and she was strong enough to encourage their budding relationship. There was a circle they were forming, a family, and they’d die for each other.

Unfortunately Harry wasn’t about to get his wish as his father approached him. “Harry?” asked James, standing a few feet from his son. His face a picture of pain, defeat and self loathing.

“Leave him be Potter, you’ve caused enough damage.” said Severus his body hiding Harry, protecting him. Fingering his wand, wondering if he’d need to use it, but judging by Potter’s broken expression - he wasn’t fit to do anything never mind curse anyone.

“I just want to say I’m sorry,” choked James, grateful that everyone else was gone and weren’t here to see his humiliation. It was much harder than apologizing to Sirius and Remus. From them he knew he wasn’t going to be outright rejected, Harry on the other hand…probably would.

“You’re sorry? YOU’RE SORRY? Do you think that automatically erases thirteen years of fucking misery?!” snarled Harry, unable to help himself. He wanted to launch himself at the man, beat him with his fists, anything to make him feel a small measure of pain he’d felt. “Do you know what it was like to be five years old and have your entire family leave for the whole day and leave you alone in a manor? I hate you and I always will.” Severus had his arms wrapped around his midsection stopping him from launching at James.

James flinched openly at his words, his entire face going pasty white.

“Take him home,” said Severus giving his mother the Portkey, and activating it. Eileen was whisked away with Harry; hopefully she’d be able to calm him down. So much for moving on, perhaps he should suggest that Harry write down everything they did and send it to Potter. Maybe then Harry could feel some relief that he got how he felt off his chest.

“He doesn’t want your apologies Potter, he just wants you out of his life, so he can move on and be happy. Or as happy as he can be, you have no idea the lasting affects your actions have had do you? He has no self esteem, and I think he will always be that way.” said Severus his lip curling in disgust. Removing a package from his pocket he pushed it into James’ chest, with enough force to cause him to wince in pain. “This is for you. If you care even the slightest about him, which I doubt. Leave. Him. Alone.”

With that Severus left the courtroom, his cloak billowing around him dramatically. It wasn’t as severe as usual, since he wasn’t wearing black or robes. Instead he had a pair of black slacks and a white long sleeved t-shirt. As much as he’d actually like to see the idiots face, he wasn’t remaining here when Harry was hurting. He’d convinced Harry to let go of everything, and two days ago he’d came to him with the thought of giving it all back. Severus told him there was no need to give it all back, since technically some of it was his anyway. Potter in name or not, he was always entitled to his inheritance. He had given both properties back, insisting he’d never want to live in the place that still haunted him. Unable to argue with it, he’d not said anything against it, Harry was free to do as he wished.

James tears blurring his vision removed his glasses and wiped his eyes and then the lenses. Replacing them he opened the envelope, and inhaled sharply, after what happened he didn’t expect this. The deeds to Godric’s Hollow and Potter Manor, along with vaults in Nick and Roxy’s names, to be given to them on their seventeen birthdays. It was more than enough to see them living very comfortably for the rest of their life. He too had a vault, one of the main Potter ones, mostly money but anything with the Potter coat of arms had been placed inside it. A sob stole out of James’ throat,
tears once again pouring from his eyes. Taking a shaky breath, he put a glamour charm up not wanting everyone to see how upset he was. He didn’t know what to do, go to Sirius and Remus or be by himself.

He decided on Remus and Sirius. He didn’t want to be alone right now. He’d just seen his wife imprisoned, his son yell at him, and despite hating him, given him half the fortune back and all properties they owned. The words Snape said echoing in his mind as he made it to the Atrium and Floo’ed out. He wasn’t in any condition to Apparate; his magic was acting up, reacting to his emotions. The relief, sadness, horror, self hatred mingled around him, making him light headed.

His son was the better man. He knew it and it was killing him. He’d never have given all this to someone he hated.
Just wait until he read tomorrow's Daily Prophet...
Sirius Black sat at his dining table in Grimmauld Place, he was still reeling from the information he’d learned yesterday. Not the fact Lily Potter had been imprisoned for a year, he’d actually expected longer, but he wasn’t on the wizengamot. He only had two seats on the board of Governors, all purebloods did. None more active than Lucius Malfoy, who seemed to want to spread as much of his pureblood crap as possible. Thankfully most people there didn’t agree with him, the others he’d probably paid or blackmailed. Majority ruled, thankfully otherwise the snake would have gotten his way a long time ago. Not that it was a problem anymore; the blonde was in Azkaban, for harming his godson. He was actually still Harry’s godfather, he hadn’t been disowned as such or struck off, and otherwise Gringotts would have formed him. Harry had given James the houses back and half the Potter fortune. James had been in a right state when he got back, he’d collapsed in shock. It was Déjà vu; he’d had a similar reaction years ago. He still wrote to Harry occasionally, even if he didn’t get an answer. He wanted his godson to know he still thought about him, and was sorry, he didn’t care if Harry never forgave him, who was he kidding? He actually did. He was hoping with his perseverance Harry would forgive him, sooner or later.

“Do you want a coffee or something stronger?” asked Remus quietly as he came into the kitchen, clad in a pair of blue pyjamas. The pair Sirius had got him at Christmas, Sirius always liked buying him the most expensive clothes. Probably because as a child and teenager he’d never had anything decent. As a werewolf, he could hardly get a job, and when he did he never had it long. He was too proud to accept money from his friends, thinking of it as charity. The werewolf was a proud creature, and it had rubbed off on him.

“Coffee,” said Sirius, he’d been drinking too much lately, especially with James around. He just couldn’t forgive him, he’d given him money for a house and he’d used it to get a lawyer for Lily. He’d been furious when he found out; he’d given him that for the children and him so they had a roof over their head. Not that James had to worry about that anymore. No doubt he’d move back into Potter Manor, they’d never stepped foot in Godric’s Hollow since the attack on the twins. It had been directed at the twins, the prophecy said the boy born as the seventh month dies, and both had been born at that time…close enough to the ‘seventh month dies’ anyway.

Remus spelled the kettle and it warmed immediately, grabbing large mugs, he floated them over and carried the pot over. Sirius summoned the coffee and tea, as Remus went to the refrigerator and took out the milk. None of them liked their brew dark, but they also didn’t like them sweetened. Remus usually did near the full moon though, so he could gain some weight he’d lose after the transformations. Never more than one spoon per coffee. Remus handed Sirius his red mug, keeping the black one for him and he placed a tea bag into the brew as Sirius added coffee to his. “Has the paper been?” asked Remus, as he sat down across from Sirius a yawn stretching across his prematurely aged face.

“No yet,” said Sirius, “Ten minutes.” he added after looking at the clock on the wall, it always came at the same time, and those at Hogwarts would already have it, since it was so close to the prophet station. In fact it probably only took the owls five minutes from the Hogsmeade to get to their designated target. Sirius had once wondered how it never got chilly with such a large opening constantly open. Which wasn’t true, it opened for breakfast only, before the ‘window’ was closed.
“Has James been up yet?” asked Remus.

“Does it look like it?” asked Sirius irritated, “No he’s not, you’re too forgiving Remus.” honestly, someone could nearly kill him and Remus would forgive them he’d bet. He was being disingenuous he knew, but he couldn’t help it. He wanted Remus to be as angry as him towards James and Lily. He’d always been one to upset or anger easily, growing up with his parents it was no wonder.

“I haven’t forgiven him,” said Remus shaking his head, “I know things will never be the way they used to. I cannot forget all those years of friendship. Or the fact he’s part of my pack, Peter betrayed us that the wolf can understand, but it’s not turned James away.”

Sirius rolled his eyes, as if he was still irritated, but he said nothing, he understood the pack thing probably better than the others had. Dogs were related closely to the wolf, had the same instincts but not as strongly of course, probably because the blood/DNA was what you could say ‘watered down’. Stags were different, they didn’t have the instincts Remus and he had in animal form.

A few minutes of silence, with nothing but sips being drank from their hot coffee before the owls swooped in. Hooting and squawking as they waited on being relieved of their burdens. Remus removed the letters, and his packages, leaning over into the kitchen drawers and retrieved a few owl treats and placing them in his palm, waiting for the owl to accept them. Once it was done he gathered a few Galleons, Knuts and sickles and placed them in the money pouch. Only when that was done did the owls quickly depart, flying out of the open window of Grimmauld Place’s kitchen.

Sirius took the newspaper from the owls leg, placing the money in pouch and let Remus feed them. A few seconds later they were flying in the air, normally they just got piece of sausage or even a strip of fat from the bacon. Unfortunately none of them were in the mood to cook today, even using magic, required hands on dealing with it. He took one look at the front page and his eyes widened. His eyes quickly travelled along the words, swallowing everything written almost greedily.

“Do you still have dress robes that fit you?” asked Sirius casually, even if he was anything but.

“Why?” asked Remus stopping in his quest to open his package, leaving it half done as he stared at Sirius suspiciously. Sirius didn’t ask pointless questions, especially not in the morning, he must be planning something.

“We’ve got a party to attend,” said Sirius smugly.

“What party? Who in their right mind plans a party with the state everything is in?” asked Remus blinking in shock.

“Now you’ve lost me, why would you want to go to an award ceremony? The attention won’t be on you.” said Remus wryly.

“Ha, ha,” said Sirius shaking his head, “No I mean it, would you like to go?”

“No,” said Remus.

“Fine then, I’ll go and support Harry myself then,” said Sirius sounding deeply disappointed.

“Harry?” asked Remus perking up, throwing his empty package box in the bin, as he placed his Honeydukes chocolates to the side. Chocolate always made him feel better, especially after the full
moon. So he always made sure to have a supply on hand, which he most certainly did, five large blocks of it right now. In his trunk he still had two blocks, that’s if Sirius hadn’t stolen any. Not that he minded, he always gave them back, and gave him another one in compensation.

“Order of Merlin third class, for a potion he and Snape created,” said Sirius still reading the paper.

“Wow, you could use it, it will repair all the damage that’s been done during transforming. It works because there’s someone anonymous saying they’ve already done it, it’s been proved by the American Ministry. They claim they feel ten years younger, and that the full moon isn’t so difficult. Apparently they are interested in Harry as well.” the pride in his voice was impossible for even a deaf man to mistake. Order of Merlin third class! At his age! He was the youngest ever recipient for the award. He did wonder if Harry would have been this amazing, this determined if they’d loved him as they should. Or if the Potter’s neglect had turned him into this awesome, determined wizard that he is. Plus he might finally bring peace between the American and British governments and make them see eye to eye for once.

“I thought it was for arthritis?” asked Remus baffled, had he missed something?

“No, apparently that was a misconception, misprint from the potions monthly magazine. It’s like a rejuvenating potion only ten times more potent. It doesn’t just work on the bones but internal organs, making the body young again.” replied Sirius sounding as though he was reading paragraphs from the paper in his hands. They’d named it Eileen’s Potion; it was obvious who it had been made for. Snape’s mother was named Eileen if he didn’t remember right, Eileen Prince-Snape. Her name had been a mere mention of the old pureblood lines during his home schooling before Hogwarts. His parents had sneered at how weak she was and how dirty she is for diluting the Prince line with that of a Muggle. Muggles of course, by his mother’s definition were worse than even a Muddblood. Which was saying a lot, since they loathed those without magical lineage getting into their precious world. It didn’t matter that a great many of the Muggle born’s were actually smarter and more magically powerful than pureblood’s, which probably did just add insult to injury.

“Sounds fascinating, does it mention the price?” asked Remus.

“Twelve galleons,” said Sirius, or sixty pounds if you went with the Muggle currency.

“He didn't patient it?” asked Remus dumbfounded.

“Harry didn’t do it for the money Remus, he did it for Eileen Prince-Snape, he did it to save her from whatever was killing her. He didn’t patient it, and it’s become very popular, especially with the older generation, of course he still receives interest on it.” said Sirius quietly, Harry was very loyal to those he loved; unfortunately they weren’t included in that regard.

“When and where is the award ceremony?” asked Remus, rather concerned it shouldn’t have been put in the paper. It was dangerous; Voldemort wanted Harry dead, for embarrassing him. He’d attend if for no other reason than to keep Harry safe, if there was an attack he would need as much protection as humanly possible.

“Where else? The Ministry of Magic, trying to make as much publicity out of it as possible.” said Sirius, then again that’s where everyone was given their awards. The last one awarded it was actually the man who invented the Wolfsbane potion, but that was a much grander affair since it was first class. There hadn’t been one awarded since Dumbledore got one decades ago (the first class medal that is).

“That will afford him some protection then,” said Remus relief clear on his face, the Minister had placed wards stopping those with the Dark Mark gaining entrance, without an Auror present. Of
course they could be betrayed by an Auror, who could allow everyone entrance, but apparently Scrimgeour had thought of that. So it was amended, one Auror for every wizard carrying the Dark Mark. If a Death Eater tried to gain access, they’d find themselves with a permanent room in St. Mungo’s. The wards would fry their magical core and addle their brain beyond repair. One could say they deserve what happens to them, the only exception to the rule was Severus Snape. Who had been a spy for Albus Dumbledore, and it was widely known. They’d given him the charm that negated the affects of the wards placed around the building to keep it safe. Of course Scrimgeour the cautious wizard he was, made Severus swear an oath not to reveal it. This had all been done from the fireplace, before the trail for Lily Potter had been put into effect.

“Nowhere is totally secure,” said Sirius, they were at war and you learned that the hard way. Like how they thought James, Lily, Nick and Harry would be safe, yet look what happened? They’d been attacked when they thought it was them they wouldn’t have to worry about, safely censored behind the wards the Fidelus Charm had to offer.

“Why are you talking about secure? Has Grimmauld Place been compromised?” asked James walking in looking like a zombie. Despite the fact he’d been in bed for thirteen hours, he hadn’t slept a wink. Any time he’d just about fallen asleep his mind would come awake again. Like he’d been injected with pepper up potions all night, there wasn’t Dreamless sleeping potions here. Nor was there anywhere else he would need to buy some from Slug and Jiggers Apothecary in Diagon Alley.

“It’s probably constantly watched,” said Sirius scoffing, “I have no doubt Bellatrix has told Voldemort about this place. Thankfully its very well guarded, added with the Fidelus Charm on it its as safe as its going to get.” the books in the library could fund Voldemort’s war alone, it was extensive, rare and valuable books. More valuable books were in the main Black vault, which thankfully he had control off. His mother had blasted him off the family tree, but never officially disowned him. It could have something to do with Regulus going missing shortly after. There was no other heir to carry on the line, closest was Draco Malfoy but he would have to denounce his Malfoy heritage before he could carry the Black name. You had to be a Black in name and blood to carry the heir title. Something his great many times grandfather had put into affect. No doubt to make sure the line stayed with immediate family and pure.

“Would you like to see the paper?” enquired Sirius grinning smugly, an expectant look on his face.

“Err…no,” said James warily, he didn’t want to see the papers edition of what had happened in that courtroom yesterday. His parents were probably rolling in their graves; his entire family was in pieces. He also had to go and see Dumbledore, if that man was even thinking of training him, well he had another thing coming. His son wasn’t going to get training from anyone other than him; he’d see his son ready to face the threat, with him at his side guiding him. He’d been a fucking idiot trusting Dumbledore to do anything for his family.

“Don’t worry, Lily’s only mentioned on page ten, and only a sentence on the front page.” said Sirius handing the folded paper to him.

Remus bit his tongue; it’s the closest he’d seen them being too friendly in years. Yet he knew there was nothing friendly about it. Sirius was taunting James, closing his amber eyes he shook his head. This war had destroyed friendships, ruined lives and left them desolate. Even when Voldemort was gone, nothing would ever be the same.

James reached for the paper, confused by Sirius’ words and the way he was being. They had barely exchanged a few words the entire time he’d stayed here. Only to make it clear Sirius was only doing it to repay James Parents for taking him in when he ran away from the expectations his
family were heaping upon him. They had greatly agreed with Voldemort’s ways, but never actually became Death Eaters. No their urging had made Regulus do it, and it had killed him. When he’d died, his DOD had appeared on the magical family tree in the house. It was the same magic that Molly Weasley had imbued in her family clock. Opening the paper he closed his eyes, his hands becoming fists, not in anger but pained defeat. His son! Merlin his son had been awarded the Order of Merlin third class, youngest recipient ever. Swallowing thickly once again reminded just how good and pure his son actually was.

Another bird swooped into Grimmauld Place.

“Hey,” said Sirius reaching for the letter but only to be pecked, reaching forward he saw it was addressed for James. “It’s for you.”

“Remus?” asked Sirius.

“Yes?” asked Remus opening his eyes again.

“Why is a raven like a writing desk?” said Sirius his face straight.

Remus groaned and slammed his head on the tabletop, ever since the teenager had found his favourite childhood book - he always, always reminded him of it. He’d kept in his trunk at all times, and Sirius had read it. Every time he saw a raven, he was reminded of the book and joke. Inwardly though Remus was grinning, it was difficult to be glad about anything else days. He’d actually seen the movie, once upon a time visiting the Muggle world. It was absolutely fascinating what they could do, it’s just a shame most wizards were backwards. They’d rather gouge out their eyes than accept anything Muggle in their world.

Sirius laughed in amusement, no matter how many years past it was still amusing. Just like the Sirius/Serious pun they always done with his name. If only it had been Orion Sirius instead of Sirius Orion he’d been named.

James sat down his brow filled with sweat, tears running freely down his face. Remus and Sirius stared at him then at the paper, their eyebrows rose past their hairline. There was like ten pages, filled with questions and statements. Judging by the first set of questions this had been written by Harry. Sirius took the pages from James, not wanting the salt water from his tears to mess the letter up. His blue eyes fluttering over each and every question, statement and written word, Harry had poured his soul into this letter. Older parchment fell out, but they were left as the letter was read out loud by Sirius.

James,

I’ve been asked to write everything down, Severus said it might help me get everything off my chest and maybe let me move on properly. I hadn’t really realized I had been hanging on, but I guess I have been.

Do you remember the last time when you sat down and actually fed me after Voldemort’s first defeat? Cuddled me? Told me you loved me?

Do you remember the last time you bathed me and not just used a spell until I was old enough to wash myself in the sink?

Do you remember the last time you ever told me a story?

Do you remember the last time there was a picture of me taken?
Do you remember the time I asked for a cat? Only for Lily to buy one for Nick not two days later?

Do you remember when Nick punched me in the face and you sent me to my room?

The list continued extensively, continuing on during the entire duration of his childhood. All faults were being laid bare for James to see, stuff James had actually forgotten about until it was reminded for him. He could barely believe Harry could remember any of it, but James knew better than most, horrible memories always encompassed the good ones. People remembered the bad better than the good. Since Harry’s childhood had been filled with nothing but misery, he probably remembered a great deal of it.

Do you remember taking Nick and Roxy to Diagon Alley, a day that should have been mine also? You had to take me for my wand do you remember what you told Nick afterwards once you got back? After denying me an owl? Shall I remind you? It took longer to get his wand, now come on before it gets dark. When was the last time you actually used my name while talking about me to others?

You forgot me, nothing new there, you took me to Hogwarts and I didn’t get to ride in the boat like everyone else. You made it seem as though it was entirely my fault.

You never wrote to me other than to tell me how much a disappointment I was. You can have them back, I don’t need them to know what they said, I’ve read them so many times that they are memorised.

I’m sorry for whatever I did to deserve being ignored and belittled by my family. For so long I had hoped somehow that miraculously you would pay the slightest bit of attention to me. I stupidly thought that with good grades you’d actually notice. Instead you blamed Ronald Weasley for Nick’s lack of good grades after letting him think Quidditch and reading magazines were more important than work! Each time the tutor came to you with how badly behaved nick was you threatened to fire him. He was just following the example you set for him, from what I’ve observed it seems he’s finally grown up. Good for him, something you can’t take any credit for - as usual.

I’d be greatly surprised if you can answer any of those questions or remember any of the memories I’m taking about. I remember everything and I wish I didn’t, maybe now old demons can be laid to rest and I can focus on my future.

Harry Peverell

Sirius’ voice was hoarse by the time he’d finished, not just because of the emotions he was feeling, but because of the length of the letter. Needless to say he truly had gotten everything off his chest. The letter may be addressed to James, but Sirius tried to remember when he had last did any of those things for his godson. For most part he and Remus had been visiting werewolf camps all over the world, especially after Umbridge had started her bloody laws. They’d gone to tell them just because she thought that way, not everyone was as ignorant. They laws were more…tolerant now because of the Wolfsbane potion but not by much.

“I’ll have something stronger now,” said Sirius to Remus, the werewolf just summoned the whiskey and glasses. Filling a glass he handed it over to Sirius, before he took the opened, old letters Harry had spoke off. He looked sick just reading them himself; he passed them over to Sirius not looking James in the eye.

Harry

Nick has just told us you can speak snake language I want you to know I'm extremely disappointed
in you. Every year there is always something, most recent ones getting sorted into Ravenclaw! No Potter has ever been sorted anywhere other than Gryffindor but you.

I supposed I should just be grateful that it wasn't Slytherin which by given your newly discovered talent I'm surprised your not. Then showing up your brother by getting better grades when you know very well what your brother was going through trying to fight Voldemort.

Now you can speak Parseltongue, when you come home for the summer you are to go straight to your room. You still stay in there; I will get Lily to send the food up to your room we do not want to see you. Poor Roxy is utterly mortified as are your mother and I! Do you know what this could do to Nick's reputation? If this backlashes on us you will be out on your backside.

“IT’s no wonder he chose to emancipate himself,” said Sirius staring at the letter completely horrified, it didn’t seem like James at all. This letter reminded him of his own father who was embarrassed he’d been put in Gryffindor not Slytherin. Talking about how it had embarrassed Regulus as well. The similarities were scary, and he’d never imagined in a million years he’d compare his best friend to his own father. He refused to read the others, six years and only four letters the entire time. Four small letters, he’d bet they were full of bitterness and anger like this one.

James just sank further into his seat, their looks imbedded itself into his mind, searing him with agony so profound it look his breath away. He had to get out of here, he couldn’t stay, he didn’t want to see the looks of quiet accusation, disgust, distrust and anger coming his way. With that he ran, he didn’t care if he looked like a coward, maybe he was?

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“Why didn’t you tell me?” asked Eileen, as Harry sleepily made his way into the dinning room. She’d just finished reading everything in the newspaper, the American Minister wanted to be the one to give Harry and Severus their awards! She was so proud of them.

“What?” asked Harry blinking in confusion as he sat down, not understanding what Eileen was going on about. He was dressed in a pair of old jeans and a white long sleeved top. He’d sent the letter, finally, after pacing up and down, and preparing to put the letter on the owl only to falter. He’d worked up the courage and hopefully things would get better now.

“She means the award ceremony for tonight, I do hope you have a set of dress robes,” smirked Severus chucking evilly at how pale Harry went. Harry hated any attention on him what so ever.

“What?” gaped Harry, “What award ceremony?”

“If you’d opened all your mail instead of leaving it lying there you’d already know,” said Severus pointing towards the table where Harry had put everything yesterday. They’d been in a hurry, getting to the trial of Lily Potter. When he’d got back he’d been too angry, Eileen had calmed him down. Afterwards he’d spent the rest of the day in the lab, brewing always put him at ease, helped him forget everything.

Harry practically bolted for the letter, ripping it open he read it quickly, his eyes getting steadily wider. He was aware he must have looked like an idiot, standing there gaping at it. The American Minster? Stepping foot on British soil? To give him and Severus an award? He certainly hadn’t seen that one coming. Not by a long shot.

“Err…I don’t suppose you can just…collect mine do you?” asked Harry, he wasn’t sure if he really meant what he said. He just wasn’t used to being looked at; he’d spent his entire life invisible to
everyone around him.

“Harry!” said Eileen her lips twitching, why did she have to have two sons who prefer dwelling in the shadows? Instead of embracing their brilliance? It was infuriating yet saddening. The world deserved to know just how brilliant they were, and she was proud of them no matter what they chose to do. She just wished everyone could see them as she saw them. To think if she’d remained in the magical world, or came back after having Severus, she could have perhaps become a Potions Mistress and have the ability to do what they did. She was great at Potions make no mistake, but she was nowhere near Mastery level. She had been too old, body wise, since everything ached if she stood too long, to consider it. Since the potion she’d considered it, but she had inevitably decided to leave it to her boys, and enjoy old age pain free as it was now. She’d never had the imagination to do what her boys did anyway.

“I hope you have a nice dress,” said Harry wryly.

“Why is that?” asked Eileen, she didn’t own a single dress! She never had. Her wardrobe was very basic, always had been since she was seventeen years old.

“You’re coming,” said Harry, “I wouldn’t be here without you, or Sev.” mostly Eileen, if she hadn’t been Severus’ mother, he would never have met him or became his Apprentice. He’d still be a full time Hogwarts student, getting troll on all Potion assessments. Then again maybe not, Slughorn seemed respectable enough. He did wonder why Reese had left, but very briefly he loathed the man more than even his own parents. He’d almost destroyed what Harry wanted to be more than anything else in the world, a Potions apprentice and inevitably a Master in the craft of Potions making.

“Nothing would make me happier,” said Eileen smiling sweetly at him. “Do you have a set of dress robes for the occasion?”

“No,” said Harry mulishly.

“Then perhaps we best visit Madam Malkin’s, is she still open Severus?” asked Eileen turning to her son.

“I believe so,” said Severus, “Security around the Alley had increased significantly since the attack.” Ollivander and Fortescue had been taken, not killed, Voldemort wanted them for something. They obviously had information that the Dark wizard wanted, enough to risk his followers, five of them had been killed during the attack, two more captured but they’d been low level Death Eaters. They knew nothing of future plans, what Voldemort was doing or actually anything useful. They were children, barely out of school, it made Severus furious, especially knowing his Slytherins would end up joining. With Slughorn though, they might have a chance to avoid their fate.

“What about you? Do you have dress robes?” asked Harry blatantly staring at Severus with a smirk, undressing him with his eyes.

Severus cleared his throat, glaring at Harry with no bite and a tad bit humour lurking behind his black eyes. “I do not.” said Severus.

“Then it’s a trip we all shall make!” said Eileen, finally an excuse to get her boys out of the manor. She had to set up a little impromptu holiday for them all. She’d enjoyed Egypt, as had they both, even got a little bit of the sun before coming back. They were both so pale, no doubt because of all the time they spend in that lab.
“Can’t you take our measurements and send them off via owl?” asked Harry hopefully. Sitting back down and grabbing some food, Eileen had already eaten so it was just him and Severus.

“If you want white robes then yes,” said Severus, his mother had the quirkiest sense of humour when she wanted it. The last time he’d asked her to do it she’d gotten him white robes, pure white. Telling him he was wearing too much black as if it was all okay.

“Severus!” scolded Eileen a smile twitching at her lips.

“Hmm?” murmured Harry, unable to speak since his mouth was full, but he was staring at them curiously trying to swallow the load.

“When I was due to meet a prospective Potions Master, I wanted to look my best; I sold some potions to afford the robes. I asked my mother here, to buy me a set, since I wasn’t able to move that day, the Dark Lord had been particularly vicious the night before. She got me a set alright, a white set of dress robes.” said Severus wryly, “Which were wasted by the time he was through testing me. He accepted me as his apprentice, telling me to refrain from wearing white unless I wanted to buy a new wardrobe every week.”

“Oh,” said Harry his lips had disappeared as he tried and succeeded in holding his amusement at by. “Well maybe I should just pick my own. I’ll get my snake some treats and mice while I’m there too.” maybe a set of blue robes? But that might make him seem proud of Ravenclaw house since it’s their colours. He’d never been proud to be a Ravenclaw, even those with intellect preferred knowing his brother’s favourite colour or food compared to actually talking to him. They spoke to him now yes, because he’d proved himself, well that was well and good but he’d never forgive them for ignoring him for three nearly four years. Or maybe green ones? He liked green it was a good colour, went well with his eyes, and he wanted Severus to notice him tonight if they were going to this thing.

“Then consider it done, we shall go after breakfast, we only have a few hours in which to prepare. The award ceremony begins at three, lasts two hours then there is a celebration party afterwards.” said Eileen.

“I know mother.” said Severus dryly.

“I’m not talking to you Severus, I am telling Harry, who perhaps doesn’t know what all this entails!” said Eileen smartly.

“Touché,” said Severus nodding his head.

“Celebration party? Just how long does that last?” asked Harry wide eyes, it was a good job it was the weekend, that way he wasn’t missing school or any lessons Severus had planned. Sunday’s were always his, well apart from this Sunday; hopefully it will only be an hour or two, itself.

“Can run on until midnight,” said Eileen, smiling in sympathy for her boys.

“It’s going to be a long day isn’t it?” asked Harry groaning in dread. Severus wasn’t helping matters by smirking at him like that. “You forget you are going to do you?”

“No, but the attention isn’t going to be focused on me, you are the youngest recipient after all.” said Severus finding amusement in how much his young lover (not that anyone would know, he wasn’t going to jeopardise Harry’s budding career he deserved everything he had and was receiving.) was dreading an award ceremony. There would have been once upon a time, he’d have desperately wanted it, especially at his age. To be acknowledged, respected before he went and
made the biggest mistake of his life. Thankfully Harry would never make the mistake he had. Despite the fact they’d had similar but very different childhoods. Whereas he’d wanted quiet and to fade into obscurity by those who bullied him and his father, Harry had been invisible to everyone, wanting someone, anyone to notice him.

“Let’s get this over with,” said Harry placing his napkin beside his mostly empty plate.

“Harry this is good news, you will be world widely recognized, respected, for something you did and do.” said Severus standing up also.

“True,” said Harry and wasn’t that what he wanted? For the world to see him as his own man? Not as Potter’s son or the brother of the boy who lived just Harry Peverell soon to be Potions Master and now Order of Merlin third class award winner. He wasn’t invisible anymore, and it hadn’t been how he feared, being found out he was the true boy who lived. He will always know who his true friends were, and for that…Harry will always be grateful. “I have a few others I want to invite is it possible?”

“It is, you will have to send it right away, otherwise they wont get their invites and passes, in the form of the Portkey that will send them straight to the Ministry’s Grand Hall.” said Severus immediately. He knew who would be attending with Harry tonight, Neville and Luna, as well as Cedric Diggory and perhaps Cho Chang if they could be given permission to leave school. Considering how honourable it is, to be asked to attend, he doubted Dumbledore would say no. In fact Albus Dumbledore would probably be there, representing the Wizengamot since he was chief warlock and head of the Wizengamot.

“Brilliant.” said Harry grabbing his mail and bolting off up stairs.
Chapter 49

Invisible

Chapter 49

Award Ceremony and Heartache

Eileen Prince-Snape stared at herself in the mirror awed at the women standing before her. It surely couldn’t be her? She wore a gorgeous flowing long length emerald dress with sequins glittering in an intriguing pattern, with a chain belt. To top it off, she wore to the necklace Harry had given her and the emerald earrings Severus had given her at the same time - Christmas. She didn’t have much jewellery but it was enough to see her through, and each piece had sentimental value. Her black hair fell down in long tresses down her back, curling slightly at the end. She wasn’t the most beautiful looking woman in the world, but today she felt it. Pride still continued to course through her, her sons were amazing, she’d always known it, now the world finally knew too. Putting on her new pair of green shoes, flats, she couldn’t wear high heels. She might now, but back then she hadn’t been able to but she’d rather be comfortable. She was tall enough without wearing them anyway, her son had gotten his tallness from her, and in fact he’d gotten most things from her, poor dear. Grabbing her shawl and travel cloak or what she rather liked to think ‘Jacket’ she’d spent too long in the Muggle world to be rid of it.

“Mum you look…amazing,” said Severus, staring at her blankly before deciding on the most appropriate word. She beamed at him, obviously over the moon with her son’s words. It hurt to think she hadn’t had anyone say those words to her before. She was his mum, he didn’t care what she looked like, and he loved her even if he didn’t show it as much as he should. Unfortunately the years of spying had stuck with him, and he preferred not to show how much he cared about people or their words.

“Thank you Severus,” said Eileen smiling gratefully at her son, she had wondered if it was a bit much, but Severus seemed to like it so she swept away her fears. This was an award ceremony, everyone would be dressed up, and ready to party. The pureblood’s loved these sorts of functions, any excuse to get dressed up and wear your entire vault contents around your neck or elsewhere. “You look very dapper yourself. Has Harry seen you?”

Severus rolled his eyes; honestly, he didn’t look any different than he normally would. Or so he kept telling himself anyway, truth be told, both he and Harry had settled on traditional dress robes, he had on a black shirt instead of a white one. It made him look skinner than he actually was, but it didn’t bother him since he always wore black and looked like a stick. He could eat like a pig and never gain weight; he’d always weighted the same since before he started teaching at Hogwarts. His mother was taking too much pleasure out of the fact he and Harry were…well together. Or as together as they were going to get for a while anyway.

“The Portkey is set to activate in five minutes, why don’t you go and get him? I’ll be in the hall.” said Eileen, making her way down the stairs. A few months ago this would have been nearly excruciating for her. She shook her head; it seemed as if the award ceremony was bringing back just how much the potion had helped her. Now it was going to do the same for thousands of others, including werewolf’s too. Perhaps it would elongate their life; werewolves had a life span on 20 to 30 years after they were bitten, before they completely deteriorated. The figure had gone up perhaps ten years since the Wolfsbane potion but now…now there was a new hope for them.

Severus knocked on Harry’s door; he’d been amused all day at how much Harry was dreading this.
Perhaps Harry felt more deeply than he imagined, hopefully he would still go. He didn’t want to have to accept Harry’s award for him. “Harry are you ready to go?”

“I’m coming,“ said Harry from inside the room, a few seconds later the door finally opened. The dress robes he’d decided on were breathtaking; it made Harry look years older. Biting his lip, he realized tonight was going to be extremely long. Harry had elected to wear a silver tie, instead of the traditional bow that came with the dress robes.

“You decided on wearing the ring then?” said Severus noticing the Peverell insignia ring on his hand. Not many decided to wear the rings these days, it was a stupid move, it was enchanted to protect the wearer, even negate some of the most potent potions. Poisons and even love potions, Black didn’t wear his, Potter didn’t wear his come to that, and even Arthur Weasley didn’t wear it. The only person he’d seen wearing insignia rings was Lucius, the Minister or magic and of course the Potion Master’s he saw regularly at conferences.

“Yup, why don’t you wear the Prince one?” asked Harry, closing the door.

“I would have to take on the Prince Name.” said Severus as if it explained everything. Which it did, he’d made his name as a Snape, he’d gained his Mastery as a Snape…need he go on? Although lately they’d been getting referred to as Prince-Snape’s in the newspaper. Even his mother had officially hyphenated it, changing it on her vault this afternoon while out shopping.

“Heh, you basically have, everyone knows you as the Prince-Snape’s,” said Harry wryly, spookily thinking the same thing Severus had been just moments before. At least they had been referred to as such in the newspapers this morning.

“Indeed, are you ready to go? The Portkey will be activating in two minutes,” said Severus looking at his watch. There was no such thing as ‘fashionably late’ at events such as these. They were all Portkey’d in at different times to the same place.

“Let’s go then,” said Harry his face scrunched up in apprehension. Both of them then began to hasten down the stairs. Grabbing the Portkey, which was actually their passes to get into the Grand hall, which wasn’t used very often. A minute later, the Manor disappeared and the hall doors appeared before them. They stood for a few seconds, letting their stomach settle after being yanked so forcefully.

“Wands and passes please,” said Kate Bennett, a very familiar Witch, she had been asked to give evidence at Lily Potter’s trial.

Severus passed his wand and VIP pass over, tapping his foot impatiently as it was checked and recorded, his name ticked off. “Welcome and congratulations Mr. Snape.” she said as she returned his wand to him.

“Thank you,” said Severus as his mother went next, the loud music could be heard from inside the room.

“Welcome Mrs. Prince-Snape,” said Kate smiling gently at the woman passing the wand back. There was hardly any magic registered on the wand, and for such an older woman…it was a surprise to say the least. She knew everyone didn’t use magic every day, and some preferred actually not using it. That was mostly because the spells they cast didn’t succeed.

“Thank you dear,” said Eileen joining her son, waiting on Harry now.

“Oh Mr. Peverell! Welcome! I hope you don’t mind but the Minister wants a private word?” asked
“During dinner, and it won’t be private, give him my apologies but I have no interest in anything other than passing my mastery at this time.” said Harry quietly but firmly making himself clear. “If it’s important then I’m sure a silencing spell will do the trick.”

“Of course, and congratulations, why don’t you go in and have a seat? The award ceremony will start in exactly twenty minutes. Auror Smith will show you to your seats, he’s just inside the door.” said Kate, handing him his wand back, urging them in getting ready for the last lot of guests. The register totalled only another five were to come, if they did come of course, which would be answered in exactly three minutes when the Portkey was due to activate. It was self activating, they didn’t have them password activated anymore. It was dangerous; after all if Death Eaters got their hands on one then they could flood the Ministry. They always sent them last minute; self activating and securely using trained attack owls that made the Gringotts ones look like playful bunnies.

“Thanks,” said Harry taking a deep breath as Kate magically opened the doors for them, as they entered the doors was firmly closed behind them. The wards shimmering over their skins, as they looked around the hall.

“WOW,” said Harry gazing around in awe. The place was done up spectacularly, they’d pulled out all the stops in making this an event to remember. There were a million balloons stuck up on the ceiling, perhaps with a magical barrier or sticking charms. Tables and chairs covered by the whitest, softest looking material he’d ever seen. Polished portraits and floors, new candlesticks and glittering gas lamps bobbing up and down adding to the look. The entire wall at the back side of the room, or bottom, depending on where one was sitting or standing; was filled with all manner of food, despite the fact Harry was sure they would get a normal meal. There was also a table with a million goodie bags, like when you were at a party. Lily and James had always done it every year for Nick, he’d never had a part or goodie bag. He was curious to know what was in them, he looked around further still curious. All the Ministry of magic Portraits were spaced evenly out spread across the room walls. They were all talking animatedly with people, obviously ecstatic to have someone to talk to. “I didn’t expect this.”

“What did you expect?” asked Eileen as they were escorted to their seats, over the noise it was very loud. Thankfully most people were sitting at their tables, so they didn’t find it difficulty to get by people. She smirked wryly, when she caught Severus glaring at anyone who looked at Harry for more than a few seconds. Glaring much fiercer with those who seemed to have ‘elevator’ eyes. He wasn’t being very subtle; thankfully it could be passed off as protecting his Apprentice, only if he didn’t go too far of course. “Thank you,” said Eileen as Auror Smith pulled out the chair for her and let her sit down before leaving, dipping his head in acknowledgement to the thanks.

“Something similar to the Yule Ball,” shrugged Harry, his green eyes lightening up when he saw Neville had managed to come with the others. He had been in this state just before the Yule Ball too, not just because it was his first ‘date’ but because he didn’t like being in the spotlight. Unfortunately it was something Harry would have to live with, but he would be happy knowing it was for himself, as Severus had said, rather than the boy who lived’s brother.

Severus snorted, “They don’t like using money at Hogwarts, the Headmaster’s are rather…tight-fisted that way, so all things are done magically with furniture they already had. They have a rather tight budget, any ingredient I wanted, that wasn’t in the potions student used I had to buy myself.” even Dumbledore, but during war, budgets were always tightened in further.

“Oh,” said Harry taking his seat, which was right next to Severus, Eileen sat down next to Luna and across from Neville who was on Harry’s other side. Cedric and Cho were occupying the only
other seats at the table. “Makes sense I suppose.”

“It’s not just that, Hogwarts is expensive to get into, with only a small amount of scholarships available - most cannot afford it. It’s not called the safest and best school around for nothing. All the best schools do have large tuition fees.” said Eileen placing her travel cloak on her seat, placing the small bag of money on the side of the table. It was the same colour of green as her dress, and it would have fitted everything she wanted to put in it.

“Yeah, it’s a good job my tuition was paid when I was born or I probably wouldn’t have attended either.” snorted Harry, it would have been the sort of choice James and Lily would have made. Twice he’d thought of them already today, he had to stop this, but at least it wasn’t with bitterness crawling up his mouth anymore. Sending that letter had been therapeutic and he owed it all to Severus.

“Most pureblood’s do the same thing, I know mine was paid then too.” said Cedric Diggory in agreement.

“It is an old practice.” said Severus in agreement.

“Yes daddy did the same thing,” said Luna, a wistful smile on her face.

“Harry look! That’s the American Minister!” said Neville shaking Harry and pointing to the Minister in question. He was sitting in deep conversation with Scrimgeour and Dumbledore. There was also a lot of security surrounding them.

“Is that the American Auror robes?” asked Harry curiously.

Everyone else turned to look, “They are what you could call a magical extension of the Secret service, and they protect the Minister of magic.”

“Does Muggle secret service know about magic?” asked Harry, there was so much he didn’t know still.

“Those with a very big pay grade do yes, not even their Minister of magic gets to meet the President of the United States alone.” said Severus wryly; able to talk now the weird sisters were no longer playing. “They are more friendly and advanced than our Muggle and Magical Ministers. Most probably because they’ve not had to deal with war.”

“Lucky them,” said Harry, he certainly wished there wasn’t a war going on. You wouldn’t think so seeing all these people talking and laughing. Yet there was the newspapers were filled with reports of attacks and mysterious kidnappings. Thankfully he didn’t have his ‘inner circle’ and with the wards increased around Azkaban, he wasn’t going to get them any time soon.

“Mr. Peverell? Mr. Prince-Snape? Could you please make your way to the podium? The award ceremony is about to start.” said Auror Smith, after making his way to their table once again. The Ministers were up there along with someone they didn’t recognize, holding onto two boxes, probably holding their awards.

“I’ll see you guys later,” said Harry getting up, a chorus of ‘alright’ and good luck’ met his ears as he did. Cho was still as shy as before, she barely spoke when they all got together, you’d think she’d be used to them by now. She certainly had a different persona at school, she was always giggling away with a gaggling of friends. Harry followed Severus up to the podium, trying to give Severus as much of the spotlight as humanely possible.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to thank you all for coming together to share this special night.
Tonight we are proud to be able to give our Order of Merlin award to these two distinguished wizards. Please welcome up Severus Prince-Snape and Harry Peverell!” they stood as one then the applauding began, it was loud and fierce, they were always proud when someone did enough to win these awards. The journalist that had been given the honour, were flashing their photographs a mile a minute in the stages direction. One person in particular wasn’t there, Rita Skeeter and her poisonous quill, Harry didn’t have anything against her, she hadn’t written anything about him though. In fact he wasn’t sure if she still worked at the Daily Prophet, James had gotten her into a lot of trouble, for publishing things about Nick.

“First to receive their Order of Merlin third class is a long prominent Potions Master, who has created numerous potions, including the notable changes in the Wolfbane potion and Veritaserum, making it usable in court of law. Please welcome up Order of Merlin third class winner Severus Snape!” said Elias Barton, American Minister of Magic, shouted into the sonorous charm so everyone could hear him.

Severus stepped forward, as always completely impassive to those around him. Only a few people there truly knew just how honoured Severus was to receive such a prestigious award. Eileen, Luna, Harry and of course Albus Dumbledore, who’s eyes were twinkling brightly as he observed Severus receive the award. The Minister attached it to his dress robe, and both of them shook hands, as Elias congratulated Severus. “It’s very nice to meet you in person; your work has inspired many in my homeland. The work you did for the Potions Weekly magazine was magnificent, I certainly wouldn’t mind reading some more. However, I know how busy you are, your apprentice is a definite credit to you and your profession.”

“Thank you and he is indeed.” said Severus nodding his head curtly.

“Should have expected it, you wouldn’t waste your time on a mediocre student!” said Elias happily, stepping back from the podium allowing Severus to say his word.

“It’s a great honour to accept this award on behalf of the magical world; it is of course, greatly appreciated when ones work is acknowledged in the best way possible. We do not do it for the praise but rather for the betterment of our chosen field. I wish to thank everyone who spoke up and decided the award was deserved.” said Severus nodding curtly before stepping back from the podium. His red and gold medal more obvious than ever with his dark clothes on. For once he had nothing to say about the red and gold medal, with a phoenix embossed on and flames rising around it. The awards didn’t move they were pure gold no tampering no magic.

“Last but no means least the second to be awarded the Order of Merlin third class, the youngest recipient for this prestigious award… an astonishing apprentice, who has already proven his worth…and who I’m sure we are going to hear much from in the coming years Mr. Harry Peverell!” said Elias once again at the podium. This was the boy he’d been waiting for; unfortunately the young man had denied him a private audience. It should have annoyed him, but it only made him more curious about the apprentice. He’d been observing him; he looked very reluctant to be in the spotlight. A few years ago he hadn’t known who he was, he knew Nick Potter, who didn’t? But now Harry Peverell was everywhere.

“Well done Mr. Peverell you have done your country and school proud, if only we had such dedicated Wizards and witches in America.” said Elias shaking Harry’s hand, and attaching his Order of Merlin medal into his clothes. Standing together allowing their photographs to be taken, much to Harry’s distaste.

“Thank you Minister.” said Harry quietly; a small smile on his face, and it was all he could muster under the circumstances. He grimaced when the Minister moved away leaving him in the middle of
the lions den so to speak. He looked at Severus for a second, getting strength from the black eyes and the confident nod from his direction. Taking a deep breath, he remembered Severus’ words from just earlier on that day. Harry this is good news, you will be world widely recognized, respected, for something you did and do. He could this, he would do this, and it’s what he’d spent his life wishing for. Breathing out, he non-verbally cast a sonorous spell on himself. Something everyone noticed, especially when his voice boomed loud enough for the whole hall to hear.

“Hi, I never expected to get this award, you should have seen my face when I did!” said Harry grinning wryly, speaking straight at his friends. Everyone laughed in response to his words. It was glaringly obvious how young he truly was seeing him standing there speaking the way he was.

“There are people I wish to thank, for without them I wouldn’t be standing where I am right now. Without them I’d still be at Hogwarts full time, not able to focus on the thing I enjoy the most. So thank you Eileen, you have been more of a mother to me than Lily ever was. Just as importantly Severus Snape who accepted me as his Potions apprentice. Without their praise and love I wouldn’t have flourished into who I am. I’d also like to thank my best friends for sticking with me through it all, you know who you are. I will of course, wear my medal with pride knowing it’s deserved. Thank you!” with that Harry removed the sonorous charm and stepped back. Finally relaxing, as the spotlight was finally removed from him. The weird sister’s band began to climb back onto the raised platform, as the podium was removed.

“Congratulations, I am proud of you both.” said Dumbledore shaking their hands as men, not as a child Harry sometimes felt. He was only the first one to congratulate them, as they made the way to their table, shaking hands with people they didn’t even know. For once Severus was much more reluctant than Harry. He didn’t like to be touched, well, from people he didn’t know of course.

“Good to see you Severus, well done on the award,” said Master Grimm, shaking hands with a fellow Master.

“Jacob it’s good to see you, how have you been?” asked Severus.

“I have been good, my Apprentice just passed his Mastery, I think I’m going to concentrate on potions for a few years before taking on another.” said Master Grimm’s. His usually long peppery hair was cut short.

“That’s a surprise,” said Severus wryly, Jacob always had an apprentice over the years, he’d had around five going far back as he remembered him.

“It is, isn’t it?” said Master Russell. He and Jacob had both learned from the same Master, and had graduated within six months of each other. Jacob had taken on apprentice after apprentice, he liked teaching about Potions. Unfortunately Jacob had probably realized how held back he was by this, and wanted to concentrate on himself for a bit.

“I suspected it would happen eventually,” said Master Sorens.

“Your potion was fantastically done, even I almost screwed up, thankfully I corrected it before it blew up in my face.” said Jacob Grimm.

“We almost did as well. We were under a great deal of pressure to brew it correctly.” said Severus wryly.

“Talking about Potions again are we?” asked a beautiful young woman coming to stand beside Jacob shaking her head wryly, but it seemed like an old joke between them because Jacob just laughed.
“Severus I’d like to introduce you to my wife, Penelope Grimm, Pen this is the Potions Master I’ve told you so much about Master Snape.” said Jacob politely.

“It’s very nice to finally meet the man I’ve heard so much about!” said Penelope shaking Severus’ hand, “And congratulations on the medal! I don’t know a lot about potions but to create one I know takes dedication.”

“Thank you,” said Severus.

“Will you be at the next conference?” asked Master Damon.

“Perhaps,” said Severus, “It just depends on how things are on this end.” they knew the United Kingdom’s magical world was under threat of war.

“Of course, I hope to see you there, I have a new potion coming out, it will be in the magazine this week.” said Master Damon mysteriously. He wasn’t going to make Severus and Harry’s day about a potion he’d published.

“Really? What is it?” asked Severus curiously.

“Not tonight, tonight is for you Severus, enjoy it, you’ve deserved it for a long time.” said Master Damon seriously.

“Very well,” said Severus grudgingly. “I expect a letter tomorrow.”

“Of course,” said Master Damon wryly, unsurprised by Severus’ words.

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“Well done Harry!” squealed Luna hugging her friend, she was dressed in the most absurdly green dress that looked like a Christmas tree with a pair of purple leggings underneath. She certainly looked very odd among them all. Harry didn’t care though, he liked her a great deal and she liked him for himself not anything else.

“Thanks!” said Harry, getting tired of repeating himself already.

“How does it feel?” asked Cho speaking for the first time, gazing at the medal, the phoenix had a small three imbedded in it, indicating which one it was.

“I don’t know, I’m still getting used to it,” shrugged Harry, “It’s nice to be recognized though for something you did.”

“Helps your brother doesn’t have one as well.” said Luna with eerie perspective.

“That too,” laughed Harry.

“Eileen would you like to dance?” asked Harry, since everyone else was doing it.

“I’d love to sweetie,” said Eileen smiling sweetly at Harry who quickly moved beside her and led the older woman to the dance floor. His friends quickly did the same, although they were a bit more buoyant than Harry was. After all Eileen was an older woman, and she couldn’t jump around like a headless chicken to the music like the youngsters could.

“I meant what I said before, you know, you have been more of a mother than Lily, I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for you.” said Harry shouting to be heard over the pounding loud music.
“I know Harry,” said Eileen still smiling, it was beginning to hurt; she didn’t think she’d smiled so much in a very long time. “I know.” she repeated. Giggle slightly when Harry tried to burl her around, unfortunately he was too short and she had to duck under causing a few people, including themselves to laugh.

“Ooh dinner,” said Harry noticing people ordering food for themselves, and truth be told after two dances his feet were beginning to hurt. No doubt Eileen’s was as well, he wasn’t very…good at dancing. He’d stomped on her feet twice already, what could he say? Nobody had taught him to dance.

“Yes it looks rather mouth-watering doesn’t it?” said Eileen, “Come on, Severus does look rather lonely sitting there by himself.” she would always worry her son, its what any good parent did.

“Bored already?” asked Harry as he sat down.

“I was bored before I walked through the door,” said Severus wryly, he didn’t like crowds or social gatherings. He’d always been that way; he just didn’t like people knowing that.

“Potatoes, steak pie, peas, sweet corn and carrot with lots of gravy.” said Harry to his empty plate, to the normal world it would make you look insane, but to the magical world it was a normal occurrence. The food appeared before him, and Harry quietly dug in along with Severus and Eileen when they ordered their food. They ordered steak and kidney pie, chips and beans; Eileen ordered chicken tikka with rice.

“That was fun we will need to do it again some time. After dinner me and you are going to dance Harry. My feet better not be trod on through!” said Luna as she sat down. She certainly wasn’t shy in telling people what she thought anyway.

“Allright,” chuckled Harry after swallowing his pie.

“Chicken (red pepper/Italian sauce marinated in it), steak, salad, pasta and some cheese.” said Luna, ignoring the looks she received. She cleared the throat, and suddenly everyone else rushed to order, causing Severus to snort in amusement. Luna Lovegood was truly one of a kind, she was quirky, harebrained but also very deep and mature, especially for her age.

“So how long is Dumbledore letting you attend for guys?” asked Harry wiping his mouth with the cloth napkin.

“Until eleven, half an hour past curfew.” said Cedric since everyone else had their mouth full.

“That’s not bad,” said Harry surprised.

“My Gran’s brought the potion, she’s going to use it.” said Neville. “Or rather my mum bought her it.”

“Really?” asked Harry surprised.

“Yeah, it was Frankie’s idea.” said Neville referring to his younger sibling.

“How is he?” asked Harry.

“Fine,” shrugged Neville. “He will be taking his O.W.L’s next year.”

Harry nodded he was well aware of that, Frankie was a year older than Roxy. Roxy was in her second year, Frankie his third. He’d never interacted with them, hell he hadn’t interacted with Neville when they were young, despite the fact they’d been in Potter manor all the time. Neville
had always been quiet, preferring his plants and animals to people. His parents had always worried about him, but he’d come out of his shell at Hogwarts. Finding people to become good friends with, and Harry was glad to be one of them.

“How is Professor Slug--” Severus started but before he could finish, the entire room went silent as the lights went off. Casting everything and everyone into darkness, but not for long as each Wizard and Witch went on the defensive lighting their wands, letting the room glow much more brightly than needed. “Get behind me.” he said harshly, his face twisted in a harsh scowl, one that wasn’t to be argued with. As he got Harry, Eileen, Cedric, Cho, Neville and Luna behind him taking up a defensive position as the entire room shook on its foundations causing people to cry out in fear and alarm. There was a commotion by the wizards protecting the American Minister, but before anything could be said the Minister and his men were Portkey’d out, initiating their emergency protocol apparently.

The same couldn’t be said for anyone else…they were locked into a room, with no way out unaware of what was going on. For how long though, that remains to be seen.

“He’d been too quiet, I knew it.” said Severus as he continued to upturn the tables, creating quite a large barricade. Everyone else in Harry’s little group, and the Potions Master’s from American began helping. If anyone came in, they’d have a small measure of protection from the tables, as they open fired on everyone.

“Anyone got a plan?” asked Jacob crouching down beside them, keeping his wife secure and calm, as the noise began getting louder. Wizards and witches trying to open the door, or banging on it demanding to be let out.

“With those idiots drawing attention to us?” snarled Severus loud enough for the miscreants to hear him. “Whoever’s attacking is probably after everyone here, and of course this is just inviting them down.”

“A plan?” asked said Sorens, “That’s exactly what we need.”

“He must have been --” said Severus stopping as the room shook once more. “--Desperate to attack the Ministry. With any luck he wont get this far, not with the entire Auror department under this roof…if they do its best to be in defensive position before going on the offensive.”

“Alright, I’ll get everyone else to take up the position, with any luck a plan will calm them down.” said Jacob.

“I’ll help.” said Sorens.

“I’m sorry guys.” said Harry from where he was crouched.

“Severus,” said Albus making his way over to the calm bunch.

“Albus,” said Severus, “You didn’t bring a Portkey for the students to get back did you?”

“No I’m afraid not, I Apparated them here, it was all last minute,” said Albus defensively, he had planned on attending alone until his students had asked on behalf of being invited by Harry. He felt a great deal of guilt when it came to the boy, so it’s why he went out of his way to accommodate him. He’d ignored him in favour of his brother, it had been wrong; especially since it became apparent he’d suffered greatly. He wasn’t the only one, his students believed if they weren’t a Gryffindor or teacher they’d be ignored or called liars. He had year’s worth of damage to undo, and he’d begun that with letting the others attend. It would get around the Ravenclaw’s (Luna, Cho)
and Hufflepuff’s (Cedric) now he just had to convince the Slytherin’s he meant well and they could come to him with anything.
Chapter 50

Invisible

Chapter 50

Sadness and exhaustion

“Wizard’s couldn’t cause this amount of shaking, it feels like a bloody earthquake.” said Master Damon. As yet more shrieking was done by people in the room. The Auror’s were trying to take control, but with so many people panicking it was difficult to do. The more calm wizards, was actually behind the barrier Severus had created. A few of them were trying to open the doors, and failing spectacularly.

“What do you think it is?” asked Neville, his worry and fear evident. His parents were on duty, he didn’t know where but they were Auror’s. They were working a lot lately, since both he and Frankie were at Hogwarts. He prayed they hadn’t taken night shift, and that they wouldn’t be called in. It was a futile hope, since no doubt all Auror’s will be getting called in.

“If I had to guess I’d say it was trolls or Giants.” said Master Damon. There was only one way out, and it was currently shielded. Leaving them as sitting ducks, unless someone came and let them out.

“I agree,” said Severus, “If they are attacking the building, there’s a possibility we might get caved in.” his mind was whirling with ideas, with no idea what was out there, were they best to remain here? Or risk being caved in? He wasn’t used to sitting around especially when his life was in danger. His instinct was to fight for his life; no doubt it was the same for quite a few others in here.

“What do we do?” asked Neville, whispering to his girlfriend, she would know. He didn’t normally ask for information, but she had the ability to see, she would know what to do.

Luna spaced out, her eyes closed as she contemplated their options. A tear ran down her face as she saw. There was no avoiding it, no matter what they did, which means it was already happening. “I’m so sorry Neville,” said Luna sadly, as her boyfriend stared at her in confusion, wiping away her tears.

“What’s meant to happen will happen,” said Neville, under the assumption something would happen to him. His heartbeat accelerated wildly, but remained calm, his face pained. If his life was to end, he was glad to have known Luna as long as he did. “What’s out there? Can we get out? Will it make things worse?” his face turning to the others, but they weren’t listening to the conversation. Cho was clutching Cedric closely, her face filled with terror. Severus was speaking quietly with one of the Potions Masters, and Harry was looking around a look of concentration on his face.

“Trolls,” said Luna, “Death Eaters.” answering his questions but she wasn’t looking at Neville. Her eyes were searching the crowd of people, looking for one person in particular. Her head stopped moving when she caught sight of him. He was tapping the wall, as if looking for some sort of secret door.

Harry tapped the wall, it sounded a little more hallow than the others. This was the weakest point, not just in the wall but the magic was weakest here too. He stood there for a few minutes, his mind extremely conflicted. Did he do it? Or didn’t he? What if he made everything worse? What if he didn’t act and the Ministry was demolished.
“Oh my god!” shrieked one of the women, “The place is on fire! Get us out of here!” she screeched at the top of her lungs. Banging on the door again, but she was right, there was smoke billowing through the crack in the sealed doors. Her words caused even more havoc than before. One witch was banishing the smoke, but it was a useless act, such as shovelling snow while it was still snowing. More smoke just seemed to replace it.

“Harry,” yelled Severus, looking around in panic when he couldn’t see his apprentice.

“He’s over there,” said Luna, pointing Harry out to the worried Potions Master, a few seconds later it would have been useless as the smoke was almost clouding everything. Even their own view, the only reason nobody was coughing was because they’d cast bubble head charm on themselves. Either that or they were still getting rid of the smoke, wasting magic in the process.

Harry’s eyes were stinging as the smoke surrounded them that was it; he was getting them out of there. Pointing his wand at the weak spot, turning his body around, so his back would take any damage. There would be debris flying everywhere, closing his eyes praying to Merlin he was doing the right thing.

Everyone heard the calm strong voice cast the spell, even over the shouting “Confringo!” shouted Harry, a large boom surrounded the room, as debris as predicted scattered everywhere. A few people cried out in agony, but it was drowned out by the yells of fear. Most of the bricks hit the tables they’d been using as barricades. More smoke scattered everywhere.

“Let’s go,” said Neville, grabbing Luna’s hand and leading her over to Harry. Almost falling over, the food was still scattered everywhere, making the floor slippery. He could hear someone behind him banishing the spoiled food as they went. It sounded like Cedric, maybe Cho or he had fallen over.

“Bloody hell,” said Harry staring around at the ruins completely horrified. His words and his voice gave way to the situation more than anything. Neville swallowed thickly, as he stepped out his heart sinking. Rubble, fire, dead bodies was all they could see.

Harry took off, levitating a huge statue from someone, having just heard them moan. His fingers checked for a pulse, as adrenaline flowed through him. He growled in disgust as the people who’d been in the room run away, trying to get out of the building. They disgusted him, they could have stayed and helped, people were seriously injured trying to protect them. It was an Auror; the torn robes gave way to that fact. Placing a bubble head charm on them, stopping them from inhaling any more of the smoke. Not wanting to move them, he conjured a stretcher and placed them on it. Levitating the wizard behind him as he searched for more bodies. The dead he regretfully left, there was nothing more to be done for them.

“Stay close,” said Severus as he finally caught up with his lover. His black eyes were clouded with worry, it was too silent. Either this had been merely a diversion, and the real attack somewhere else, or it had been a statement.

Harry nodded silently, as his green eyes flitted all over the area. Searching for any sign of life. Running over he began levitating more rubble, Severus helping him. There was someone under there, a foot was sticking out, still twitching, and they could still be alive. With the two of them it didn’t take any time at all, it was a familiar face, Kate Bennett. The woman who had been standing at the entrance when they first arrived. Harry felt for a pulse, it was weak but still there; he had to get them help as soon as possible.

Severus used two spells, and she was floating on a stretcher as well. Looking back, he saw the others had followed their examples. So few people saved, but it was better than none at all. “How
do we get out of here? The lifts wont work.” said Harry.

“The wards are down, how many of you can Apparate?” asked Severus, speaking mostly to the younger generation.

“I will Apparate them,” said Albus his usual bright robes filled with dust, bloody and food. His face had aged considerably in what was probably just twenty minutes, but this night was turning into the longest night.

“I’ll Apparate them to Hogwarts, you can get the injured to St. Mungo’s,” said Cedric taking charge. His dirty face streaked his long messy hair flat, he was tired but the day was far from over.

“I will help, I know where St. Mungo’s is,” said Master Damon, they could only Apparate at least two people at the same time. Especially when they were unconscious, it would be dangerous to take more than that at once. They could end up splinched; it would defeat the point of saving them.

“Go.” he said to Cedric Diggory nodding.

“I need to know my parents are okay,” said Neville looking worried.

Luna looked away a lone tear working its way down her face; she wished she could have saved them. Unfortunately she couldn’t, if she didn’t see it before it happened, it meant there was nothing she could do - it was their fate. She shouldn’t have said anything, Neville might blame her and she couldn’t bear the thought.

“I’ll do what I can, now go on.” said Dumbledore soothingly, Frank and Alice were few of the best Auror’s. They would be fine; they could hold their own against anyone. For now he had to get the injured to St. Mungo’s and find out what was going on out there.

“Hold on guy’s,” said Cedric, not that he needed to say it to Cho; she’s stuck like glue to him since the attack began. Luna and Neville held on and the four disappeared from view.

“What about the other floors? There may be injured people there?” asked Harry.

“St. Mungo’s will send Healers out,” said Dumbledore his customary twinkle gone as he regarded Harry with pride. He was exactly what a hero should be, thinking of others all the time. Doing anything he could to help, he and his brother couldn’t be more different. Harry was exactly what he’d imagined Nick being at this age. Unfortunately James and Lily hadn’t brought him up right, instead letting him off with murder and now look what happened. They’d all thought themselves above the law, Lily had used an unforgivable.

“Let’s go,” said Master Sorens, Jacob and his wife had Apparated away, he couldn’t blame him really. Penelope was pregnant, and he would have done exactly the same thing. Holding onto two of the unconscious wizards, he Apparated them away. Everyone else did the exact same, appearing at the accident and emergency section of the hospital.

They looked around; it seemed as if others had been doing the same thing. A few looked as though they’d just Apparated there themselves. Sitting there being tended by the healers, crying or extremely hurt.

“Let me see them!” said a healer making her way over to the group, immediately scanning them, calling on a few others by their names. They were immediately taken away, while the others were left there. “I’m afraid we are overrun today, the most life threatening will be seen to immediately.” she said in explanation.

“I am a potions Master, if there’s a way you can show me to the potions cupboard I can help.” said
Master Sorens.

“I am too,” said Master Damon.

“We will appreciate any help we can get,” said Healer Walsh looking drained.

“Bring them through here,” said Medi-witch Tantum gesturing to the room, “It’s usually used as a visitors sitting room, but there’s no more room for anyone the beds are all being used.

“I’ll show you where the cupboards are,” said Healer Walsh lifting her too long work robes and began running off in the direction.

“I’ll help her,” said Harry, immediately taking off after the witch. He could hear people Apparating in, even as he went after her.

“I wish I’d brought my Potions bag with me,” said Severus as he floated the stretchers through to the room the Medi-Witch was telling them to. She held the door open, her white robes filled with blood, her face pale and drawn but she remained professional. They floated them down, against the wall, making as much room for as many as possible.

“I will go and get it Severus,” said Eileen. Looking around at the devastation, she felt guilty that she was glad it hadn’t been her or anyone she cared about.

“Ask one of the elves to bring it, go and get some rest.” said Severus, there was nothing she could do here. He didn’t want her to remain behind; she’d seen and been through enough tonight.

“Be careful Severus,” said Eileen her black eyes filled with worry and fear.

“I will, I promise.” said Severus hugging her close before letting her go. “Go on, I’ll see you back home, soon.”

“Okay,” said Eileen, using the Floo to leave, after staring at her son for a few more seconds.

“What happened?” asked the Medi-witch as she placed pillows under their heads, making sure they were still breathing.

“The Ministry was attacked,” said Master Sorens helping the witch with her quest. A table was filled with them and sheets, but there was no need for them yet. Not until they were healed anyway, many had broken bones and internal injuries.

“Perhaps we should open the Hospital wing to those in need.” said Albus looking around the devastation, the war was truly starting. This was the first big attack Voldemort had ordered yet, and the body count already looked extremely big.

“There isn’t enough Potions to help, Poppy is better of coming here.” said Severus irritated.

“Then I shall go and get her,” said Albus, feeling useless, not a feeling he was familiar with. Everyone else was helping, but his abilities didn’t lie with healing potions or healing spells. Poppy would be within her element, and so he left the room, back to the main entrance. It was the only place one can Apparate into St. Mungo’s. All other areas, especially wards were protected heavily, the best of the best ward casters employed to ensure it.

“Here’s the potions.” said Harry running into the room, sliding to a stop extremely out of breath. He was using a medical tray to bring them, enlargement charms cast on it, so they could fit more. He put it down on the table, going over to Kate Bennett, doing a diagnostic charm on her, grateful
he’d learned it. Harry winced at the amount of injuries she had, she had been the worst injured, hidden among the pile of rubble.

The Healer came in five seconds later, another tray filled with all the potions they’d need. All of them were labelled, so they wouldn’t have to worry about identifying them. Considering there was four Potions Masters, including a one to be (Harry) - they didn’t need to worry. “The Potions Master’s have been called in, they are brewing more, but I think we will run out before then.”

“If you do, come find me, I have a supply of them.” said Severus, from where he was crouched down helping one unconscious Auror swallow a potion, this would heal his internal injuries. Or rather he will anyway, just as soon as the house elf sent them his way.

“Yes sir,” said Healer Walsh tending to another hurt wizard.

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“That’s the last of them,” said Severus, who was crouched down placing a sheet over them. It might be a single sheet, but they were woven with heating or cooling charms. They would change to whatever the patient needed. Sighing warily, he rubbed his eyes tiredly; he’d been awake all night. When it had calmed down considerably, the other Potion Master’s had left.

“Severus do you have any burn paste?” asked Poppy, from across the room. There were only three patients in here now. Those who could get better at home had left, giving more room to those seriously injured. They’d been transferred to proper wards once they were out of the ‘critical danger’ stage. A few hadn’t, they’d been transferred to intensive care, where there were always at least three healers on duty at all times.

“Yes,” said Severus stifling a yawn as he passed the tub over. Looking around, his lips twitched as his eyes fell on Harry. He was sleeping in the corner, completely exhausted the pepper up potion he’d taken had obviously long ago worn off. Then again he knew it had worn off, he’d taken one at the same time.

“Why don’t you get of home Severus? We can take it from here,” said Healer Welch smiling at him in gratefulness. His new medal, she noticed was caked with all sorts of stuff, just like the rest of him. “Thank you for all your help, your friends also, I dread to think how many would have died this night without it.”

Severus nodded curtly in her direction, planning on doing exactly as she suggested.

“Has Neville been informed?” asked Poppy looking close to tears just remembering, it had been the most horrific sight in her life. There was nothing more to be done for them, she prayed they recovered but the medical side of her knew it wasn’t possible. Nobody was quite sure why they’d been targeted. There was a large assumption that You-Know-Who had assumed they were the secret keeper for Azkaban. Because of that, Frankie and Neville had lost their parents. With magic and potions advancing as they did, they could be cured. As of right now, they were trapped in their own mind, tortured with the Cruciatus curse.

“Not yet, Lady Longbottom has, she’s visiting them right now, I assume she will tell the children.” said Healer Walsh.

“Poor woman,” said Poppy, she was going to visit her, let her know she wasn’t alone. Frank and Alice had been students at Hogwarts; she’d been the one to bring Frankie into the world. She was good friends with Alice and was devastated. Poor Harry had been the one to see her first; she’d never forget the look on his face. Harry was very good friends with Neville, she was just glad he’d
gone back to Hogwarts when he did.


Harry batted the hand away, but the shaking persisted, his exhausted green eyes opened. Yawning tiredly, he allowed himself to be hoisted to his feet. Merlin he was so tired, he could sleep for a year the way he felt. It wasn’t just tiredness, he felt extremely depressed, Neville loved his parents and he felt bad for him. He couldn’t imagine how he’d feel if anything like that happened to Eileen. He let himself be guided towards the emergency entrance, and Apparated away. He couldn’t have been happier to be safely within the wards of Snape manor if he’d tried. Home, exactly where he wanted to be. “Neville,” murmured Harry tiredly, his tortured green eyes meeting Severus’.

“I know Harry,” said Severus just as quietly, “I know.”

“Does he know?” asked Harry, stumbling slightly as he moved.

“No, not yet, his grandmother will tell him.” said Severus soothing his distraught apprentice. He had acted very maturely tonight, with grace that made Severus proud. Never once loosing control of himself…apart from when he’d tried to tend to Alice Longbottom. It was understandable, yet he’d regained his composure and continued on. Like a warrior and Severus was in awe of him, he constantly forgot Harry was merely sixteen.

“Allright,” said Harry, his eyes closing in their own violation.

“Come on, let’s get you to bed,” said Severus, sounding incredibly tired himself. “Actually, a shower might be in order first.” for both of them, they were black, covered in soot and blood. He had to check that Harry hadn’t been hurt; he’d been standing too near the blast. He hadn’t thought to check, since he hadn’t said anything. Knowing Harry he’d probably put everyone’s need above his own, not used to people caring. Even after all the years of his mother taking care of him, Harry would learn at some point though.

“Thank goodness you are back!” said Eileen coming down the stairs, watching them in the landing.

“Yes mum, go back to sleep,” said Severus giving her a wane half smile, she was clean and in her nightclothes, at least someone was warm and comfortable. Still guiding an exhausted Harry in the right direction, he looked ready to conk out again. He’d never been gladder he wasn’t using the upper level of the manor. Otherwise they’d have had two sets of stairs to get up. Every step took forever, but eventually they made it. “Go on mum, we are going to bed.”

“Allright son,” said Eileen going back to her own room, relieved beyond belief that they were back and safe. She hadn’t been able to sleep, too scared that they would be hurt. The Death Eaters had attacked the Ministry for Merlin’s sake! If they’d done that nowhere was truly safe, least of all the hospital. It didn’t even look like they’d been the target either.

Severus guided Harry to his room, he idly noticed the bedding had been changed; it was dark blue instead of black. The house elf’s had obviously been busy when they were out. He was grateful for it, nothing like going into a freshly made bed; especially with his he was feeling. He was running on his reserve energy, and it wouldn’t last long. Not wanting to use anymore magic, he undressed them both without it. Placing their wands on the sink, he guided Harry into the shower turning it on, the warm water immediately cascaded over them. Getting rid of the muck coating them both, it looked worse now that the skin that had been protected by their clothes was revealed.
Severus squeezed his shower gel onto the cloth, not sparing it they both really needed it. Harry stood against him, too tired to really appreciate the sight. They were washed, hair shampooed and dried in record time. They left the bathroom, Severus grabbing his wands; he always slept with his no matter where he was. If any wizard or witch didn’t they were insane, their wand was a part of them, like a hand or foot. They should never be parted with it, although if they were stupid enough to break the law they deserved it. He’d once been without his, until Albus got him out, it had been the worst week of his life.

“Come on Harry, just a little further then you can sleep,” said Severus, as he walked to his bed, flipping the duvet down. Sliding into the warm bed, his body almost bowing in relief he was so tired. Shifting slightly he pulled Harry down onto the bed. Harry instantly curled around him, already soundly asleep, and Severus followed him. There certainly hadn’t been a need for dreamless sleeping potion tonight, as they fell into a dreamless sleep too exhausted.
Chapter 51

Invisible

Chapter 51

The After Affects

Eileen woke up abruptly, her nightmare quickly leaving her as she tried to make sense of it. Her boys were home, they were safe. They’d gone to bed, she could remember it, and she thought as she calmed her erratic heart the events of the yesterday had truly shaken her. Getting up she put on her dressing gown and got up, she noticed her evening dress had been washed and cleaned already, no sign of the blood, dirt and debris on it they’d done a good job repairing it. It was almost as if what happened last night was just a nightmare, but the memories were fresh in her mind telling her it was all true. Knowing she’d never get back to sleep, she slipped her feet into her slippers before leaving her bedroom. Anxiously peeking into her son’s room, a smile spreading across her face, they looked wonderful together. Perhaps Severus would give up on keeping his distance now. Closing the door as silently as possible, not wanting to wake them, she wandered away down the stairs. She could get her way around this place blindfolded; you never forgot the house you grew up in, no matter what age you were and how many homes you had afterwards.

“Can I get you something to eat Mistress Eileen?” asked Dobby appearing before her, his lively eyes regarding her warmly. He owed his life to Harry, and he’d serve them with pride, they didn’t hurt him or make him hurt himself. The elves here were treated so differently from what he was used to. Proper clothes, they were respected, given hours in which to sleep and eat, in fact it was demanded of them. He knew without Harry he’d be dead, at Narcissa Malfoy’s hands for besmirching the Malfoy name. He owed a great debt to Harry Peverell, and he’d spend the rest of his life repaying it. He adored Harry, and this was the only way he could show it, and he loved his new home too. The House elf’s here had been very friendly and he’d made good friends with them all.

Eileen looked at the time and her eyes widened in shocked disbelief, it was one o’clock in the afternoon. She couldn’t remember a time when she’d slept so late, probably as a teenager still at Hogwarts using the weekend to catch up on missed sleep. She was so used to getting up at six on the dot it was rather refreshing not to be up at the crack of dawn. “Is something cooked Dobby?” asked Eileen sitting down, deciding on the couch, she was too wound up to sit on the stiff seats at the dining table.

“It will be ready in ten minutes Mistress Eileen,” said Dobby. “Can Dobby be getting you something in the meantime?”

“Make sure to cook extra today, I have a feeling we are all going to be extremely hungry.” said Eileen. They hadn’t eaten since lunch time yesterday. The attack had happened before they could eat their dinner last night. Her sons’ day hadn’t gone as planned, instead they’d been attacked. She was proud of the fact they’d taken the lead, they were both good leaders. She couldn’t be more proud of them, nearly everyone had run away, not her boys, no they’d stayed and helped. Even healed people in St. Mungo’s when they were swamped with incoming patients. She’d worried about them the entire time.

“It is being done,” said Dobby proudly.

“Thank you, I wouldn’t mind some coffee while I wait, and has the mail come yet?” asked Eileen.
“Yes ma’am!” said Dobby disappearing immediately.

Eileen looked around, almost expecting everything to be different. It wasn’t. Everything was exactly the same. It was just her mind that was different, she’d never witnessed such an attack before, and it had left her extremely rattled. She’d had nothing to do with the last war, having left the wizarding world when she was seventeen years old. She didn’t keep in touch with anyone, and didn’t receive the Daily Prophet. Her husband would have blown a fuse if he’d seen one never mind allowing her to get it every day. He hated the fact she was a witch, and her and her son had paid the price for her cowardice. If she’d only told him earlier, things might have been so different. Maybe her son might not have felt the need to join the Dark Lord. She had of course stuck by him; he was her son, her only child. Good or bad, it’s the way she was, she couldn’t have been more proud and terrified when he’d renounced the Dark Lord’s way. He had begun spying for Albus Dumbledore, but not too long otherwise she would have been completely grey years before her time. His trial had been public with no way for him to return. At the same time she’d feared Harry dead; those three days were the worst. She’d refused to believe him dead until she saw his body, wanting so badly to believe he’d survive, come back to her. Miracles of all miracles, he had come back, coming to her door of all places. Now both her boy’s were happy and together. The only things she’d heard about the last war was what snippets Severus gave her. Which wasn’t much, Severus didn’t come to see her to talk about the war, he came to talk to her and be with her. Most of their discussions were about potions and the good old days. Her son hadn’t truly forgiven her for his childhood, not until a few years ago. The knowledge that the war was going to get worse terrified her, because both her boys were in the centre of it. It was no coincidence the Dark Lord had attacked the Ministry that night.

“Here you are Mistress Eileen,” said Dobby popping back in, the mail in one hand and a large mug of coffee in his other. “The food will be ready in five minutes.”

“Thank you, Dobby.” said Eileen smiling at the house elf.

Eileen removed the wet plastic surrounding the paper, keeping it dry, it must have rained at some point last night. Washing away the blood, debris and Merlin knows what else surrounding the Ministry. She wasn’t sure if she wanted to read the paper. Placing the rolled up paper in her lap, she took a sip of her coffee as she contemplated everything. Stiffening her resolve, she unrolled it, staring at the picture of the ruins of the Ministry as she put her mug down. It looked like a demolishing site; she could barely believe she’d been in there last night. Twenty six dead, ninety two injured in a devastating attack that’s left the wizarding world vulnerable.

“What does it say?” asked Severus scaring his mother out of his wits.

“Severus!” cried Eileen, “Don’t do that!” it was a good job she hadn’t had her coffee in her hand or it would have been down her front. Scalding her in the process, honestly, Severus was quieter than a mouse! It was unbelievable.

Severus chuckled in amusement, taking a seat on the couch across from his mother as he took the newspaper. He promptly opened it and was lost from view behind it. His eyes roamed over it, reading it, ninety two injured, it didn’t surprise him since he’d tended to them all night. The list of injured was on the third page, opening it out of curiosity more than anything, he was surprised to see Sirius Black and Remus Lupin on the list. Black didn’t surprise him overly much, since he was an Auror, but Lupin wasn’t. Dumbledore had not summoned the Order to defend in the attack; he should know he’d been with him the entire time. He remembered Dumbledore trying to calm everyone down, ordering them to take defensive positions. They hadn’t listened, and Dumbledore hadn’t tried again, curious really since the old fool didn’t usually admit defeat. Instead he’d copied the more level headed wizards and witches, and started building the barricade he’d started.
Eileen drank some more coffee, as she sorted out the mail, into three piles, Severus’, Harry’s and of course hers. Hers was the smallest obviously, since she didn’t have any acquaintances in the magical world, she’d left it when she was seventeen only coming back a few years ago to run a little corner shop. Which had been successful, giving her a generous living over the years. Once sold it and the flat it was even more money in her pocket; money she could use these days. She placed the boy’s bundles on the table, so they could retrieve it whenever they wanted it.

“Lunch is served Mistress Eileen, Master Severus.” said Dobby his voice muffled behind the large stack of food. All that was visible of him were his long ears; Severus immediately removed the toppling tray from the house elf. Placing it on the table. He immediately made himself a coffee, despite the sleep he’d gotten last night he was still exhausted.

“Thank you, Dobby,” said Eileen, “You can go get something to eat now, all of you.”

“Yes ma’am,” said Dobby bowing his head a little, aware that they didn’t like him bowing and scraping at their feet. A novelty to him, since the Malfoy’s had revelled in it, it made them feel more important. He was just glad Lucius Malfoy couldn’t hurt more innocent people like Master Harry anymore. They were an evil family, and he could say it now without the compulsion to hurt himself. With that he disappeared ready to have lunch with the rest of the house elves.

“They didn’t attack anywhere else,” said Severus folding up the paper a thoughtful look on his face as he plated up food for himself. Which mean the attack had been planned, this didn’t bode well for the wizarding world. If that was the Dark Lord stepping up his attacks, then he knew what came next. Diagon Alley, Hogsmeade, and yes even Hogwarts and Azkaban if he could. It had been the smartest move Fudge had ever made putting it under the Fidelus Charm.

“I had thought maybe it was a diversion,” admitted Eileen, but from what Severus said evidently it wasn’t the case.

“It could have been,” said Severus thoughtfully, “The Longbottom’s seemed to have been the purpose of the attack. Everyone else seemed like collateral damage, they were driven insane…they wanted information. They may have assumed the Longbottom’s were the Secret Keeper for Azkaban prison.” it was the sort of thing the Dark Lord would assume or at least his followers. They were all idiots in his opinion, insane idiots which made them all the more dangerous when dealing with them.

“Poor Neville,” said Eileen, she’d only met him a few times but he was a nice boy. Extremely loyal to Harry, and was there for him when Harry needed him. She didn’t know the Longbottom’s personally to feel anything for them other than pity for what they’d gone through.

“I know,” said Severus quietly, Harry had been deeply affected by it, not for himself but mostly for his friend.

“Should we wake Harry up?” asked Eileen, he was bound to be starving.

“No, he needs all the rest he can get. He used a lot of magic yesterday healing everyone; he needs a chance to recuperate.” said Severus, wakening up next to Harry had been heaven. He’d expected it to be awkward; he wasn’t used to sharing his bed with anyone. Or at least he hadn’t in such a long time; Harry was the first person in a very long while. Yet he’d felt nothing but contentment, and he certainly wouldn’t be adverse to it becoming an every day thing. Although sleeping would be all they’d do. He knew Harry would be disappointed about that, but he had principles and a strong morale. He wouldn’t be doing anything with Harry until he was seventeen, an adult and a Potions Master. He would never allow anyone to question why Harry had passed his mastery it wasn’t fair, not with how hard he was working. He was indeed working hard, extremely so. Not only was he trying to gain his Mastery in Potions, learning at Hogwarts but also learning healing spells at his
own time it seemed. Hopefully Harry would have enough sense, especially after what happened to Nick Potter, not to push himself too far.

“You must be so proud of him,” said Eileen as she sipped more coffee. The way he’d blasted through a Ministry spelled hall, it was nothing short of miraculous. Nothing should have gotten in or out of that room; Harry though seemed completely above the rules, in a good way.

“I am,” said Severus, his mind turning to the Wizards and Witches who’d fled the scene instead of helping. He wouldn’t be surprised if they were on the list of wounded or dead. To run from a building during a battle in blind panic was a stupid, stupid thing to do. They’d not even had the sense to Apparate; he half wanted to think them all Muggle born’s the way they’d reacted. They made him sick to his stomach, a boy half their age had stayed and helped while they acted like rats fleeing from a burning ship.

“Looks like someone’s up,” said Eileen smiling, as she heard thumps from up the stairs, unlike Severus she always knew when Harry was up and about. Yes even here, and especially back at the flat, he wasn’t noisy per say, she was just a very light sleeper and had the hearing of a bat.

“Indeed,” smirked Severus wryly, as he continued to eat his lunch, he was starving, even now his stomach continued to growl hungrily. No surprise, since he hadn’t eaten for over twenty fours hours, and using all that magic as he had left him with a considerable appetite to assuage.

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Harry woke up wondering why he still felt so tired, his eyes opened, blinking around in confusion. Sitting up abruptly he realized he was in Severus’ room and the memories of yesterday all come flashing back like a reel from a horror film. The ceremony, the attack, getting them out, helping the wounded, finding Alice and then Frank, Merlin Neville must be going through hell right now. He couldn’t remember passing out yesterday, but he could recall being woken up, Severus had helped bring him back here. He bit his lip, Merlin he’d had his chance to see Severus stark raving naked and he he’d been too out of it! Of all the bad luck, he was unable to help himself, he pouted childishly. Closing his eyes, remembering what he could, gasping as he remembered those long dexterous fingers washing him, cleaning away the blood, dirt and grime from him. Oh life was so unfair, sometimes; the side of the bed where Sev must have slept was still warmish, so he hadn’t been up too long.

Grabbing Severus’ black dressing gown feeling chilly he put it on before getting out of bed. As much as he wanted to remain there forever it wasn’t possible. His stomach was grumbling loudly in complaint, he was starving of hunger. Hopefully he might be able to convince Severus to let him sleep with him tonight again. He winced once he stood up straight, ouch that had hurt. What had he done to his back? It felt as though he’d pulled five dozen muscles.

“Hi,” said Harry quietly making his presence known as he slid onto the couch next to Severus.

“Here is your lunch Master Harry,” said Dobby putting a tray on his lap.

“Thank you, Dobby. Lunch? How long have I been asleep?” asked Harry, he didn’t think it had been that long, he still felt exhausted.

“Its quarter past one,” said Severus wryly.

“What time did we get back?” enquired Harry surprised.

“Five,” said Eileen, it’s when she’d finally gotten to sleep.
Harry winced as he sat back, okay his back was in flipping agony, he should have taken a pain reliever before coming down. Although he wasn’t sure if there were any potions left in the entire house! They’d all been given to St. Mungo’s so his search probably wouldn’t have yielded any results.

“Are you in pain?” asked Severus, turning to face Harry, his intense black eyes regarding Harry shrewdly. He should have known Harry was hurt, but he hadn’t thought more on it. He had seemed fine while he was tending to everyone, but that would have been the adrenaline - they’d all been filled with it last night.

“It’s just my back, I’ll be fine.” said Harry brushing it off.

“Let me see,” demanded Severus, he wasn’t going to let Harry just brush it off.

Harry put his tray on the table, and turned his back to Severus, removing the dressing robe, allowing Severus to pull up his night shirt. Severus’ sharp inhale of breath made him think it might be worse than he thought. Before he knew it Severus was summoning a pain reliever and a balm. The potion was thrust into his hand before a hand was delicately putting the salve onto his sores causing Harry to wince. He couldn’t quite remember how they’d happened, but if he could make an accurate guess, he’d say it was the debris when he’d blasted the wall apart.

“There, they will be healed in a few hours.” said Severus shaking his head in irritation, he hadn’t even thought to check Harry’s back for injuries.

“Thanks Sev,” said Harry quietly, putting the robe back on before sitting back more comfortably now and able to eat his lunch without pain. “How many were killed?” asked Harry, noticing the newspaper on the table.

“Twenty six,” said Severus, “Black and Lupin are on the list of those injured.”

“Are they okay?” asked Harry.

“They will be fine, takes more than one battle to take them out.” said Severus; perhaps Harry didn’t hate them as much as he thought sometimes. Black and Lupin were good duellers, but not as good as him but that goes without saying. It’s why they’d always teamed up or hit him from behind. They knew they’d never have a chance one on one with him, even as a first year. He’d known more curses and hexes than they did and he’d been raised in the Muggle world.

Severus took his mail from the table, noticing one from St. Mungo’s marked as urgent. Frowning in curiosity, wondering what they could possibly want with him. He’d just been there seven hours ago helping to heal the wounded. Cracking the wax seal he opened it and began reading. A sigh left his lips as he rubbed at his eyes tiredly, of all the things he should have suspected it but hadn’t.

“What’s the matter Severus? What do they want?” asked Eileen, noticing Severus rubbing his eyes. He normally only did that and rubbing his temples when he was either furious or worried. She could tell it was worry and tiredness making him do it now, when he was angry he got really tense. She knew her son; she’d watched him grow up after all. She didn’t approve of some of his choices but what mother did approve of them all? She’d regardless of it stuck by him always. There had been too many times when he’d let him down to consider not sticking by him now and in future hours.

“They are short of Potions, they need an emergency supply now.” said Severus, the Potions Masters they had were being crushed under the orders no doubt. Not only did they need to brew potions for the patients already there before the attack yesterday but a large emergency selection of potions for the wounded during the attack. It made sense that they would come to him, he was the
best at his chosen field, the most renowned Potions Master in the world. Someone they could trust completely, to brew the potions they required.

“What are you going to do?” asked Harry.

“I don’t see what choice I have, I need to do my part.” said Severus.

“I will help, I can brew the simpler potions.” said Eileen immediately, she’d been dying to brew ever since she got better. She can stand long hours now without being in agony, all that’s to Harry, not something she’d forget any time soon. Every day she was alive she owed to her two boys, and their amazing ability to invent and brew potions.

“Me too,” said Harry.

“Then let us finish our lunch, we cannot brew on an empty stomach.” said Severus continuing his coffee as he replied to St. Mungo’s. Letting them know he would do all he could to help, and that he would send a house elf, named Dobby with the potions as they were brewed. “Would you like to enquire at St. Mungo’s how Black and Lupin are doing?” he would need to send them the Wolfsbane potion if Lupin was in the hospital longer than a week. They had to be forewarned if they didn’t already know that is.

“I don’t know,” said Harry cautiously, he didn’t want them thinking he was forgiving them or anything like that. He would never forgive them for never paying attention to him, for forgetting him. That’s all everyone seemed to do his entire life…forget about him. As if he had a huge sign INVISIBLE written across his forehead.

Five minutes later lunch was eaten and the plates taken away once more, Dobby on an errand to St. Mungo’s delivering the letter. Before long they were in the Potions lab, getting ready for a long hard day filled with brewing, but it was in their blood, something they loved doing above all else. It was no chore for them whatsoever.

“So Severus what do I brew?” asked Eileen, allowing Severus to take charge, it was his lab after all. She hadn’t been down here in forever, strangely enough she felt at home. Potions didn’t require spells; it had been her comfort, no silly wand waving down here. She’d always said that to her son, Potions required no silly wand waving, just precise instructions and iron clad patience. Potions had always been her comfort, that and Gobstones, she’d been a champion during her years at Hogwarts. As far as she knew, nobody had bet her scores yet.

“You brew the Dreamless sleeping Potion mum, Harry the blood replenishing draught and I’ll brew the pain reliever.” said Severus immediately, the first three items they required on the letter they’d sent. Before long, two cauldrons per person were set up, fires under them slowly simmering away as they grabbed the ingredients they needed from the cupboard. Severus and Harry never needing to look at a book. Eileen on the other hand had to, unfortunately she couldn’t remember them of by heart, and it was no surprise she hadn’t brewed in a very long while.

“What else needs brewed?” enquired Harry as he chopped up his current ingredient before sterilizing the knife.

“The letter is on the worktop,” said Severus as he squeezed the juice from a bean and adding it to the potion before repeating his actions with his next cauldron.

Harry waited until there was enough time between adding ingredients to check out the letter. The list was quite long, requiring potions he hadn’t even brewed yet. That sure did get the excitement thrumming through him, he could scarcely wait. Calming draughts, sedatives, mild pain relievers, stronger ones, internal injury remedies, sleeping draughts, blood replenishing draughts, dreamless
sleeping draughts, Eileen’s Potion, bone mending, infection balms, bruise and cut salves. There was a lot on the list it would take them all day if not at least three days to get everything required brewed. They were getting a hefty sum to do it, nine hundred galleons was a lot of money, they must be desperate to give that much away. “That’s a lot of potions.” commented Harry as he went back to his workstation.

“It is,” said Severus brewing five times anti-clockwise never once loosing his concentration. He realized he should have begun on the internal injury potion. There was nothing to be done about it now unfortunately; it would just waste time and ingredients, something they didn’t have the time for. “If anyone can do it, its us.” he said with confidence.

Harry smiled slightly as he continued on with his potions, he was right, they could do it.

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James paced back and forth in agitation and worry outside the ward he’d came up to. It’s where Remus and Sirius were, he prayed their injuries weren’t bad. They might not have been getting on, but that didn’t stop the fear he felt right now. They’d been part of his life since he was eleven, he didn’t under any circumstances want them hurt. He jumped immediately when he noticed a Medi-Witch coming out of the ward they were in.

“How are they?” asked James immediately. “Remus Lupin and Sirius Black, please are they okay?” he couldn’t lose anyone else, it was killing him.

The Medi-Witch immediately smiled and said soothingly, “They are fine, they suffered injuries but they are mostly healed now. Would you like to see them?” she asked, he wasn’t the only worried people she’d seen today. The hospital was filled with worried parents, children, grandparents, and friends, trying to find out if their loved ones were injured. Thankfully most of them were now in the database, so they could tell them right off whether they were here or not. It had only taken them nearly all night to get the names of everyone here.

“Can I?” asked James in surprise, feeling a little worried that they might not welcome him.

“Of course,” said the Medi-Witch, placing her palm on the wall granting James entrance the door opened. “You can only stay for twenty minutes they need to recover.” she added as an afterthought.

“I understand thank you.” said James smiling gratefully at her as he closed the door and walked up to their beds. Standing between them, he felt relief pour of him, they were fine, whole and conscious, he felt weak in the knees with overwhelming elation.

“How are you?” he asked them, still unsure of how they’d take him being here. They hadn’t parted on the best of terms that was putting it lightly. They’d suffered because of his and Lily’s actions, they loved Harry dearly and they were paying a price for it. If he thought it would change anything, he’d go to Harry and tell him they loved him. His words he suspected would fall on deaf ears, and he couldn’t blame Harry for it. After the way he’d treated him, all his small actions he hadn’t realized had a big affect on his son. Merlin he constantly wished he had a time turner.

He’d been worried Remus was hurt more, but he should be out before the full moon. He could see that he’d be healed by then, it was a good thing. Remus had a tough time of things, being a werewolf; he was treated so differently from everyone. Yet St. Mungo’s didn’t seem to care, for that he was grateful. He hated Umbridge, and her laws trying to cut off all half breeds, of course she didn’t call them that in polite society, or at meetings. Yet he knew how she felt about them all, he’d feared when Harry took his seats away she’d start her vendetta again. He’d managed to stop her passing quite a few laws that would make Remus’ life harder. Especially one about having
children and jobs, he’d protested most fervently against them. Everyone had agreed with him, when his seats had been taken from him he thought Remus was going to be done for. Yet his worry had been for naught, he had the Potter seats back, although he had less since Harry had the Peverell seats. Not something he begrudged his son, especially not now. His son had given him nearly the entire contents of the Potter vaults and houses. He owed him everything, so did his kids, and again he wished he could change things.

“Harry, where’s Harry? How is he?” asked Sirius groggily, demanding answers from James, his blue eyes practically told James he’d kill him if he didn’t know. They’d gotten to the Ministry too late; the doors had been sealed already. He’d cursed for half an hour, deciding to stay until the doors opened at nine o’clock after the ceremony was over and after party started. Determined to congratulate Harry on his order of Merlin, wanting so badly to make up for all his bad choices. Yet before that time the attack happened, shaking the entire building. They’d gone out and joined the fray, trying to help everyone. Stop them from getting into the ministry, a futile effort on their part. Nobody could tell them how Harry was, and he was terrified something had happened to him.

“He’s fine, honestly he’d good.” said James immediately nodding sagely. “He stayed behind along with a bunch of others, helped to recover people from the building after it had collapsed. He saved a lot of peoples life that night, so I’m told, he stayed at St. Mungo’s all night healing people as well.” his pride was obvious on his face, although admittedly it pained him to know it had nothing to do with him. No he had Snape to thank for that, and he couldn’t even hate his childhood nemesis anymore. For the simple fact he’d taken care of his son when nobody else had. He’d also helped Harry realize his dream, to brew potions and he knew Harry was safer with Snape than anyone else. Snape was the best dueller he knew, he’d drive through the gates of hell to help someone he cared about.

“Thank Merlin,” rasped Remus, his body sagging in relief.

“Why were you both at the Ministry?” asked James sitting down curiously.

“We wanted to see Harry, got there to late the place had been sealed.” said Sirius licking his dry lips. “Where were you?” he hadn’t seen James at the battle at all. Then again he couldn’t remember very much after he took a blasting curse to the side. Thankfully with a few potions his side was healing and looking nearly as good as new.

“I was out on call when it happened, I got back in the middle of it and stayed until it ended, and helping people until the healers from St. Mungo’s appeared. I went straight to Hogwarts after, to let Roxy and Nick know that I was okay. They were concerned about you both, I told them you’d be fine and than Merlin you are.” admitted James. The children’s relationship with both men thankfully hadn’t been affected because of their fall out. He was surprised they weren’t glaring at him.

“We will go see them as soon as we get released.” promised Remus, he needed to see Roxy anyway; she was far too quiet these days. She was shutting herself down, reading books in the library all the time or doing homework. She’d always been rather studious but she couldn’t loose herself in books, she had to face reality. He knew the desire; he had lost himself in all fairy tale books out there, in anything a werewolf wasn’t part of it. Wanting for just a few weeks to forget he wasn’t a monster every month. Unfortunately every full moon he was painfully reminded his life was horrible and painful. Merlin he’d been so elated when he got his letter, until he realized there was no way Dumbledore would allow him to go. Yet when his parents had explained Dumbledore hadn’t reacted badly at all! No he’d made plans and before Remus knew it he was allowed to attend. Each full moon he’d go to the shrieking shack and transform, go back though the passage way and go to the hospital wing. He owed Dumbledore everything for that, without him, well he
didn’t think he’d have survived this long. Albus gave him a new lease of life, friendship, normalcy and he’d never forget what he’d done for him.

“I think they will like that,” said James smiling slightly, sitting down on the hard uncomfortable chair. “Would you like the newspaper?” he then asked removing the paper from his cloak.

“Yes!” both men chorused in unison.

James grinned before passing it to Sirius, knowing Remus would prefer to read the paper in peace without Sirius grumbling for him to hurry up.

“Was there any fatalities?” asked Remus, he knew there were, he’d seen them laying all over the ground. It’s not a sight he’d soon forget, and it was just the first battle in the upcoming war.

“Yes,” said James warily, “Twenty six dead, nearly one hundred injured. Including Frank and Alice…they’ve been driven insane by the Cruciatus Curse.”

“No!” cried Sirius horror slamming into him, making him breathless, they’d been friends all through training academy, then during the Order. He’s seen the man bring up his kids for Merlin’s sake! His kids! They’d just lost both their parents, he couldn’t even begin to imagine what they were going through, he really couldn’t.

“I don’t believe it,” said Remus quietly, shaken to the core. “Why? Why them? What did they know? What could they have possibly known?” as always the first to come to the conclusion.

“Unofficially we are speculating that the Death Eaters thought they were the secret keeper for Azkaban. Officially we just don’t know, none of the Death Eaters were taken alive.” said James tiredly.

“None of them?” asked Remus, “Some of them must have got away.”

“Has anyone said anything that can help identify them?” asked Sirius immediately, throwing the paper at Remus with his good side. Wincing as he moved his body, it still hurt like blazes even with a pain relieving potion.

“Not yet,” said James, their stories were contradicting each others, nobody would probably know what really happened. “Most of them are still incoherent or unconscious so we’ve not even managed to get around to talking to half of them yet.” the Auror crops were in disarray, they wanted vengeance, it was only because of the Head Auror that they weren’t out there getting revenge. He was keeping a close eye on them, reminding them it wasn’t the way to go. They needed all the Auror’s they could get these days with an upcoming war. He half wished Snape was still a spy, maybe then they could have some idea of what Voldemort was up to. Why he’d targeted the Longbottom’s, maybe even have helped stop the attack. Unfortunately that wasn’t possible; they were just muddling through a sea of uncertainty.

“Look at it,” said Remus staring at the photo of the building, there was no way they could still be working there. “What’s going to happen until it’s fixed?”

“They’ve set up in Hogwarts.” said James.

“Hogwarts?” said Sirius gaping that was just painting a big red target on its back, the students and all Ministry officials under one roof.

“I know,” sighed James warily, unfortunately it had nothing to do with him, it was between Minister Scrimgeour and the Headmaster. It was the only building big enough to house them all, each department was taking an unused classroom and expanding it temporarily until they could
move back. It would be a month at least, but the wizarding world had to continue on as it always had.

“What about the Ministry though? And everything in it?” asked Sirius, the wards were probably down; anyone could get inside if they were willing to risk it.

“They are clearing it out, taking all the files to Hogwarts, its taking time though since they aren’t risking Apparation. The Prophecies in the Department of Mysteries are all gone; every single one of them broke when the building collapsed. The Unspeakables removed everything they were working on quickly, even the veil has been removed, we can’t let anyone get their hands on that. It’s not in Hogwarts, Dumbledore was strongly apposed to that, quite rightfully I suppose, not in a school of students anyway. It will take them two more days at least to have the Ministry cleared out completely. We are putting new wards up, and five Auror’s are being stationed around it until its fixed.” said James.

“Hopefully that will be enough and we won’t lose anyone else,” said Sirius darkly, hating being useless, stuck in a bed while everyone was helping. Unfortunately he wasn’t stupid enough to attempt to get up; it hurt just moving never mind putting any strain on it whatsoever. He would be useless injured, and a hindrance so he would just have to deal with it. The quicker he healed the better, he wanted to help his world try and get everything back to normal - as if they ever would be again.

“I agree,” said James quietly. “What happened to you guys?”

“Blasting curse to the side, but I’m mostly already healed, with a bit of luck I’ll be out by tomorrow.” said Sirius, showing his side as if to prove his words. His entire chest was bandaged up tightly, making it almost impossible to breathe. He had to take bone mending potions every three hours while it repaired itself.

James turned to Remus curiously.

“Crushed leg, but I’ll be fine,” said Remus, he’d got caught under a Troll or was it a giant? Either way the weight had crushed his leg. As a werewolf he could take a considerable amount of pain, but not that much unfortunately. He’d passed out due to blood loss and pain five minutes, although it felt like five hours, after it happened. He’d been too close to it, when it collapsed taking ten stunners to the chest, he had been unable to get away in time. It could have been worse he supposed, he could have ended up completely crushed underneath it.

“I’m glad you are both okay,” said James honestly.

“Has Dumbledore got a new Defence teacher in?” asked Remus shifting slightly, he was feeling rather numb unable to move. His leg and foot was wrapped tightly in bandages and in a splinter, so he wasn’t able to even wiggle it, not that he wanted to mind. His entire leg was bruised completely, normally it would have been healed by this, but he had a feeling St. Mungo’s was a little short on potions. It was little wonder, one hundred patients in one night; it would deplete anyone’s stocks.

“No, actually Dumbledore’s cancelled the classes for a few days, nearly everyone at Hogwarts has someone in here.” said James. “Some of the children are being informed that their parents are dead. Some of them probably didn’t even know their parents were Death Eaters. You should have seen their faces, they looked so stunned and sick by the news. Who wouldn’t be I suppose?” the world wasn’t as black and white as he’d liked to think back in the day.

“Maybe you should get Dumbledore to ask Severus to speak to them?” suggested Remus. Folding
the paper and putting it on the cabinet, as an afterthought grabbing the goblet of water, he was rather parched.

“Snape?” snorted James; he was the last person anyone would go to for a pep talk. He might not hate him, but it didn’t mean to say he had to like him - well not much anyway.

“He can understand what they were feeling, make them see it’s not their fault and they aren’t to blame.” said Remus.

“He does have a point, Snape knows from a personal point of view, some of them might not have been doing it willingly.” said Sirius grudgingly. “You know he likes blackmailing them or putting them under the Imperious curse.”

“Good point,” agreed James reluctantly. “It can’t hurt to tell Dumbledore of the suggestion at the least.”

“No it can’t.” said Remus.

“I hope Harry’s alright,” said Sirius worriedly, changing the subject.

“He’s fine,” said James blinking, was Sirius having memory trouble? He’d told them when he first came in Harry was okay.

“Physically yes, but he’s seen people horrifically injured, been involved in a battle and used a lot of magic to heal people.” said Sirius bluntly.

“He’s strong, stronger than we realize, and extremely powerful, I have complete faith that he can get through this.” said Remus.

“What if it brings back what happened to him?” said Sirius.

“No doubt it has,” said Remus quietly. Being tortured for three days, at such a young age, left him feeling cold. They’d read the newspaper, they knew what Harry had been through, and they hated the fact they hadn’t been there for him. They’d let him down so much, but at least Snape had been there for him, it always came back to Snape. Yet if anyone could understand again - it was him. As old as he was, he hadn’t been under the Cruciatus Curse, none of them had, Sirius himself or James.

“Times up!” said the Medi-Witch returning, she looked a little bit more upbeat as if something was finally going her way. Either that or she’d been drinking pepper-up potion during her break, which wouldn’t surprise them the least.

“When can I come back?” asked James.

“Tonight, after their dinner.” she said smiling in understanding.

“Thank you, and Shacklebolt will be coming around to see everyone soon, its his turn to talk to everyone who’s woken up.” said James, “Can I come and see you later?” he then added, not taking anything for granted.

“Yeah, and thanks.” said Remus quietly.

James smiled slightly, nodding his head as he made his way out, reminding himself to bring some magazines and chocolate with him next time. Maybe even hide a cheeky Butterbeer or small flagon of Fire whiskey to cheer them up.
Chapter 52

Invisible
Chapter 52
The Aftermath

It had been a busy past few days for everyone in the magical community. It didn't come as a surprise, after all over three hundred Wizards and Witches worked in the Ministry of Magic. Without the main building some people felt a little lost, as if they'd been cut adrift but they were making do with what they had. Hogwarts, the safest place they could be, other than Gringotts. Minister Scrimgeour and Albus Dumbledore had agreed, and now everyone was packing entire departments into classrooms, with charms to enlarge the place it wasn't to claustrophobic. In fact Arthur Weasley was feeling rather cheerful; his 'office' now had a window. He'd always wanted one, and now he did. With the war ongoing, he was needed more than usual, so he was able to take on more hours. This meant he was able to bring in more money; his family certainly needed it during times of war. Being 'Blood Traitors' to the majority of Death Eaters, he knew it would only be a matter of time before his family was targeted.

"The wards on St. Mungo's should be strengthened, it must be our number one priority!" said James adamantly. They were in a meeting, decided upon the first few things the Ministry needed to do. The Wizengamot and those who had voting seats were there.

"I agree with Mr. Potter, it is imperative we protect our own first." said Mr. Daniels admittedly, for most part he argued against James, so it was a surprise for many to see them actually agree on something. It certainly gave them pause to think. Even James was surprised, although he tried very hard not to show it.

"It would push the project rebuilding the Ministry back a week." said Madam Rachel.

"And? Without Wizards or Witches what good is the bloody Ministry?!" snapped another voice joining the fray.

"I doubt very much he will attack the hospital, he didn't do it the last time." said Madam Rachel flippantly.

"It's well seen you don't have family there." snarled a voice at the entrance to the meeting room. Everyone turned as one, blanching slightly and looking away in shame. Here they were arguing about what to do first, when people had lost a loved one. Neville Longbottom strode into the room his head held high a sneer on his lips. Gone was the mostly shy boy in place was a man who was prepared to go any lengths to keep the remainder of his family. His family had three votes, so he was perfectly within his rights to be here. "How many of you have family or friends in St. Mungo's?" demanded Neville. Striding to the chair beside James Potter, it's where his father always sat. Sirius' chair was vacant also, since he was in St. Mungo's.

More than half the people raised their hands, remaining solemn since Neville had stridden in. They still couldn't quite find it in themselves to meet the boy's eyes. They didn't dare to say that you had to be an adult wizard to be here. It was within his right, as his father is unable to perform his duties. "How can you propose such an idea of reconstructing an empty building instead of helping secure the well-being of our own people?" snarled Neville, his soft brown eyes hard, flashing with fury.

"Will you not be satisfied until our world is reduced to a dozen wizards?"

"I think it's time we voted don't you?" suggested James, proud of Neville standing up to them, he was truly his fathers son. It's exactly what Frank would have done, he would have said as such, but he knew the wounds were still too raw to say anything right now. "All in vote to secure St. Mungo's first?"

Everyone raised their hand; nobody abstained or voted against it, they had enough self preservation to go with the flow.

"Next order of business do we draft the Goblin's help or use wizards?" asked Albus from where he sat, his twinkle absent but pride clearly displayed for his student. He would never suspect Neville
capable of it; he’d always been one to blend into the shadows. "Will they be willing to help?" asked a dozen voices in unison. "For the right price anyone would help." said Albus Dumbledore. "Then perhaps a meeting should be initiated with the Goblin nation, there is no time to loose." said Minister Scrimgeour his voice raspy. "What if they want more than we can afford?" demanded Madam Rachel. "It's our world, if they want more, then we brand together and meet their price.” said James grimly. He had money; he'd do anything to help his world. His kids came first though, so he'd make sure they had enough to live their life before he offered anything. "Not all of us have money to spare!" snapped a voice angrily. "Stop arguing, the meeting should be held first.” said Minister Scrimgeour. It helped nothing arguing and fighting among themselves. For all they knew they could meet the Goblin's price without needing anyone's help. They should have enough to rebuild the Ministry and strengthen the wards in St. Mungo's. He should have expected the violent nature of the attack, with Death Eaters unable to gain entrance because of the wards he'd put up stopping those with Dark Mark's gaining entrance. They'd sent Trolls and Giants to destroy it instead; the Death Eaters had remained out on the grounds where they were safe. "I will arrange a meeting with them as soon as this meeting is over. A New one will be set up in a few days. Now is there any more concerns needing addressed?"

Silence met his question; evidently they did not have any more complaints to bring up.

"Then I announce this meeting adjourned!” said Minister Scrimgeour looking relieved, with that he stood up and immediately left the room. Making his way back to his little 'office' he was using right now. Which was right next to the Potions classroom, Slughorn's voice had been grating on his nerves. He thanked Merlin for silencing charms, otherwise he wouldn't have lasted. It was also cold, since he was in the dungeons not even warming charms helped the cold seeping into his bones. He immediately began a correspondence with Gringotts; they needed their help if they were willing to meet the price.

James left the room almost as quickly as the Minister, running towards the Entrance of Hogwarts. He would have took the secret entrance, but truth be told, he couldn't be bothered. Sirius and Remus were being released today, which made him remember, the Portkey. He patted at his cloak pocket and nodded in relief, the Portkey was there ready to bring them straight to Hogwarts. The headmaster had made it himself, so it would allow them through the wards. James cursed quietly as a stone lodged itself in his shoe, skidding to a halt he quickly removed his shoe, hopping up and down on the spot. Once he'd successfully managed to remove the offending stone he put his shoe back on. It took him eight minutes to get to the gates, he was getting old! He remembered a time where it only took him five minutes while running. Standing still outside the gates, he Apparated to St. Mungo’s appearing outside the hospital. “Hello is Sirius Black and Remus Lupin still here?” asked James once he got to the receptionist. “Yes they are,” said Healer Walsh, before the receptionist could respond, wheeling an entire cart filled with Potions, she went behind and grabbed various folders and placed them in the cart as well. “I’ve just returned from their room, you came just in time, they are just getting ready to leave.”

“Thank you,” said James, quickly making his way to the ward they were in, getting of on level two the elevator closing behind them. Unlike the last two times, the door was open, it was visiting hours, and the room was rather busy. Remus and Sirius were fully dressed, and out of bed for the first time in days. He’d got them some robes from Grimmauld Place so they didn’t have to go home in hospital gowns. The robes they had on during the battle were ruined and probably in the bin by now. He had noticed both their clothes in the same room; they’d finally begun dating by the looks of it. He wondered when they would tell him, they hadn’t been friends before so that’s fine, but things were getting better now. At least he thought so; he wanted his friends back, more than anything else in the world. “Hey guys, how are you feeling?” asked James, staring at his friends still concerned; he could tell
by the way they moved they weren’t one hundred percent healed yet.
“Glad to be getting out,” said Sirius immediately, the hospital beds were so uncomfortable to sleep in.
“Do you have potions to take?” asked James.
“Yes, we’ve to collect them at the reception.” said Remus, wincing as he put some weight on his leg. He had a cane and it looked as though he’d have to use it. Grabbing it reluctantly, he began walking with it, and the relief washed away any embarrassment. With the cane there wasn’t so much pressure on his leg, so he was able to walk without agony stealing away his breath. He was glad to be leaving though; he’d had hardly any sleep. The hospital beds were uncomfortable. Then there were the lights they always had on, and Medi-wizards/witches coming in to check on them. It made it impossible to get sleep or rest whatsoever. They weren’t allowed to use magic, so they couldn’t even put silencing spells around their beds. Sirius was alright, he could sleep through an earthquake and tornado combined.
“I have a Portkey for you, it will take us straight to Hogwarts.” said James.
“Great,” said Remus in relief, relaxing once the constant chatter stopped when they left the ward behind.
“How are Frank and Alice? Any improvement?” asked Sirius, he had been unable to see them yet, injured as he was. He didn’t know how he felt about going to see them though; they’d always been so strong and proud. He could only imagine what they were like now, and it actually scared him. The Death Eaters were laying low; no one had been arrested yet, so they were unable to find out the purpose of the attack.
“They don’t look so bad anymore,” said James admittedly, they’d looked terrible the first day, shaking and drooling, such a horrific sight. Now they looked like they were sleeping, well with their eyes open. The twitching and drooling had stopped. He’d asked why, that’s when he’d found out it was his son’s potion that had helped them. Eileen’s potion, it was a nerve regeneration potion; they had hoped it would heal the couple, but it hadn’t. It didn’t really make sense to him, since the brain was a bundle of nerves, and that’s what the potion targeted. There was hope for them though, maybe one day they would come back.
“Anymore?” asked Sirius subdued.
“They took Eileen’s Potion, it helped their body, they look like they’re sleeping peacefully now.” said James. “They seem to be able to mostly control their motor functions, it’s just the mind that’s…gone.” only afterwards had Augusta let her youngest grandson see his parents.
“I see,” said Sirius, Merlin he felt so bad, he wished he’d been there to help them. The pain they must have gone through chilled him to the bone. He’d been outside how could he have not spotted them? He felt guilty that he hadn’t seen and fought the Death Eaters with them. He couldn’t change anything now, just make sure Neville and Frankie had everything they wanted. Alice and Frank would have done it for them, so he would make sure both were as happy as possibly.
“I’m here to pick up my potions, its Remus Lupin and Sirius Black.” said Remus quietly to the receptionist; normally you had to visit the apothecary they had in the building. He wasn’t sure why you picked up the medication here now, maybe to save time? Who knew? He certainly didn’t, a few minutes later the receptionist was back with two bags of potions.
“Has Healer Walsh explained when and how to take them?” asked the receptionist kindly, smiling at them.
“Yes, she was very thorough.” said Remus nodding his head.
“Very well, sign these documents and you can go.” she said, handing over four papers, two were given to Remus and the others to Sirius. One was for the potions, and another signing out of the
hospital, paying as well. Sirius paid for both of them out of his vaults, he didn’t have any money on
him. The documents were handed over to her, and the receptionist in turn handed over the potions
nodding in silent thanks. “You take care, now.” with that she turned her back on them, placing the
forms into their confidential folders.

Remus sighed in relief as the fresh crisp wind flew into his face, and filled his lungs. He’d missed
it, such a silly little thing to miss, but he had. The windows in St. Mungo’s didn’t open, at least not
in the ward he’d been in. He stopped for a few seconds, rubbing at his shoulder; it ached with him
using his upper body to keep the weight of his leg.

“Here, hold on.” said James, holding out the ornament Albus had turned into a Portkey for them.
“Give me the potions, so you don’t drop them.” Remus did as he was told, and held onto the
Portkey, Sirius was already holding it, wincing in pain, it hurt to breathe.

“Hogwarts,” said James, saying the activation word for the Portkey and the three men disappeared.
All three of them reappeared in Remus’ quarters, which were situated directly above the Defence
Against the Dark Art’s classroom. Remus and Sirius immediately sat down on the welcoming and
comfortable couch, and sighed as their bodies were able to finally rest. James sat opposite them, he
didn’t have long but he wanted to spend as much time as possible. He’d missed them a great deal,
and it felt so good to have friends again, ones he could confide in, ones who understood what he
was going through.

“Is the Ministry still here?” asked Remus, putting his cane safely within reach but someone it
wouldn’t fall over.

“They’re going to remain for a month at least, they want to ward St. Mungo’s first. They can get
both done if they can convince the Goblins though.” said James. He didn’t understand why they
were arguing, wizards could start on the reconstruction, while Goblin’s work on St. Mungo’s.
Once the warding has been finished they could then start on the new Ministry building.

“Look, Harry made these potions,” said Sirius reading the small writing on the script, it was the
same as the letter James received, he was sure of it. He passed one to Remus, and saw him nod his
head, evidently recognizing the writing as well. Well, not them all, that were Snape’s writing if he
wasn’t mistaken, the spidery scrawl was unmistakable.

“Apprentices aren’t allowed to make Potions for business.” said James confused.

“The potions he’s made, they probably waived that clause just for him!” said Sirius proudly. He
doubted very much Harry would be an apprentice much longer.

Even Sirius was unaware of just how far Harry’s Potions would advance the magical world.

Sirius uncorked it and drank it, sighing in relief as the pain completely disappeared. Remus did the
same, rubbing at his leg, loosening the tense muscles and kinks. The full moon was going to be a
nightmare unless his leg healed completely by then. It would be a close call, since he only had four
days before he’d be changing into a werewolf. He didn’t even know if he’d be getting his
Wolfsbane potion, with everything that had happened, things could easily be forgotten. If Severus
and Harry had been brewing the potions for St. Mungo’s then it was more than likely.

“I have to get going in twenty minutes,” said James looking at the time again, “I’m on guard duty
at the Ministry.” he said the prospect was a dull one, and it showed on his face.

“Is Shacklebolt finished with everyone at St. Mungo’s?” asked Remus.
“I don’t know, I’ve not seen him yet.” said James shrugging his shoulders. A grin suddenly spreading out on his face, as he stared at Sirius. He was sleeping, his mouth open on the couch. “Do you want me to levitate him to the room?”

“Yes,” said Remus wryly, shaking his head at Sirius, honestly he didn’t know how he did it, sleeping wherever and whenever he could. He certainly couldn’t wait to sleep himself, but he knew he should wait until night. He had to get himself into a routine again; he had classes to teach soon. Thankfully it was Friday today, so he would have the weekend to recover. He’d be teaching for one day before he was off for the full moon, during that Sirius would be teaching. He took two days off every full moon for him, working on days he could have had off to make up for it. It’s what friends did, and it’s what made Remus love him.

“There, that’s him down for a few hours at least.” said James coming back into the living room, just then a knock was heard from down in the Defence classroom. “That will be the kids; do you want to see them for five minutes?”

“Go on then,” grinned Remus, relaxing back letting James do the running around. “Daisy?” he called after James had left the room.

“Yes sir?” asked Daisy making her appearance, staring inquisitively at the defence teacher.

“I’d like a pot of coffee and some nibbles please, nothing greasy please.” said Remus, “Just some sandwiches and a few plain biscuits.” it was breakfast time, and most of the stuff they had out for breakfast was greasy. He couldn’t handle that right now, for the past few days he’d had porridge for breakfast. The coffee though he was most looking forward to. The stuff they had in the hospital was weak and disgusting, needless to say after the first cup he never asked for it again.

“Yes sir!” said Daisy immediately popping away to do as her Master had bid.

James came back, opening the door, and keeping it open for someone to step through, looking tense yet awkward. Remus had a feeling whoever it was - it wasn’t the kids, it was a kid, but not the kids he’d assumed it was. Harry stood in the doorway just as awkward as James, disowning himself didn’t stop the resemblance. Harry really did resemble his father standing there, especially with their stances and faces so similar. The only thing he didn’t have was the messy hair that made up the Potter family.

“Harry!” said Remus surprised, “Come in, sit down.” he said immediately, welcoming the teenager in.

“I can’t stay,” said Harry, his foot trailing a pattern in the carpet, he felt like such a child right now and he hated it. “I just came to give you the potion.” which by the way he had made, well mostly, Severus had added a few ingredients while he was unconscious that time.

“I had worried you would be too busy to brew it,” admitted Remus, “Thank you, and Thank Severus for me.” he would have stood up if he’d had the energy. Harry passed the still smoking potion to him, staring at Remus pensively as if he wanted to ask him something.

“I will.” said Harry deciding against asking, he didn’t want them to think he was forgiving or forgetting.

“How are you? I hope you didn’t get hurt in the Ministry.” said Remus his amber eyes filled with worry.

Harry shook his head; he hadn’t been hurt at all.
“How did you get out?” asked Remus, they hadn’t been able to get in, so the fact they’d been able to get out was amazing. He doubted anyone had been around to let them out, he could remember the fleeing, the fighting he thanked his lucky stars he’d survived.

“Found a weak spot in the wall and blasted my way out,” shrugged Harry as if anyone could do such a thing.

Remus’ eyes widened, as James choked in shock as they processed what Harry had just said. Harry could either see magic or sense it enough to do what he just said. It was a rare gift; only one person they knew could do that. Bill Weasley, and thankfully he was on their side. No doubt he would be joining the goblins to help if warding if they accepted the proposition. There had never been such a gift in the Potter family, at least not that James knew about.

“How did you get out?” asked Remus impassively.

Remus stared at Harry and smiled, he knew despite the fact he pretended he didn’t care, he did deep down, even if it was just a little bit. It was good news; it meant sometime in the future they could maybe talk about anger and biting tones getting in the way. It wasn’t that Harry didn’t have a right to be furious, because he did every right. They’d neglected, ignored and treated Harry despicably. It’s the worst sort of abuse, treating someone like they were nothing, he should know, it had happened to him. He’d told Harry as such, he hadn’t even told Sirius and James, he was too ashamed really. Could have been worse, his parents could have flung him out, left him in the wild like an animal (Which he was once a month). “Sirius is resting, I’m afraid he got the worst of it, blasting curse to the side. He’s mostly recovered through, just takes a lot out of him.” said Remus soothingly, and unless he was mistaken he could have sworn he saw a glint of relief in Harry’s eyes.

“If you need more just tell Dumbledore, he can get in touch with Severus.” said Harry, “Bye.” he added as an afterthought before hastily making his way out, feeling idiotic for letting them affect him. The last thing he’d expected was James Potter at the door. Since writing all those pages of what James had done to him, he couldn’t muster up the fury he’d carried with him all this time. He’d gotten it off his chest, out of his system and he felt better. That’s not to say he wasn’t bitter, because a part of him always would be, they’d ruined his childhood and teenage years. They still would be if he hadn’t met Eileen and grown the guts to emancipate himself, build a new life for himself in the process.

“Wait! Would you like to stay for coffee? Tell us more about what happened?” asked Remus. “We were late, that’s why we were there. We wanted to congratulate you on your medal - it’s deserved.”

“No,” said Harry scoffing, he wasn’t their best friends all of a sudden; this was why he’d avoided visiting them in St. Mungo’s. He didn’t want them to think he cared and that he suddenly wanted them to be part of his life. This was exactly what was happening, shaking his head in exasperation he continued on. Leaving the man’s quarters and making his way out of the Defence classroom. He had decided to take defence, the more he knew the better, and it had been before he realized it was Lupin teaching. Now though he wasn’t sure what to do, continue or just not bother attending. It’s not as if Lupin would be teaching him stuff he didn’t already know, he was well ahead of the sixth years. Severus had taught him well in the past few years, especially in Potions and Defence.

“Hello Harry,” said Luna coming down the corridor, conveniently enough.

“Luna, how are you?” asked Harry, jogging down the corridor and hugging her tightly.

“I’ll be fine.” said Luna strongly.
“I know you will.” said Harry she was the strongest girl he knew, next to Eileen, and without her he would be lost. Luna had helped him so many times, reassured him when he was at his lowest. Never once asking for anything other than his friendship. “How’s Nev coping?”

“He’s angry, angry and heartbroken,” said Luna sighing heavily. He alternates between two of them, crying and depressed one minute then angry and swearing revenge the next. His Gran wasn’t helping by bossing them around; five times Frankie had gone to Neville crying over something Augusta said. Luna knew they wouldn’t be away from the school long. Frankie and Neville needed guidance; a shoulder to cry on not made to feel worse. “Neville was here half an hour ago, he and Frankie will be back in time for lunch.”

“I wish there was something I could do for him.” said Harry quietly.

“Just say yes,” said Luna mysteriously, “It will give him the hope he needs to continue.” the future wasn’t set in stone; there was visions of him succeeding and ones of him not. Her ability was growing with her emotions, the older she got the more clear the pictures became. She wasn’t about to tell him something that might not happen.

“What do you mean?” asked Harry withdrawing from the hug, gazing at her curiously. He knew he wouldn’t get an answer, but he would find out sooner or later he’d bet. “Never mind.” he finished wryly.

“What are you doing here? You don’t normally come on Friday’s.” she asked curiously, changing the subject.

“Just giving Lupin his potion,” said Harry in explanation.

“How is he?” asked Luna.

“You don’t already know?” teased Harry.

“Ha, ha, ha.” said Luna grinning in amusement, “I don’t claim to know everything.”

“How many people have gone home?” asked Harry his face drawn in sympathy. He didn’t care for many people at Hogwarts, but it didn’t mean he wished them to lose family members.

“Twenty, all different years,” said Luna. “You look exhausted have you not been sleeping?”

“Not much, we’ve been brewing the potions for St. Mungo’s.” explained Harry.

“You should try and get some sleep then.” said Luna comfortingly.

“We only finished the last lot two hours ago,” said Harry, “Definitely going to get some sleep, are you going to be okay?”

“I’ll be fine, Neville will be back at lunch,” said Luna, “Go on, get some sleep, I’ll see you on Monday, probably write to you before then.”

“Yeah, I heard from Krum, he was concerned, he must have heard the news.” said Harry smiling weakly.

“It looks as though Cedric decided on the right career,” said Luna, he had been very calm during the chaos. When Cedric first left, he’d trained to be a professional Quidditch player. He hadn’t stuck to it, instead choosing to join the Auror corps. He was now a proper Auror now, not just a trainee, having passed the tests and qualified.
“He was brilliant,” agreed Harry, “I’ll talk to you later, bye Luna.” the bell had just gone and it was time for her classes. He wanted to get out of the school before the halls flooded with students coming out of the Great Hall.

“Bye.” said Luna watching him go smiling; with a dreamy look once again on her face she wandered away to her class. Hoping inwardly that her first vision came to pass, but taking nothing for granted.

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“Come in,” said Remus, he was expecting Roxy; he had to have a long talk with her. She was excluding herself from everyone and it wasn’t good. If he could find out what was bothering her, maybe get her to open up, he could help. She’d always been closer to him than Sirius, just like Nick had always been closer to Sirius. It made sense since Roxy loved books like him, but Nick had loved hearing all the stories of what they and his father did as children. It was rather odd, since Nick had never once played a prank on anyone.

“Hi Uncle Remus,” said Roxy quietly, giving him half a smile as she came further into the room. It was lunch time, and it looked as though she’d be eating here. The table was filled with food, and even Remus couldn’t eat all that alone. “Where’s Uncle Sirius?”

“He’s sleeping sweetie,” said Remus watching her sit down, “He fell asleep this morning and has slept like a log.”

Roxy sniggered in amusement, especially remembering the time she saw Sirius sleeping in his Animagus form at the front of the fire. What she didn’t realize though was that he’d been completely drunk and certainly not fell asleep there by accident. Or had a strange urge to sleep as a dog. She knew she could make all the noise in the world; nothing woke her uncle Sirius up. She stopped when she realized she’d just laughed, it had been so long since she felt genuine amusement, it felt weird to laugh again.

“How are you feeling Roxy?” asked Remus, handing her a pumpkin juice and some food. His amber eyes regarding her warmly, letting her know he loved her without saying anything.

“Fine,” said Roxy automatically, it’s what she told everyone, she imagined if she said it often enough she’d believe it herself.

“Roxy,” sighed Remus, “You don’t have to put on a front for me; I was there when you were born. I know you better than you know yourself right now. Talk to me; let it out, it’s no use keeping it bottled up. Trust me I know, I’ve been there.”

“I miss mum,” said Roxy her lip quivering as her eyes filled with tears, Remus’ words wearing down her resistance. It didn’t matter how neglected she’d been feeling lately, her mum was her mum at the end of the day. She missed her so much, and she just wished things could go back to normal. The way things had been before she attended Hogwarts, she wanted that so badly. Her dad wasn’t even talking about her; he’s taken down all pictures of them together and put them away.

“Come here sweetie,” said Remus, opening his arms and letting her fly into them. Rubbing her back soothingly, sighing sadly. He knew this was just one thing; she’d been different even before her mum had been stupid enough to try and cast the Cruciatus Curse. Regardless he let her cry herself out on his shoulder, just soothing her.

“I hate him, I really hate him.” sniffed Roxy as she withdrew and sat herself down on her chair again.
“Who?” asked Remus, but he had a feeling he already knew the answer to that question.

“Harry.” stated Roxy an ugly look appearing on her face.

“Why?” he asked calmly, stopping himself from lashing out, he’d talk to her adult to adult, it may be the only way to get through to her. Just telling her it wasn’t Harry’s fault and sending her on her way as a child wasn’t going to work. She had to work through her feelings and realize Harry had no choice but to make the decisions he had.

“It’s his fault.” snapped Roxy bitterly.

“Is it? He didn’t make your mother cast the curse.” said Remus.

“He made her mad,” said Roxy, looking taken aback, obviously not expecting that statement. She wasn’t sure how to feel about the fact Remus was defending Harry. After all he’d done to the family, family was supposed to stick together.

“So have you and Nick, it’s part of growing up, are you telling me you expect her to cast the Cruciatus curse on you?” asked Remus blankly.

“She wouldn’t hurt us,” said Roxy defensively.

“But you think its okay for her to hurt Harry?” stated Remus his amber eyes darkening slightly.

Roxy paused before admitting grudgingly, “No.”

“Exactly, Harry did nothing to deserve what your mum did. Its fine to miss her and be angry with her Roxy, just don’t place the blame where it’s not deserved. Otherwise you will continue to do so, and in the end you’ll end up in the same situation as your mother.” said Remus firmly.

Roxy hunched in on herself, it’s exactly what her brother had said, the time she’d visited him in the hospital wing. He’d told her not to be like him or their parents, otherwise it would draw her down a dark path, one she might not be able to get off. This was before he’d used the curse, he’d known something bad was going to happen and there would be nothing he could do to stop it. “But he took our money and houses! He made her angry.” she said weakly, her defence half hearted. As if she wanted to be vicious but unable to do so, as the truth finally hit her full force.

“Yes, Harry was angry at your parents. You must understand he was doing it to teach them a lesson. He wanted them to feel what he felt all those years. Your parents didn’t give him pocket money, they didn’t give him a familiar, and they didn’t give him a trust vault. Do you know he got a paper job just to get some money for himself?” said Remus. Roxy shook her head mutely, seemingly unable to say anything. “In the end he gave it back Roxy, he was the better man. Neither of your parents would have done such a thing at the age of sixteen. In fact it would be debateable if they would do it right here and now.” of that he was absolutely certain.

“He gave it back?” murmured Roxy her eyes wide with astonishment. Her dad hadn’t told her! Why not? She didn’t understand.

“He did, just after the trial,” said Remus quietly. “Can you remember the last time you worried about Harry, Roxy?” he knew how prejudice he sounded, for he had never cared either, and the way Roxy stared at him indicated she realized the hypocrisy of the question too.

“Five years ago, mum and dad didn’t wake him up. I forgot to mention it because Nick had just come down. Bragging about going to Hogwarts, and I wanted to go with them; I wanted to be at Hogwarts, older I guess. I started badgering mum to let me; it wasn’t until we actually got to the
train station that I remembered again. I told mum and dad, dad went to go get him...he didn’t look very happy.” said Roxy solemnly.

“Well you didn’t fail him as much as we did,” said Remus sadly, Harry never mentioned Roxy, so there was a chance he didn’t hate her. They might be able to have a normal relationship when they are older. “You have a chance to make things up with Harry. To have a relationship with your brother, whereas none of them could. Think about it Roxy, you are more like your brother than you think.” frowning when he saw Roxy flush and stare at the floor, he was missing something. Where they already communicating with one another? Or was something else made her embarrassed or what?

“The hat wanted to put me in Ravenclaw, Remus. I made it put me in Gryffindor, I wanted to make mum and dad proud...and I remember how disappointed they were when news reached them that Harry wasn’t in Gryffindor like everyone else in the family.” choked Roxy looking ready to cry again.

“Ah,” said Remus sadly, shaking his head, his amber eyes filled with sympathy and weariness.

“Nobody really likes or understands me in Gryffindor, I made a mistake, and I should have let it.” said Roxy her hands covering her face as the tears finally fell.

“Yes, you should have. You can still change it Roxy, there’s a stipulation, you can demand a resorting. If you wish I can speak to your father about it. He will not be angry I promise he’s finally coming around. He’s realizing he’s been wrong about everything.” said Remus passionately.

“You would?” asked Roxy her eyes wide, uncovering her face, the tears evident.

“Yes,” said Remus nodding his head patting her knee in a comforting gesture.

“Thank you Uncle Remus!” cried Roxy launching herself at him again, hugging him tightly.

Remus grunted but hugged his niece in all but blood just as tightly. Just then the warning bell rang, lunch was over and now it was time to get to class. “Go on, or you will be late. I’ll speak to your dad; he’ll probably talk to you later. Go on.”

“Thank you,” said Roxy, grabbing her school bag before running towards her class, hastily wiping away the tears. She didn’t want people to know she’d been crying, that would be totally embarrassing. Then calmly she walked into her class, maybe this would be the last time she sat beside the other Gryffindor’s. She prayed her dad wouldn’t react badly to it.
Chapter 53

Invisible
Chapter 53
Recovering

After all her classes Roxy went to the library, she knew where the kitchens were so she didn’t need to fear being hungry. Her dad had told them everything about the secret hideouts, the kitchens, even how to get to Honeydukes. She hadn’t been able to concentrate on her classes, the conversation with her Uncle Remus just kept whirling around in her mind. Roxy picked out a book and squared herself away in her favourite solitary spot. She opened the book but didn’t read it, her thoughts trailing to Harry. She’d been very bitter and angry towards him, but Remus had made her see things from his point of view. It changed her perspective on everything irrevocably. Herself, about her parents, and yes even Nick strange as it may seem. Her brother, her big brother was days away from becoming the youngest ever Potions Master in the world. He worked so hard, attending Hogwarts and gaining his Mastery, having received an Order of Merlin, for his work in the Potions community, surely that was someone she should look up to? She loved Nick she really did, but he was…well normal despite what happened before she was born. He’d survived the killing curse, yet he was ordinary, like everyone else at Hogwarts. Harry though wasn’t normal, he was powerful, smart, and she actually wanted to follow his footsteps. How could one conversation change so much that she suddenly wanted to be like Harry?

She spent hours there, just staring blankly at the book, trying to make sense of her thoughts and feelings. Not even noticing when everyone departed for dinner. She admittedly wasn’t getting anywhere. There were a few points she was sure on though, she was enraged at her mum. Her uncle Remus had said it was okay, and he was always right. She would always love her mum; she was her mother after all at the end of the day. Yet Roxy’s rage surpassed the love she felt right now. Lily had done something wrong, why hadn’t she thought of the consequences? Especially at what would happen to her and Nick if she ended up in Azkaban. For as long as she could remember her mother had been concerned about what the world thought of them, then she had to do the worst thing of all. Her dad was so angry at her mum; she wasn’t sure what would happen when Lily got out.

“I should have known I’d find you here,” commented her dad wryly, bringing Roxy from her thoughts. Roxy looked up surprised, he was still in his Auror robes, had Remus already spoken to him? She wasn’t sure what to think anymore.

“Hi dad,” said Roxy unsurely.

“I think we need to talk don’t you?” said James gazing at his daughter half sadly half exasperated. “Come, let’s go somewhere private.”

“Okay.” said Roxy, following her dad; he led her up to the rooms Lily had been using when she was a teacher.

“Tix?” called James sitting down, waiting expectantly for a house elf to appear. His daughter hadn’t eaten since lunch time, and he wanted to make sure she had something proper in her stomach. He’d failed so much; he wasn’t going to allow his daughters health to deteriorate because of their actions. It seems just when he thought things would be better, more and more of his wrongdoings just spat back in his face. The dressing down he’d just received from Remus attested
to that, he wondered if he would make a decent parent even now. Yet he was all Nick and Roxy had, so he had to do all he could.

“Yes sir?” asked Tix making an appearance, bowing low his ears flat as he waited for the wizard to talk, anxiously.

“Can you bring us both a dinner please? I’m afraid we missed it.” said James, for the first time in his life not demanding something but asking. The house elves in Potter manor had all been freed, Lily hadn’t approved of it, and of course James had done what Lily wanted. The freed elves had come to Hogwarts; he wouldn’t be surprised if Tix was one of the descendants of his freed elves, judging by its behaviour. It was simply put terrified, judging by its shaking. He’d never abused a house elf, ever.

“Yes sir,” said Tix in relief, he couldn’t have gotten out of there faster if he tried.

“I’m so sorry Roxy,” said James staring at his twelve year old daughter, who he had failed so much over the past who knows how many years.

Roxy just stared at him clearly apprehensive.

“Why didn’t you let the hat sort you into your proper house?” asked James, when it was apparent his daughter wasn’t going to speak.

Roxy’s apprehension turned into incredulity, unable to believe what had just come out her dad’s mouth. “After the way you both reacted to Harry’s sorting?”

She had been there, when they received the letter from Nick, they’d boasted proudly, beaming that they’d known Nick would end up in Gryffindor. Their little hero, as if he’d been meant for anywhere else. Then they’d read the rest of the letter, and found out Harry hadn’t been put in Gryffindor as well. They’d shrieked at how Harry had besmirched the Potter name, it hadn’t been the last one either. They’d been so horrified when Nick told them Harry could talk to snakes. Their worst reaction by far was when they found out Harry liked boys, and that he was dating Krum. It was odd, they’d been more furious at who Harry was dating than the fact he was gay. Roxy had been perplexed, because she knew her Uncles were gay, so why the reaction? She realized now they’d always been very irrational when it came to Harry.

James nodded tiredly, realizing she had a very good point. “Do you want to be in Ravenclaw, Roxy?”

“Yes,” she replied her brown eyes filled with a silent plea.

“Okay, I’ll speak to the Headmaster tomorrow morning and get you resorted.” said James quietly, “Is there anything else you’d like to talk about?”

Tix reappeared placing a tray of food on the table between the father and daughter before leaving. James passed a plate of food to his daughter and one for himself feeling tired, not just physically but mentally.

“Why didn’t you tell us Harry had given the money and houses back?” asked Roxy softly. It was what was mostly bothering her; it’s why she’d condemned her brother so badly lately. It made her feel guilty, and it wasn’t an emotion she liked very much at all. Growing up she’d always been happy, nothing bothered her at all. She’d got all she’d ever asked for, but lately she had experienced so many emotions she was unfamiliar with.
James stared at his daughter, wondering how to tell her, she seemed very perturbed that he hadn’t told them. “I did not think to say anything; I was just relieved we would have somewhere to stay when Hogwarts finishes up. With Lily no longer working here, it wouldn’t be possible for us to remain. We’ve already expended Dumbledore’s generosity too much. Potter Manor will keep us safe, nobody knows where it is.” not even Pettigrew had known, only Sirius because he’d lived with them for years.

“What’s going to happen with mum?” asked Roxy.

“What do you mean?” asked James staring inquiringly at his daughter.

“Will you still be together?” enquired Roxy.

“I do not know sweetie,” said James a tortured look crossing over his face, shadowing it with uncertainty.

Roxy gasped her eyes widening, it was obviously not the response she had been hoping for.

“You will still see her, Roxy. Don’t you worry about that, she will still stay with us,” said James, at least until she could get a place of her own and she was off probation.

Roxy nodded in understanding, eating her dinner as she did so, her stomach grumbled letting her know it wasn’t happy. She’d been missing meals more than she should lately. She’d just been too sick and wound up about everything to eat much. Now though she found herself famished, as she dug in clearing her plate of as she and her dad bonded some more. Talking about safer matters, happier times that didn’t involve Nick, Harry or Lily. It was something that should have been done a very long time ago.

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“You promise me!” said Nick coming down the steps not far from Gryffindor Tower, he’d just been about to go searching for his father. It looked as though there was no need, since his sister and father were there.

“What are you talking about?” asked James staring at his son, he’d been escorting her to Gryffindor tower, and it may well be her last night here. It was getting late and almost curfew, unless the times had changed since he was there, but he doubted it very much. The wizarding world didn’t adapt well to change.

“You swore I wouldn’t have to train until I was feeling better.” said Nick close to tears of frustration and betrayal.

“Train?” stated James; he had a funny feeling where this was going now.

Nick breathed deeply, realizing his dad might not even know he thrust a piece of parchment into his dad’s hands, his eyes flashing in despair. He wanted to train; he wanted to be good, powerful, and able to fight his own battles, but not right now. His magic still felt shaky enough as it was. He didn’t do to much magic for fear of ending up with his core split again. It had been the single most horrifying experience of his life, and yes, even against the time he’d seen You-Know-Who brought back to life by Pettigrew. The fear that it wouldn’t reconnect and what would happen to him had incapacitated him. The thought of being left a squib, after being brought up as a wizard, using magic, knowing the feel of it left him paralysed. Now Dumbledore wanted to train him again? After what happened before! Well simply put he didn’t want to.

James opened the letter and read the missive cursing mentally at it. He’d warned Dumbledore what
would happen if he pushed it! Yet here he was telling his son to come to his office tomorrow after
dinner that he would continue the lessons. The demand not to tell anyone left him cold and furious.
Dumbledore was trying to keep his son quiet? He stood there panting in anger, the letter scrunched
up in his balled fist. What did he do? Go through with his threat and show him he wasn’t to be
trifled with or just go up to his office and warn him? It wouldn’t stop him he knew, Dumbledore
was the most stubborn wizard he’d ever met. He had to be after all he’d been through two wars,
and was currently a figurehead for the third time.

“Get your stuff, we are leaving.” said James determination thrumming through him, his kids came
first, before this stupid war, before Dumbledore and before the Order. “Roxy you can come or you
can stay, I’ll still make sure you go into Ravenclaw if that’s what you wish.”

“Ravenclaw?” asked Nick unsurprised, she was very studious, just like Harry.
Roxy stared wide eyed between both of them, struck by the ultimatum her dad had just issued.

“Go, Nick. NOW!” said James, he wouldn’t take no for an answer. He’d train his son himself; he’d
work less if it came to it.

Nick jumped and scrambled up the stairs muttering the password and gaining entrance into the
common room.

“Roxy the choice is yours sweetie, what would you like to do?” asked James.

“Can I stay?” she said.

“Yes, if that’s what you want. I’ll still see you; this is the Auror Headquarters until the Ministry
building is fixed.” James reminded her softly.

“Okay,” said Roxy, she intended on writing to Harry, even if it was just to say how sorry she was,
she’d rather do that from Hogwarts than Potter Manor. Plus she liked it here, despite the fact she
didn’t have many friends. Frankie was back, she’d seen him in the afternoon, waiting to get into
Charms after they’d left. She understood how he felt, well sort of, they’d been friends for years,
and she wanted that back. In fact she was determined to do it. She didn’t want to be friendless like
Hermione Granger, who was always alone in the common room or library, she never spoke to
anyone at the Great Hall much either.

“Ready,” said Nick running back down the stairs, skidding to a halt beside his sister and father.
“Aren’t you coming Roxy?”

Roxy shook her head negatively, “I’m staying.” she said.

“Be careful,” he said before hugging her, James joined the hug and for the first time in a long time,
Roxy realized she wasn’t as alone as she thought she’d been.

“Remus is here for you if you need him okay?” said James.

“I know,” said Roxy grinning slightly.

“Now let’s get to Dumbledore’s office, get you resorted,” said James looking at Roxy before
turning to Nick and adding “And you back home.” With that the three Potters began walking with
determination none had felt in a long time.

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“Come in!” shouted Dumbledore sounding tired, which made James, feel a twinge of guilt, but he
quickly shoved it aside. Reminding himself what he was about to do to his son and the anger
renewed.

“Ah, James, what can I do for you this evening?” asked Dumbledore as more letters and parchment magically appeared on his desk. He stared at them mentally groaning in exasperation. Since the war had started, the demands had been so much more than he was used to. He could stay up all night, and still end up with more than he could deal with. Minerva had her share as well, but being a teacher and Head of House it was much more difficult for her to keep track of the correspondence so most went on his desk.

“Roxy is here to be resorted.” said James impassively.

“I see,” said Dumbledore his twinkle lessening, he’d never seen James sound so…unemotional before. Even with Harry he’d displayed some emotion, he was giving nothing away whatsoever. Then again he’d just lost his wife to Azkaban prison, it was not an easy time for him and Albus sympathised with it. He’d lost his own father to Azkaban; he understood Roxy and Nick more than they would ever know. “Is this what you want Miss Potter?”

“Yes sir,” said Roxy her eyes twinkling for the first time in almost two years.

“Very well,” said Dumbledore getting up and retrieving the sorting hat from its place on the shelf. It woke immediately, yawning tiredly staring around curiously. “Miss Potter here would like to be sorted again.” he told the hat as he took it around and placed it gently on the twelve year olds head.

“Well, well, well, back again are we Miss Potter, I knew you wouldn’t do well in Gryffindor did I not?” said the hat smugly.

“I know, I want to go into Ravenclaw now,” said Roxy demurely.

“I can see that,” said the hat amused. “You will do well there, just like your brother….” he told her secretly before shouting for everyone to hear. “BETTER BE RAVENCLAW!”

The crest on her robes immediately changed from a lion to an eagle, changing colour also, she now had a blue and bronze badge on.

“A house elf will immediately remove your things from Gryffindor common room to Ravenclaw,” said Albus, creating a Patronus that immediately swirled away in a puff of smoke. “Professor Flitwick will come and show you to your new house in a moment.”

“Thank you sir,” said Roxy, surprised she hadn’t expected things to move so quickly. Yet she wasn’t about to complain, this was what she’d wanted at the end of the day.

A few minutes later Filius Flitwick appeared through the Floo in Dumbledore’s office, “You wanted to see me Albus?” asked the half goblin, half wizard as he made an appearance.

“Yes, I’d like to introduce you to you’re newest house member, Roxy Potter has just been resorted into the house of Ravenclaw.” said Albus his twinkle noticeably less than usual.

“Oh well done!” squeaked Filius happily, “I always knew you would have done better in my house Miss Potter! Just like your brother who’s putting most of my students to shame!”

James stared at the floor at that pronouncement; he’d screwed up with Harry he knew that - but it kept getting thrown in his face every day.

“Thank you Professor Flitwick,” said Roxy flushing at the praise.
“Well let’s go then, get you settled in it’s nearly curfew!” said Filius happy with this new turn of events.

“Yes sir!” said Roxy hugging her father and brother again before following the small professor out.

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“I’m pulling Nick out of Hogwarts.” said James, making Dumbledore cough and splutter at his words, his blue eyes wide with shock and unless James was mistaken a little bit of hysteria and fear. It didn’t deter James the slightest, he’d been warned and it wasn’t his fault Dumbledore hadn’t heeded it.

“Now let’s just talk about this James,” cautioned Dumbledore warily, placing his hands up in a defeated gesture. He could barely believe what was happening; worse still he could do nothing to stop it if James did. He was the boy’s father, all he could do was try and change the stubborn wizard’s mind. Judging by the look on his face, it wouldn’t happen tonight. He couldn’t let Nick Potter leave his school, he was need.

“No, I’m done talking, I warned you what would happen if you tried anything.” said James impassively.

“You have nowhere to take him, he is not safe outside these walls, be rational James, you will both be killed.” pleaded Dumbledore.

“Potter Manor is safer than anywhere else, nobody knows where it is.” said James stubbornly, it’s not as if Sirius would give up its location to Voldemort.

“Potter Manor?” echoed Dumbledore taken aback. “You do not have the manor James, do not do anything stupid and get yourself arrested.” although it would suit him well, he’d get custody of Nick, and he able to make a hero out of the teenager. One that would kill Voldemort and survive.

“Harry gave it back.” said James a proud glint in his eye. “Consider Nick withdrawn from Hogwarts.”

“Nick cannot possibly want that!” yelled Dumbledore unable to manipulate the conversation was seriously rattling him, not something that had happened in a very long time.

“I do.” said Nick, he’d wanted it since his fourth year, when everyone turned against him. Staying had taught him a valuable lesson, he’d been wrong in what he did. He had deserved all the scorn sent his way, and he hoped one day to prove himself worthy and sorry for what he done. Not just to show everyone at Hogwarts but his twin brother as well, who he’d wronged so badly in the past.

“You can’t,” cried Dumbledore petulantly, unable to believe this was happening. “He needs trained James, otherwise he will die do you want that to happen? You’ve already lost one son do you want to loose the only remaining one you have left?!”

“I’ll do it myself, when. He. Is. Ready.” said James his anger showing now. “Not when it pleases you! He’s just recovered from his core splitting I won’t sit back and watch it happening again.”

Nick watched the confrontation in awe; his dad was sticking up for him and sticking to his guns too. He was really going to leave Hogwarts; he wasn’t just doing it to prove a point to Dumbledore. He felt bad for leaving when Susan was in a bad way, but she was getting better with the help from all the Hufflepuff’s, he would keep in touch with her as well. He would be asking his dad if she could stay over the summer, she had no family left, her parents had died during the last war. She’d been adopted by her aunt, now she was gone too. He felt anger seep into him; Dumbledore was
trying to manipulate his dad! Using Harry and him against his father! He couldn’t have been more horrified by the means Dumbledore was using to make him remain at Hogwarts.

“I wouldn’t let it happen either James, I care a great deal about Nicolas, otherwise I wouldn’t be doing this!” coaxed Dumbledore.

“Let’s go Nick.” said James, through arguing with Dumbledore, he’d argue till he was blue in the face and James, was having none of it.

Nick couldn’t have moved fast enough, glaring at Dumbledore as he left the Headmaster’s office, still unable to believe what he’d said. His father grabbed his shoulders and led them down the stairs, through the halls and out of Hogwarts in record time. Everything was almost happening too fast to process it, regardless though he felt a sense of relief when they Apparated away from what had become, an oppressive school of late.
Chapter 54

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Invisible

Chapter 54

Musing

“Are you alright?” asked Severus, making his way into the sitting room, the far corner is where Harry had his little ‘office’ or ‘classroom’ depending on how you saw it. It wasn’t just used when he did his quizzes, which by the way Harry no longer done since there was nothing about Potions he could learn anymore. Or at least none he could learn about that required written quizzes anyway. Harry usually read his mail, and obviously for most part replied to missives using it.

“Neville’s written to me,” said Harry his back crouched as if he wanted to make himself as small as humanly possible.

“How is Mr. Longbottom coping?” asked Severus as he took a seat, letting himself get some rest, his back ached from standing in the lab brewing so long. He refrained from taking potions, knowing it didn’t help just temporarily elevated the discomfort. Dobby appeared and handed a mug of coffee to both men before disappearing without saying a word, not wanting to interrupt them.

“He’s still upset, but getting better. It’s not that, he’s made a formal appeal for me to create a cure to the damage done to his parents.” said Harry still staring at the paperwork completely baffled. This must have been what Luna meant about saying yes, that it would give him hope, help him continue his life.

“How is Mr. Longbottom coping?” asked Severus as he took a seat, letting himself get some rest, his back ached from standing in the lab brewing so long. He refrained from taking potions, knowing it didn’t help just temporarily elevated the discomfort. Dobby appeared and handed a mug of coffee to both men before disappearing without saying a word, not wanting to interrupt them.

“Formal appeal? He’s paid you?” asked Severus his eyes marginally wider than normal, if you weren’t looking for it there was no way anyone would have spotted it. Neville Longbottom wanted Harry to come up with a potion to help cure the insanity forced upon them by the Cruciatus Curse. He stared at Harry’s back, the cup hovering half way to his lips untouched. He couldn’t believe it, many had tried but failed, they’d willingly gone into their own mind to escape the pain, and there was no reversing the damages. It was a waste of money; surely his grandmother had told him that?

“Our potion helped them Severus, the results are here, it actually helped them.” said Harry, turning around facing Severus dumbly.

“How so?” asked Severus thoughtfully, his mind racing as he thought of ways it could have helped the couple.

“He sent the results, apparently St. Mungo’s are shocked at the damage it repaired.” said Harry, handing him the doctors notes and official scans done by Healer Smethwyck. They weren’t copies so Neville had obviously asked for them with every intention of sending them to him. If he was going to do this, he needed all the information he could get.

Severus took them, reading intently at the results, at various points his eyebrows rose in wonder. For two days Alice and Frank were unable to communicate, move, do anything for themselves even the toilet. They’d been as weak as a newborn baby, drooling, staring listlessly, Healer Smethwyck had been the one to decide to give them Eileen’s potion, with the board of Medical healer’s approval. To say they were stunned with what damage it healed would be putting it
They’d thought perhaps it would lessen the shaking to some extent. Instead it had healed their body; they were now able to follow orders when they were given. Like going to the toilet, eating when they were told to, they were half there, with the real Alice and Frank just lurking somewhere in the back of their mind. According to this they’d tried Legilimency but nothing had come of it, which is what Severus would have attempted upon seeing the results. The results of the scans done on their brain were the same, with five percent change on a small part of the brain.

“I had no idea our potion was that powerful,” commented Harry knowing exactly where Severus was, he’d read the letter and scans a dozen times already this morning.

“Nor I,” admitted Severus mesmerized. It was little wonder Neville was hoping that Harry could come up with something to help. These results, well it was a near miracle, to do this though Harry would need to find out more about the brain and the way it worked. “If you wish to do this, you will need to speak to a healer about the way the mind works.”

“Can’t you? Don’t you require that for being a Legilimens and Occlumens?” asked Harry his green eyes alight with a fiery passion. Harry’s love for potions was staring him in the face, and he was proud of Harry for even thinking about it. Most Potions Masters wouldn’t even take it seriously. They’d consider it to much work and that it would be impossible. He would have said the same thing if not for the results Eileen’s potions had induced.

“You’d think so, but no. Being able to see into someone’s mind or read it for that matter, is completely different to healing it.” said Severus. “The potions you’ve brewed so far are for the body, internal or external, the potion this needs…is solely focused on the mind.” his hand waving the papers about while he was talking. Remembering his coffee, he took a long drink seeing it was cooling down more than he liked.

“Oh,” said Harry, nodding his understanding.

“By that I am to assume you wish to at least try?” asked Severus enquiringly, flipping the next page and reading through that. The healers had given them a second dose, but it had yielded no results he noticed idly.

“I’d like to.” stated Harry but he truly didn’t know where to begin, perhaps it would be best to follow Severus’ advice. Speak to the healers first then go from there if he could.

“What of your exams?” asked Severus, wondering if the Ministry had come up with something; the labs had been demolished along with the entire building. Harry had nowhere to take his written or practical exams come to that. He could go abroad to do it, but the best one was here. Even if it was more difficult than the American Ministry Mastery exams. A lot of people actually did go abroad to gain their qualifications, it was also less expensive over there. He couldn’t believe he hadn’t thought about it, but he had no reason to until today. Since Harry was actually supposed to be there in over three hours to take his next exam.

“Oh yeah, I received a letter today, I’ve to go to Hogwarts, they’ve set up rooms for us to use.” said Harry flipping through his various correspondence until he found it. “I’ve never been in the room, in fact I don’t even know where it is.” he added wryly, as he passed it over.

Severus accepted the additional piece of paper, reading it; it explained the move and where they were temporarily setting up. It was in the lower dungeons, in fact if he could remember correctly it was directly underneath the Great hall. Many assumed that the dungeons was the lowest point at Hogwarts, they were wrong, there was an entire other layer, that made up the labyrinth of Hogwarts school. It truly would take forever to investigate every nook and cranny of Hogwarts. “Do you know where the Slytherin dormitories are?” asked Severus.
“Yes I think so,” said Harry.

“Instead of going towards the dorms you go left, it will lead you to a door that will take you down some steps, in there is where you will find the room they want you in. If you get lost a Hogwarts elf will help you, they know everywhere like the back of their hands.” stated Severus, he knew pretty much everywhere in the Dungeons, he had been a teacher for many years. The students liked to go to places where the teachers wouldn’t find them. He should know, he’d found dozens of them over the years. It made him smirk just thinking about it, they’d been glad to see him because they’d wound up lost. Hogwarts had a sense of humour; it looked to make doors disappear randomly. “Do not be late, the instructors don’t like it, it shows you do not take your chosen path seriously.”

“I won’t.” said Harry.

“More mail, Master Harry sir,” said Dobby appearing with a few more neatly folded letters in the house elf’s hand.

“Thank you, Dobby.” said Harry accepting the mail a curious frown on his face. A few years ago he wouldn’t have received anything, well maybe apart from Eileen. Now he got mail from Cedric, Neville, Luna, and Viktor as well as from various organizations mostly potions related.

Dobby nodded eagerly, before he left again to take care of his duties.

“I’m going to write to the healer,” decided Harry adamantly.

“This could take a very long time Harry, you are so close to gaining your Mastery,” said Severus, “Are you prepared to wait until then if you can do it to qualify?”

Harry turned to stare at his Potions Master again, about to open his mouth petulantly, not sure if Severus thought he couldn’t do it. The look on Severus’ face made him pause, he was being serious, thinking only of him and it warmed his heart. Gazing thoughtfully, his mind drifted to his journal, a few potions he’d completed, theoretically at least, but that was the hardest part of inventing potions.

“That won’t be necessary, I have my two chosen potions to pass my mastery, I’ve completed the theory I only need to test them. I can concentrate on this one in a few days without having to worry.” he hadn’t originally planned on using them, wanting something different but considering the circumstances its what he was going to have to do. Sometimes growing up and doing the right thing sucked.

“Very well,” said Severus his black eyes gleaming with pride, Harry truly was exceeding his expectations. When he’d taken the fourteen years old on, he had no idea of the accomplishments he’d make. The thought of Harry not being in his life was a dark one indeed; his mother would be gone for starters. He would have tried his hardest to save her, but there would always be a lingering doubt if he would have succeeded. Harry had truly deserved the order of Merlin. He was curious about which potions he’d decided upon, but he decided to wait.

“Your lunch Master Severus, Master Harry,” said Rose, another house elf making coming through from the kitchen, wheeling a trolley filled with the most aromatic food, beside the table. Causing their stomach’s to grumble loudly. Having gotten up so early Harry had eaten sooner, so now he was exceedingly hungry.

“Thank you, Rose.” said Harry muffling a yawn as he took his seat at the table, as Rose levitated all the platters and disappeared with the trolley once again.

“Just in time I see!” said Eileen beaming at them as she came into the sitting room, a large bouquet of flowers freshly cut in her hand. She’d been out in the garden yet again cutting the flowers,
pulling some up and getting it prepared for winter. Which by the way was right around the corner, the weather was getting dreadful out there. She’d reminded to take her coat this time though, thankfully. Muggle clothes just kept her warmer than any cloak or warming charm could. Well at least her magic, which wasn’t very powerful. Eileen quickly placed them into the big vase at the corner of the room, not bothering to sort them, she could do that later.

“Hello Mum,” said Severus smirking wryly.

“Everything okay?” she asked sitting down, helping herself to the platters.

“Yeah,” murmured both boys as they began eaten to hungry to talk much.

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“How much does Neville want for the investment it will make if you succeed?” asked Severus curiously. They were once again in the potions lab, only for a few hours until Harry had to leave for Hogwarts.

“He’s waiving it all, he doesn’t want anything.” said Harry quietly; his mind had been on the proposition all day. Which was why he was in here when it was his day to do as he pleased.

“And Black?” asked Severus, he was probably as surprised as Harry when Black added his own investment into Harry creating the Potion for the Longbottom’s.

“Just three percent, I think he just wanted to give me money and was using this as an excuse.” admitted Harry, Black was trying he had to give him that. Maybe he should throw the wizard a life raft, although he’d keep that anchor handy if needed. Although he needed someone who was an Animagus to test this potion on…maybe he could use him. He didn’t want to have to ask Severus, only because he was scared it wouldn’t work! Severus was the last person he wanted to disappoint. What Harry didn’t know was that no matter what he did Severus couldn’t be disappointed in him.

“Considering it won’t be continuously used every day I’d say so, three percent won’t bring much in…long term though it might be a decent income.” said Severus, keeping an eye on what Harry was putting into the potion, he had his journal open, the one he used for potion ideas on the desk. It was obvious this was a potion that would be used for his mastery, he wasn’t stupid after all.

“I don’t know, we never thought Eileen’s potion would be popular, look how often we are personally asked to brew it despite the potion being public.” said Harry truthfully.

“Touché,” said Severus, he did indeed have a point, he had to concede it, especially considering he was right at this minute brewing it yet again.

“Even if its not I’m not doing it for them.” said Harry, he’d never cared about the public, he wasn’t about to start now. Or so he convinced himself anyway, the public had vied for Nick’s attention, just completely ignoring Harry, pretty much what absolutely everyone had done - including Dumbledore. It was his turn now, his time, and it was for something he had done. The day where everyone would find out he survived that night still terrified him. He was scared that all he had accomplished up to this point would be shadowed by it.

“Are you telling me you wouldn’t do it if it wasn’t Neville asking?” asked Severus sardonically, knowing the answer to that already. It was the thought of creating the potion, trying to at least that was prompting Harry to say yes. He to had done it often enough, the allure of creating something from scratch was a heady thing indeed.

“I don’t know.” admitted Harry quietly, his eyes glazed in though would he? Harry couldn’t help
but wonder.

Severus just shook his head in silent wonder as he brewed the potion. Harry was an enigma, and he wondered if the he even understood himself.

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Two Day’s Later - Grimmauld Place

Harry rapped hard on the black door of Grimmauld Place, he knew this was where Black stayed, and it wasn’t the full moon so he was hoping he’d be there and not at Hogwarts. He wasn’t going back; he’d had enough of the place this week. Between attending classes and doing his written and practical exams he was exhausted. Thankfully he didn’t need to return to Hogwarts for three days which reminded him...he had his homework to do. He was beginning to feel like he’d bitten off more than he could chew. In all seriousness he’d been stretched as thin as he could go with Hogwarts education and his Mastery, now he was trying to find out everything he could to brew Neville’s potion with everything else on his plate. So needless to say he hadn’t gotten much sleep in the past few days.

“Harry?” gaped Sirius wide eyed as he answered the door, of all the people he’d expected he was nowhere on the list. He’d been writing to him for two years, never once had he received a reply, apart from the first one telling him to leave him alone. He dug his index finger into the palm of his hand, nope, ouch, he certainly wasn’t dreaming. This was real, and Harry was standing in front of him, and looking ready to bolt. “Come in!” he said immediately not wanting him to leave, his heartbeat had shot through the roof. Then he remembered...he could be here on business, maybe to tell him he didn’t want his money. That thought left him a bit depressed, but Harry could have sent a letter which gave him enough hope not to beg right there and then.

“Would you like something to drink?” asked Sirius guiding them both into his kitchen, the large table had been replaced with a smaller one. There was just no point to having a table big enough to feed an army when there was never an army in Grimmauld place.

“I wouldn’t mind a coffee,” said Harry looking around in interest, flushing bright red when he caught sight of the paper clippings with him in it framed and up on the wall.

“Coffee it is!” said Sirius his voice slightly louder than normal as he busied himself with preparing it, his mind blankly wondering why he was here. It had been so long since he’d seen Harry, he was taller, almost as tall as him now, he was becoming a man and Sirius was proud of him. He couldn’t change the past no matter how much he wished he could have, all he could do was try and rectify it. “Sit down if you like.”

“Thanks,” said Harry formally sitting himself on the closest chair, unobtrusively staring at the framed newspaper, confused by Sirius’ actions. Who could blame him? He’d been ignored all his life by the man...only now he was accomplishing something was he worth attention?

“How’s your potions Mastery going?” asked Sirius, trying to think of something, anything to talk to his godson about.

“Exhausting,” admitted Harry.

“I remember Auror training, it was gruelling as well.” said Sirius smiling in sympathy, “But once its done that’s it, you can rest until your hearts content with a Mastery under your belt. You are so close now, don’t let it get to you too much, just relax and do what you can.”
Harry scoffed, “It’s not that easy.”

“No?” questioned Sirius placing the coffee pot on the table between them, grabbing some mugs and biscuits, Remus wasn’t going to believe Harry had willingly come here. Pouring the coffee into the cups, letting him chose what he wanted to add since he didn’t know what he liked.

“Between Hogwarts, homework, Potions, defence training and the exams…I…it’s hard, sometimes too hard.” confided Harry, belatedly wondering why he was getting into all this. He’d meant to say a few things, ask him to do something then leave, end of story.

Sirius was nodding in understanding, was Harry actually here for his advice? Or did he just need someone to talk to that didn’t have anything invested in it? Either way it sounded as though Harry wanted guidance and he’d provide it. Harry didn’t even have to accept his counsel.

“Have you thought of removing yourself from Hogwarts? You’ve already completed your O.W.L’s Harry, you don’t really need your N.E.W.T’s…you know what you want to do with your life. Which is more than most adults who’d already left Hogwarts have managed to decide. Nobody will think badly of you for wanting to concentrate on your Mastery. N.E.W.T’s was exhausting itself, the workload was…immense itself…never mind with whatever else you are doing.” said Sirius.

“I think I might have to,” said Harry despairingly, drinking some coffee, keeping himself awake. “If you decide at some point after your Mastery you want to take them…I have no doubt you can work towards it.” said Sirius sincerely.

“Maybe,” said Harry.

“Have you spoken to Snape about it?” asked Sirius, keeping his voice even, he’d never liked Snape but he’d do anything, even tolerate the man for the sake of Harry whom he’d failed so grievously in the past. He’d seen Harry when the rest of them had failed to do so, and helped him accomplish what Harry evidently wanted more than anything else in the world. So bygones were bygones to him when it came to Snape. Although it might not be the same with Snape, after all it had been him who bullied the Potions Master not the other way around.

“No, but he knows it’s too much,” said Harry smiling half-heartedly in thanks when Black refilled his cup.

“Just remember adults have given and failed at their chosen fields by panicking, it doesn’t help. What you need to do is think about it, what you want to do and what to you can stop before you end up in a mess.” said Sirius solemnly.

Harry nodded he did have a point but he didn’t like the thought of quitting anything, it made him feel like a failure. A failure he’d felt his entire life until two years ago.

Sirius wondered why Harry had originally come, he couldn’t think of a way to ask him without being obvious if he was honest. There was no way Harry had come to see him to talk, he knew that, and he wasn’t about to delude himself otherwise. Yet he hoped it wasn’t the last time, maybe Harry would come back if he asked. Then he realized there was a way he could ask, the investments, which was probably what it WAS about. “Did you receive my letter?” enquired Sirius.

“Yes,” said Harry shaking away his thoughts getting back to his real reason for being here. “I’ve signed it, you’ll probably hear back from Gringotts soon.”
“Really?” asked Sirius taken aback, he’d actually accepted it? Well that was a surprise he’d expected it torn up and sent back to him.

“Yeah,” said Harry giving Sirius a penetrating look, as if he could see right into his soul.

“Alice and Frank were very good friends of mine, not just through the Order or work,” said Sirius using it as an excuse so Harry didn’t think he’s sent it to make it up to him.

“They were,” said Harry, a smirk twitching at his lips as if he KNEW Sirius was being disingenuous by using them. “You’re an Animagus aren’t you?” already knowing the answer to that one.

“Yes,” said Sirius cautiously, did Harry want to become one? That certainly would bring them closer together, but his workload was already too much as it was.

“Did you get a choice of others?” Harry then asked, placing the cup down and helping himself to a biscuit.

“Yeah,” said Sirius, a flush of complete embarrassment enveloping his face.

“How many choices did you get?”

“Four…well five if you include Padfoot.” stated Sirius wryly, thinking of his Animagus as part of himself.

“What were they?” asked Harry curiously.

Sirius supporting a Bambi caught in the headlights look reluctantly began revealing what he’d been given the choice of. “At the time it was a badger, an Asp, a fly and a chameleon.”

“A chameleon?!” said Harry loudly looking excited at the prospect.

Sirius’ lips twitched remembering how excited he’d been at the thought, “Yes, I was tempted to choose that one, I must admit. Unfortunately everyone else had four legged creatures, and we wanted to join Remus so we chose the animals more suited to it.”

“What about Pettigrew?” asked Harry darkly, he had been a rat.

“A rat was the best he could do, the others were all insects.” said Sirius his voice just as dark as Harry’s. To this day he was in awe that an underage school boy had brought down one of the most wanted wizards in the world. He’d been on the Muggle watch lists as well. He had also been deadly curious at what went down, how he’d managed to kill Pettigrew and Voldemort’s beloved snake, if the dark wizard could actually love anything other than himself.

“I have a potion here that will unlock your Animagus, its untested…if you’re interested.” said Harry slyly staring innocently at Sirius as if he hadn’t just told him it was untested.

Sirius snorted at the innocent look, staring intently at Harry, would this be one way he could prove himself to Harry? Was this what exactly it was? A test? His mind drifted to the potions Harry had created, and knew without a doubt that if there was anything Harry was good at it was Potions.

“On one condition,” said Sirius seriously.

Surprise flickered over Harry’s face before a grin formed, he was amazed at the guts the wizard had. Not many would want to test a potion, not all of them went as expected after all.
“Which is?” asked Harry critically.

“You come and see me once a month,” said Sirius hiding his nervousness, it could go so many ways. Harry could say no and leave feeling he was asking too much. Then Harry could say yes, and he’d have a marginal sort of relationship with his godson. “Look I know I’m not legally your godfather anymore…but I do want to be part of your life…even if its just to see you once a month, for a few months.”

“You are my godfather,” whispered Harry staring at the table, “I never removed you.”

Sirius gaped in shocked surprise, unable to believe what had come out of his godson’s mouth! And YES he was his godson.

“All I did was change my last name and emancipate myself, taking on the Peverell name.” Harry added after a few seconds of stunned quietness.

“Merlin,” whispered Sirius completely blown away by the admission.

Harry huffed quietly.

“Come on then, give me the potion,” said Sirius gruffly trying to stop the tears from falling.

Chapter End Notes

Hopefully I can still surprise you all ;) lol
Invisible

Chapter 55

One Potion Down

Sirius took the potion, his fingers and mind numb, he truly didn’t know what to do. His mother’s shrill voice rang in his mind, ‘never, ever accept a potion from someone you don’t know and definitely if you don’t know what it does’. There were a few people in St. Mungo’s due to untested potions affects. One still there if he remembered, he couldn’t talk; only bark, on second thought it might have been a spell. Harry was asking a lot from him, by testing an unknown potion. He knew though without a doubt, this was Harry’s way of testing him. Whether his godson knew that or not, it didn’t matter. Taking a deep breath, his mind yelling at him for doing this, and his heart was encouraging him. He opened the stopper, praying to Merlin and every deity watching over them that nothing happened to him. He threw back the potion before he could chicken out, which he was very close to doing.

Harry watched in fascination, he’d tested his first ever potion himself, it gave him the ability to breathe under water. The second one Eileen had tested, she’d been to far gone to actually consent to it. Fortunately both men had been extremely sure the potion would do no harm. They just hadn’t realized the potency of it until a few days ago. This was the first time he’d seen anyone reluctant to try his potions. Part of Harry was insulted, for most part he understood, anything could happen after all. Harry was admittedly ninety nine percent sure the potion would do as he expected. Which would open all Sirius Black’s potential Animagus’. Then it happened, one second Sirius Black was standing there human, next he was a black grim-like dog, then to Harry’s delight, it continued on as animal after animal appeared in front of him. Until the five had been shown, then Sirius Black returned and flopped to the floor, groaning as his butt protested heavily at the pain.

True to Sirius’ word, his Animagus’ had been - A badger, an Asp, a fly which Harry had a tough time seeing, before the chameleon had appeared. Harry was almost jumping up and down, he’d done it! The potion he’d worked on for so long had been successful the first time around. Ever since Severus had let him use the potion to uncover his Animagus forms he’d been trying to figure out how to succeed in breaking the one Animagus rule. He’d put it together only a month ago, then everything happened and he’d admittedly forgotten about it. With his Mastery end looming dangerously close, he had to test both of them.

“Er…are you alright?” asked Harry staring down at the man who he’d just revealed to still be his godfather. He felt rather awkward, and not forget tired. “Do you need anything?” he then sheepishly asked. Staring intently at all possible reactions to the potion. He would have to return to Prince Manor and write everything down; he hadn’t brought his things with him.

“I’ll be fine,” said Sirius, patting each inch of himself, relieved beyond belief that everything was still there. He was him again; he’d survived the potion - whatever it had done. It felt as though he’d turned into Padfoot for the first time all over again. Once he felt as if he could control himself, he held onto the counter and hoisted himself up, plopping down on the seat he’d been previously sitting in. “What exactly did that potion do?” he asked after a few seconds of silence passed.

“Shouldn’t you have asked that before you took it?” asked Harry chuckling wryly, sounding very much like Severus Snape, Sirius couldn’t help but notice.
“Probably,” said Sirius bluntly, reaching back, opening the fridge and taking out the container of
pumpkin juice and drinking from it in large gulps. All potions tasted absolutely disgusting, and
he’d just finished taking the potions to help heal the damage caused during the battle of the
Ministry as the papers had taken to calling it. Replacing the lid he absently put it back as he eyed
Harry curiously.

“It unlocked your Animagus’.” said Harry repeating what he’d told him earlier.
“Which means?” asked Sirius.

“Why don’t you try and turn into a Chameleon?” suggested Harry, he wanted to see if it had
worked the way he hoped or if the potion just turned them into it once before going back to normal.
He prayed that Black could turn into all his animals or his hard work was for nothing. Coming
here was for nothing as well, failure didn’t sit well with Harry who had felt it his entire life.

Giving Harry a strange look, but upon seeing he was serious he stood up once again and attempted
it. He felt the distinctive shimmer that gave way he’d turned into his Animagus form. Moving his
tongue out, he was mesmerised to see it long and thin not big and small as it was as Padfoot. He
could see in both directions, better than he could even as a human. His sense of smell was greatly
diminished though, one tick towards how useful ‘Padfoot’ was. A mirror was placed in front of
him, he couldn’t see himself, he was blending in with the fridge, and this was just awesome.
Excitement thrummed through him, excitement he’d not felt since leaving Hogwarts.

“Try another Animagus form,” said Harry, before adding “Stay as you are and try.”
Sirius closed his chameleon eyes…what other Animagus’ did he have? Oh yes, the Asp and he
tried.

“Brilliant,” hissed Harry without thought. Sirius was a red and black Asp; they were small but
extremely deadly.

Sirius reared back, “You’re a Parselmouth!” he hissed at the teenager having forgotten.

“Yeah,” hissed Harry, “I found out in my second year.”

“Oh yeah,” hissed Sirius sheepishly, before he turned to human form he had to admit as a snake it
was odd, not having legs or arms, he’d have to learn to ‘slither’ along.
“Can you still understand?” hissed Harry, out of sheer curiosity.
Sirius’ eyes widened, he could understand Harry still, despite the fact he was human. He knew it
was Parseltongue since he could hear the undercurrent of hissing in his voice. “Yes.” he tried
wondering if he could speak it. His reply was in English, but still, amazing. This potion had given
him the ability to understand Snake language, even when he wasn’t a snake himself. If he could
understand it though, why couldn’t he speak it? Maybe in time if he learned through speaking in his
snake form he’d be able to. Well needless to say his mother would have been proud; Parseltongue
was greatly desired gift by the Dark families.

“You can’t tell anyone about this potion yet, it’s to complete my Mastery.” said Harry; it wouldn’t
count it if ended up public knowledge. It’s why his Eileen’s potion or the potion to breathe under
water had not been useful in regards to using it to complete it.

“Can I at least tell Remus?” asked Sirius understanding Harry’s desire to keep it secret.

Harry stared at Sirius a blank look creeping over his face, the one thing he’d asked for and he
couldn’t even respect it? It was all right after all, it was just his career they were talking about. It
wasn’t every day people could brew potions, sure he’d successfully done three, but it had taken
him years. Only reason he’d been so quick with Eileen’s potion was because the woman he loved as a mother had been dying. He’d not eaten, slept, or rested until he’d come up with it. The only reason he did any of the above when researching it was when his hand had been forced.

“Fine, fine, I won’t tell anyone.” said Sirius throwing his hands up in surrender, and Harry hadn’t even said anything.

“Thank you,” said Harry a little bit of warmth returning to his face.

Sirius nodded glad to see Harry a little more welcoming again, his face had been rather intimidating. He would just have to wait to tell Remus, he didn’t like keeping secrets but needs a must. Harry trusted him, and he couldn’t allow himself to break that trust. No doubt Remus would understand, he was used to secrets, his lycanthrope had been kept secret since he was fifteen years old. “Does that mean I can come with you and prove your potion worked?” asked Sirius, he’d never cared about potions but if this was what it took to get close to Harry, he’d do it. Which reminded him of all the potions books he had in his library gathering dust.

“Since when did you care about potions?” asked Harry a bit scornfully, surprise flickering over his green eyes.

Sirius bit his tongue, stopping him from saying something Harry wouldn’t appreciate. It was a valid question but he didn’t like the way Harry was talking. Yet he couldn’t say anything about it, not unless he wanted to risk Harry not coming again. He wondered if it would always be this way? Half hidden scorn, veiled hatred…but didn’t he owe it to Harry and himself to try? He’d given up on Harry as a child…he couldn’t do it again now he was an adult. There would be no second chances, no nothing if he did. So he did his best to brush off the scorn, he could feel depressed when Harry was gone.

“I did need Potions N.E.W.T’S to get into the Auror academy.” Sirius pointed out quietly. “In fact I scraped an Exceeded Expectations.”

Harry nodded curtly conceding his point.

“Although you are right,” sighed Sirius, “Potions wasn’t my strongest or favourite subject. Our teacher had his favourites, we just faded into the background.” deciding not to mention the times he’d tried to sabotage Snape’s potion - that sure wouldn’t win him any favours with Harry.

“I know that feeling,” said Harry feeling a slither of sympathy for Black.

“Snape didn’t favour you?” asked Sirius surprised, then again he had hated all Potters…which brought him to think on how Harry had ended up apprenticed under Snape in the first place.

Harry sighed and shook his head, before replying. “Severus was only my teacher for one year, and that was just brewing first year potions. He left and was replaced with Professor Reese, he was a dickhead, and he favoured Nick just like everyone else. My potions were always perfect but I was always getting Troll or barely acceptable on my potions. If it wasn’t for Severus nobody would have taken me on. Not even if I paid for it I don’t think, which is what I had been doing with paper money I was saving up.” his voice showed just how much this would have affected him.

Sirius winced, he could imagine how Harry felt, by putting himself in similar situation, and if he himself hadn’t passed his potions N.E.W.T’s he wouldn’t have been able to be an Auror. It would have killed him, it’s all he’d wanted to do, both he and James actually. It wasn’t just them that had let Harry down, but nearly everyone he’d come into contact with he realized with regret. “How did you know Snape? I mean to become his apprentice?” enquired Sirius.
Harry stared at Sirius it was getting really personal, did he even want to tell him? Then he realized what was the harm in it really? As long as it didn't have anything to do with his secret he didn't really care much. No matter how friendly he and Black got in the coming months he'd never, ever tell him it was he who survived the killing curse that night not Nick. Then he remembered that nobody knew Eileen was Severus’ mother, did he risk telling Black? The wards in Prince Manor were secure; they’d remained strong during all the other wars.

“When I got the paper job, you know the ones going in Diagon Alley and Hogsmeade? I got close to the shop owner. She was nice to me, noticed me, she used to talk to me about things made me feel welcome. It continued for over a year, she’d try and catch me out in a lie.” chuckled Harry remembering his first few meetings with Eileen. “She knew I wasn’t happy, and then out of nowhere she offered me her spare bedroom. I took it, I didn’t return that summer…not that any of you noticed.”

Sirius just stared at the table, oh yes, he’d hear about it for years but if they eventually got passed it he’d consider it a job well done.

“She was the only one that wrote to me during the school year, she didn’t even care that I liked boys.” said Harry.

“Neither do your parents,” said Sirius blankly, James and Lily knew both he and Remus were gay, had known since they’d left Hogwarts.

“No? Should have seen the letter they sent me. I couldn’t include it in the ones I sent him, Viktor burnt it.” said Harry adamantly.

Sirius just stared at his godson completely bewildered, he would need to have a long chat with James - AGAIN.

“When I was in Malfoy’s dungeon…I thought about her a lot, when they dragged me out and Volde appeared…I thought I was dead. I closed my eyes and thought about her, wanting to see her again…wanting to be safe and I managed to Apparate to the flat. It was only then did I realize who she was, I’d never once asked her last name…” said Harry.

“Eileen, that’s how you got to know him.” said Sirius it dawned on him like lightning. His stomach clenched uncomfortably, he’d been grieving for his godson when he was being tortured. If only he hadn’t just taken things in the face of value and tried to find Harry. No matter what he wouldn’t forget what Nick had done, he’d put it behind him realizing he’d been terrified but never would he forget. Fourteen years old…Merlin how had he survived? He’d seen grown men break in lesser times in the hands of the Death Eaters. He also belatedly wondered why Harry had given Voldemort a bloody nickname!

“Yup.” said Harry. Once again wondering why he was sitting here happily talking to him? Oh yes, because his potion had worked, he was on cloud nine. He’d also promised to see him once a month, he didn’t break his promises. In hearts of hearts he wanted to be normal…wanted so badly to get rid of the hatred he had hanging around him. He doubted he’d forgive everyone, maybe Black and Lupin since they hadn’t been around. He’d forgive but Harry was most assuredly wasn’t ever going to forget.

“I am sorry Harry, you do know that don’t you? If I could turn back time I would do it in a heartbeat…I would have made sure you were happy…loved.” said Sirius his blue eyes filled with tears.

“When did you first feel guilt? When did you realize you hadn’t thought of me in years?” asked
Harry his face blank once again.

Breathing out he told Harry the truth, “When news reached us that you were supposed to be dead, the night of the Tri-Wizard tournament.”

“Why didn’t you get in touch?” asked Harry.

“Do you want the truth?” asked Sirius warily.

“Yes.” said Harry.

“Guilt, I just couldn’t write anything, I just threw myself into my work. It was Remus that knocked some sense into me, got me writing to you.” said Sirius. Ironically enough, afterwards he seemed resigned to the fact Harry wouldn’t come round. Now here he was Remus was never going to believe him.

Well at least he’d been guilty before he’d became well known, it made Harry feel a bit better about talking to Sirius. “I better get going.” he said, it was enough for one day.

“Wait, come with me.” said Sirius standing up, jogging towards his library, and going in. “I have potions books here that never get used…I can think of nobody more deserving of them. I know you will look after them and treasure them in a way that they deserve. They might even empire you, instead of just gathering dust.”

Harry threw Black a look full of incredulity, not sure whether to turn and walk away or grab as many books as he could! He already had all the potions books (copied) from Potter library, access to all the Prince potion books which by the way was many, since they were well known for their ability in potion making and spell casting incidentally as well.

“It’s not as if I’ll ever use them.” admitted Sirius when Harry just continued to stare obviously shocked. He could understand why, they’d been in his family for generations a lot of them were probably worth a lot of money. It’s not something most purebloods would do. Their library was as an important part of them as their magic was, the bigger the library and house the higher a status you were regarded in. Of course a lot of those traditions were dying down, especially with families dying out. Or the older generation not bothering to educate their children. He wished his own mother hadn’t! He stared around the room wistfully; then again he never expected to end up the last remaining heir to the Black fortune. His parents were probably rolling in their grave as well; he didn’t have to think ‘probably’ his mother was ‘kind’ enough to let him know what she thought every day. If only he could find a way to destroy the bitter old wrench.

“Sev has this one.” said Harry twenty minutes later as they were sifting through the books. Harry taking a great deal of care, some of them had been scrolls to begin with, before someone had them bound into book form. He could tell by how delicate they were. Gathering dust, he hadn’t been kidding, didn’t he have a house elf to keep the place clean? As more were pushed in his direction he realized Sirius hadn’t been kidding. He truly was going to let him have any book he wanted, and it made Harry admittedly feel a little warmer towards his godfather. He was truly trying to make amends and he did appreciate it.

“You are amazing, you know that don’t you?” said Sirius quietly. Wanting his godson to know how special he was, make up for not saying it all the times he should have.

Harry didn’t reply, he didn’t feel or think he was amazing, he just wanted to be normal…brew potions till his heart was content. Be with the man he loved beyond reason, he did love him, and every day he couldn’t show him was torture. It was more than just a crush; he knew that, he’d had
a crush on Viktor, what he felt for Severus was so much more. There were days Harry could barely contain it, but thankfully working towards his mastery sometimes distracted him. Sometimes he just wanted to parade around until he lost control, on the other hand he couldn’t do that to Severus. He had a ridged sense of right and wrong, and Harry couldn’t really let him abandon that. Both of them would just end up feeling guilty at the end of the day.

“You are, and I hope someone special helps you see that one day.” said Sirius determinedly.

It took everything in Harry not to show his smile, because he had found his special someone who made him feel amazing.

“Will you reply if I write to you?” asked Sirius when he got to reply.

“Don’t push it,” said Harry not shy in saying what he thought.

“Alright,” grumbled Sirius looking sheepish. He just though he’d try his luck while he could, that’s all.

“I really have to go,” said Harry, looking at the time in shock.

“Okay, you can use the Floo if you like.” said Sirius moving the desk aside again so Harry could use it.

“Thanks,” said Harry tiredly, shrinking the books and placing them safely in his cloak.

“Here,” said Sirius handing him a handful of Floo powder.

“Prince Manor!” shouted Harry, and he disappeared from view.

“Everything alright Harry?” asked Eileen from where she sat on the sofa.

“Yeah, fine.” said Harry giving her a smile.

“You look exhausted sweetie,” said Eileen as always concerned about all that Harry was taking on.

“I am,” admitted Harry slumping down beside her, stifling a yawn. He actually wanted to sleep right now. But he still had homework to do and reading for his next written exam which was coming up pretty soon. He didn’t know if he wanted to quit Hogwarts, not after all the effort that had gone into it so far. To do that would make all those months work for nothing, he could stop attending the defence classes, and since he wasn’t learning anything he didn’t already know. He could quit Care of magical creatures as well, that would leave only four classes, it would give him more hours to himself. In fact that’s exactly what he would do.

Harry slipped asleep without even meaning to or realizing it.
Chapter 56

Invisible

Chapter 56

Times Changing

Prince Manor - Harry, Eileen And Severus

Christmas and New Year come and gone, along with the colder weather, and what a sight Prince Manor had made. Covered in pure white snow, as far as the eye could see. Icicles hanging down from the roof. The Potion seeds and plants had been removed; they would be replaced in February for the New Year ahead which was only a few weeks away. The green houses were the only thing visible, since they had strong warming charms on them, the snow didn’t cling to the windows instead it was steam that did so. This year for Christmas Harry had received mostly shopping vouchers, since nobody really knew what to get him. Harry had everything he wanted, he told them and so they’d given him vouchers to get what he wanted when he wanted it. Neville was still subdued; he and his brother had spent Christmas in St. Mungo’s visiting their parents along with his girlfriend Luna.

“Come in,” said Harry when someone knocked on his door, it could only be one of two people, Eileen or Severus.

“Hello sweetie, how are you feeling today?” asked Eileen coming into the room with two mugs of coffee, placing one in front of him but away from the laptop. Harry had it running on magic, so it would never break down. There was a law against charming Muggle things, but Harry didn’t plan on letting anyone see or use it. The laws were more geared towards people purposely using them against Muggles, who would obvious find out about magic. She sat on his bed, which was filled with scrunched up paper and tissues he’d used yesterday. It was probably the messiest she’d ever seen his room, Harry was normally extremely neat, well they would think so if they didn’t see the mess he made of the Potions lab when he got into a project.

“Much better,” said Harry, Pepper up potions worked wonders on cold which was what he’d been suffering from for the past few days. In that time he’d also gotten his much needed rest, his body had certainly needed it. Not that it had all been rest, since Harry had been using his laptop to come up with another potion he needed to pass his Mastery. It was similar in the Muggle world he’d found out, you needed a dissertation or thesis after completing your Mastery to get your PHD in your chosen field or something similar like that, he wasn’t one hundred percent sure he’d read the information correctly. It may just to further in your chosen Mastery field. “Thank you.” he added gratefully drinking the hot brew.

“I’ve not seen you using that, are you able to work it?” asked Eileen after taking a small drink.

“I’ve been using it for ages; it’s much handier to change things instead of having to re-write everything down. Only when I’ve managed to successfully write a theory of a potion do I write it in the journal now.” said Harry sounding smug, he really loved the computer and was so glad Eileen had gotten it for him.

“Glad to see it’s not gone to waste,” said Eileen smiling proudly. Now that Harry no longer had written exams for his Mastery he could relax now. He’d written his last week, and would soon have his results, no matter what she was proud of him. You had to get more than eighty percent
right to qualify, but Harry was so good at potions he would pass, she was one hundred percent certain of it. Then all he had to do was succeed in brewing two potions for the Potions academic community to be considered a Master in his field. “How is your progress coming?” she asked in genuine curiosity, she loved potions as much as her boys.

“I’ve got one potion tested and proved, I just have to invent another,” said Harry, it was more difficult than he’d first assumed. His mind just went blank when thinking of something, anything really. He was beginning to understand why a few of them had been an apprentice for years. He was determined to do it, he wanted to pass his Mastery and get it over with so he could be with Severus when his birthday came around. He was already legally an adult, but that didn’t matter to Severus, he wanted to wait until Harry was actually an adult. His teenage mind petulantly groaned about Severus’ morals, but the grown up part knew he was doing the right thing.

“Maybe you should read some books, it might spark some ideas,” said Eileen, her black eyes twinkling slightly, Harry might not have said anything but she knew him. She could see he was getting irritated at his lack of progress on his second potion.

“I might have to,” groused Harry exasperated, as he finished his cup of coffee.

“Getting worked up won’t help you either, just relax, have some fun and let it come to you. I know it seems like a silly thing to do, but it works, it certainly worked for Severus.” said Eileen.

“What did he do?” asked Harry curious about him, a grin worming its way onto his face.

“I told him to relax so he went out and got drunk, woke up in the morning with a hang over and an idea for a potion.” said Eileen shaking her head in amusement. Thankfully her son didn’t make a habit of drinking; she’d had enough of dealing with drunken people during her marriage to Tobias. Her husband had been a violent drunk; she’d tried to protect Severus from him but for most part failed.

Harry laughed in amusement; it wasn’t something he could do, unless he got Cedric to buy him drinks. No maybe a nice quiet day by the fire, reading books would help him as Eileen had suggested. Severus was busy in the lab anyway; he had a contract with St. Mungo’s now. His potions were superior to those they’d got from another brewer, and so he had even more money coming in. The only down side was it took a lot of his time, St. Mungo’s was a hospital that was in constant demand. Thankfully though they had an additional two Potion Master’s working in their personal labs, staving off some additional work he’d have needed to do.

“Mother,” growled Severus beyond exasperated, standing at the door his arms crossed glaring at her but it was only half heartedly. He’d made some foolish decisions as a teenager, none more so than taking the Dark Mark. It wasn’t something he wanted Harry hearing about though; it brought home just how young Harry was. It gnawed on his conscience, yes Harry was mature, he seemed to know what he wanted, but at the end of the day he was only sixteen years old. He could no more deny him than he could cut out his own heart.

“What?” she said in feigned innocence.

Severus just sighed in annoyance shaking his head; mothers would always do their best to embarrass you one way or another.

“Have you finished already?” enquired Eileen changing the subject.

“For today,” said Severus, “How about you Harry?”

Harry just groaned closing his laptop having already saved it; it held all the results of the
Animagus unlocking potion. He had also written it down in his potion journal, which he carried everywhere with him, something he didn’t do with the laptop. “I’m just going to read; maybe something will come to me.”

“I thought you already had two,” stated Severus confused.

“The other idea didn’t work out,” said Harry shrugging his shoulders.

“I see,” said Severus, “I’m going to shower.” he added before leaving the room.

Harry bit his lip; he’d been dreaming about that for weeks now, the feeling of those hands cascading down him. Oh, no, not now, Harry thought chasing them away, not wanting to dwell on it. It was enough wakening up to wet sheets feeling like a twelve year old again. “Do you know where my blue cloak is?” asked Harry, looking around his room, the Black books were still shrunk and in his pocket. They’d been there for months, he’d had other books to read and forgotten about them. Plus the fact he’d had to read books related to his Mastery questions.

“I believe it’s on the back of your chair in the sitting room,” said Eileen, and they say you forgot things as you got older? Evidently it wasn’t true.

“Thank you!” said Harry gratefully, grabbing his cup before leaving the room, Eileen came with him.

Harry grabbed his cloak, and felt inside, grabbing out the box he had shrunk within it. With experience he flicked his wand out and returned it to its normal state. Dozens of books lay within, all of them ones that neither he nor Severus had. It would make a wonderful addition to the library.

“Dobby?” called Eileen, sitting down comfortably.

“Yes Ma’am?” asked Dobby his green eyes seeking hers.

“Two more coffees and slices of Severus’ birthday cake please.” said Eileen, Severus’ birthday had just passed, and he’d celebrated it with quietness as he always did. He hated big shows of affection, so it had been a mostly quiet day, but Harry had bought him a large cake (much to Severus’ gratefulness refraining from putting his age across it). He had received Christmas cards and Flourish and Blotts vouchers from his acquaintances from the Potions Master community, lemon drops from the Headmaster, a book and whiskey from Minerva, a bottle of wine from Flitwick, two books from his mother and two new cauldrons, rods and of course dragon hide gloves she’d noticed was getting faded. Harry had gotten him new robes that had added protections that had just come out on the market, keeping him safe from anything harmful while brewing. More importantly he’d translated a book by Salazar Slytherin for him, by hand since there was no spell to translate Parseltongue. It didn’t have any secret potions but it was about potions and Severus had begun reading it immediately, not once putting it down.

“Yes Mistress Eileen, Dobby will be doing it right now,” said Dobby before disappearing again.

“What did you get these?” asked Eileen staring at the titles of the books. The spines were faded and worn, like all old books were age did that to anything. Some though were in nearly impeccable condition, and looked to be worth quite a lot of money. “Did you find them in the Peverell vaults?”

“No, Black gave them to me,” admitted Harry.

“Black? Sirius Black?” whispered Eileen surprised, she knew that name and loathed it with every fibre of her being. He had nearly killed her son, and she’d never forgive or forget it. If she had been strong enough she’d have Apparated to Hogwarts and given the boy a punishment he wouldn’t
have forgotten. Her son hated him just as much, they had put it aside. Or rather he’d ignored his existence during the war. Ending the first war had been more important to Severus, despite the taunts Black continued to spout.

Harry nodded, “I went to see him, he tested my potion and it worked it was before Christmas.”

“You worked things out with him?” asked Eileen, putting her personal distaste for Black aside, Harry needed to let go of his anger if he wanted a normal life not one filled with hatred. She knew what dark path it led down to be filled with spite, it had happened to her own son and she’d realized it only too late. She had of course stood by him, as any mother would and should do for her son. After all it was partly her fault; if she’d just had the courage to leave Tobias Severus would never have ended up with a bitter outlook about Muggles.

Harry scratched at his head in self consciousness, as he thought about how to reply. “Well, we did speak for a little while, we will never be really close.” he stated surely and confidently.

“Why not?” asked Eileen, “From what I can gather neither Black nor Lupin were around.” they weren’t as much at fault as the Potter’s.

“They still forgot about me, and Lupin ignored me during my third year, he didn’t even say hello once.” said Harry adamantly. No he wasn’t going to give them another chance to mess with his feelings, well maybe just Black, since he did seem repentant for what he done. He’d seen genuine guilt in his eyes and added to the fact he was keeping him close in the only way he could, framing his accomplishments made Harry’s heart soften towards the Animagus. He would go for a few months, talk to him but they will as he’d already said, ever be close. Lupin with guilt or not would never be forgiven he didn’t care if it was petulant it’s just how he felt and nothing would change it.

“So he gave you books from the personal Black Library?” asked Eileen changing the subject.

“Here you are Mistress Eileen,” said Dobby placing the tray on the table before leaving.

“Yeah,” said Harry, he’d been too tempted so he didn’t tell Black to throw his offer where the sun didn’t shine.

Harry read the back of the books, before deciding on the one he wanted to read first. Sitting himself comfortably by the roaring fire breathing deeply. He’d never done this with the Potter’s, in fact apart from meals he was hardly in their presence spending it all in his room. This was a novelty that hadn’t quite worn off, reading at the fire with people he considered his family surrounding him. He could do it forever and forget the outside world, which unfortunately wasn’t something he could do. The war was beginning to show, attacks were becoming more frequently. Soon they would be common place if he didn’t do something about it. The smell of a book, smoke, hearing the crackle of the flames and the odd occasional nose as he immersed himself in the book by Patricia Nott.

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Hogwarts - James and Sirius

“You and me need to talk,” said Sirius gravely staring at James, both of them was in Hogwarts, it would be the last day there. The new building was now finished and ready for them to start the move back, which the night shift would be doing. It would probably take them a few days to settle back in, but they’d get there. Neither Rome nor the wizarding world was built in a day, they’d continue on as they must. They would show Voldemort they weren’t easily brought down, and if he wanted to take over - he would need to do with everyone kicking and screaming. He’d been meaning to talk to James about this, but had put it off constantly between overtime, fighting the bad guys, and having things to do on their own…well he’d forgotten about it in all honesty.

“What have I done now?” grumbled James as he was manhandled by his friend into a classroom.
Which wasn’t being used at the moment.

Sirius sat down, still having pains in his side from time to time, especially after working all day. He refused to take more potions, otherwise he wouldn’t be considered ‘fit to work’ and have to take more time off. He stared at James who was bewildered with confusion, wondering what he’d done this time. “Remus and I are seeing each other,” said Sirius, James was the first person to know.

“I gathered as much,” grinned James, “Your stuff was together when I went to pack some clothes for you when you were at St. Mungo’s.”

“You are okay with it?” enquired Sirius.

“Of course! It’s about time.” said James his brown eyes gleaming, obviously very happy for Sirius and Remus. He had wondered why they hadn’t told him, or even acted like they were seeing each other - well he didn’t have to wonder anymore.

Sirius rubbed at his forehead, deeply troubled.

“Are you having problems?” asked James in sympathy.

“Problems? Not relationship ones, just a problem figuring you out.” said Sirius, he believed Harry. He wasn’t one for lying, he told the truth whether they liked to hear it or not. For most part he didn’t like hearing what his godson had to say, although they did have a polite conversation a few months ago. He had written every month, telling him about his progress and things but not coming over. Sirius understood though, he was busy, too busy for his own good. He had much to his surprise received a card at Christmas, no present but the card…had meant the world to him, he was getting there with Harry bit by bit. It was certainly a record since Harry hadn’t spoken to him for years not even to reply to his letters.

“What?” said James taken aback, wondering what the hell was going on now. “What does that mean? Is this about me pulling Nick out of Hogwarts?” it was three months ago nearly why bring it up now?

Sirius snorted in amusement. “No, how did you find out Harry was gay?” asked Sirius.

James stared at Sirius warily, “Nick wrote to us, it was during their fourth year.”

“How did you react?” demanded Sirius, his blue eyes cold and ice, he wasn’t about to let James lie to him.

James sighed, sitting down opposite from Sirius, keeping a table between them, just in case. That was one thing he was grateful for, that the letter Lily had written to Harry in his fourth year had been missing from the pile, and hadn’t been mentioned in his letter stating all the reasons he hated him. “Lily was very upset about it, more of a reflection on her feelings for Harry than the fact he was gay. At that point I think we were just looking for anything that would make the magical world think badly of Nick.”

“What did you both write?” asked Sirius.

James stared at the table, swallowing the lump in his throat, “That he was an embarrassment to the Potter name, that we should have disowned him when he was twelve. That he should just drop out of the tournament and stop letting us and his brother down.” said James.

“Letting his brother down?” echoed Sirius tiredly.
“Nick was…fascinated with Viktor, wanted to be friends with someone who would understand the burden he was under. To be perfect all the time, being in the papers constantly and things like that. He blamed Harry for taking that away from him, told us that he’d been saying things about him behind his back.” said James. “I realize it was a lie now, but back then I really thought the worst of Harry, more fool me.” his voice filled with bitterness and self discrimination. No if anything Harry had turned out the most decent of them all, and it was nothing to do with him whatsoever.

“Well maybe Harry took what you said to heart, and bet you to the punch,” said Sirius his lips twitching in bitter amusement. It would make sense, then at the same time leave them without a penny and make them learn a second lesson while they were at it. Oh at the time he’d been shocked with Harry’s actions, until he realized the extent of the damage they’d inflicted on their own son…now he was just amazed and amused.

“He did,” said James ashamed and ashen. “Two weeks later he was emancipated and the head of the family, taking on the Peverell name.”

“If it was me in all honesty at that age James…I’d have not only left you penniless but nameless.” said Sirius, he’d loathed his family, well maybe not his brother, who he had just been jealous of. Regulus has been everything he wasn’t, eager to please the family, getting all the attention after ending up in the ‘correct’ house.

“I know,” said James bleakly of that he had no doubt, Sirius had not made it a secret how he felt about his parents or whole family come that.

“Have you been to see Lily yet?” asked Sirius bluntly.

James shook his head negatively, “I cannot do it, I’ve tried but I can’t.”

“How are the kids? Aren’t they asking to see her?” enquired Sirius, despite everything she’d done Lily had loved Roxy and Nick completely, no doubt this was very hard on them.

“Actually they haven’t asked, well Roxy has but it was only to know if we were going to remain together.” said James messing up his hair, a nervous habit he’d started as a young boy.

“And are you?” said Sirius curious himself.

“She used an unforgivable Sirius, my mind tells me she’s no better than Bellatrix Lestrange…but my heart…my heart hurts all the time.” said James looking drained. “We’ve been together for such a long time; part of me will never stop loving her.”

“I realize that,” agreed Sirius quietly.

“It’s difficult, but I’ll get by,” said James strengthening his resolve.

“We will all help,” said Sirius, “How’s Nicks training going?”

“Good so far, I suggested getting in Remus full time but Nick wasn’t very amendable to the idea,” said James wrly, his fingers carding through his hair. “There’s nobody else I’d trust other than you to help, so I’m on my own.”

“Why not ask?” asked Sirius blinking in confusion.

“I guess I assumed you’d say no, I mean you’re working a lot lately.” said James. It wasn’t for money since he had the entire Black fortune. Sirius had never needed money, he could have quit as an Auror years ago but he hadn’t. Sirius saw it as his duty to help his world; it’s why he was an Auror and Order member.
“I can take night shift duty and teach him for a few hours in the morning, you can do it for a few hours in the evening. It’s important he learns everything he can; I want to see him come out on top. We can be there for him every step of the way…but he has the strike the death blow. I wish there was a way to do it, but it seems like it’s meant to be Nick isn’t it?” sighed Sirius. He remembered his first kill; it wasn’t something you ever forget. It was two nights after it happened that it dawned on him how lucky the nightmares hadn’t started at the age of sixteen…seeing Snape killed or Remus ‘put down’. It had horrified him but of course the hatred between himself and Snape had burned deep within them by this point - there was just no going back.

“Believe me, I know.” said James, he would saw his own hands off if it meant Nick didn’t have to kill someone. Unfortunately it just wasn’t meant to be, what happened when Nick was one was proof of that, his son was destined to kill Lord Voldemort and be a great wizard one day. He just wished he hadn’t screwed up so badly, but the knowledge he’d almost lost Nick had nearly crippled him, and that he still could had made him want to spend each possible minute with him. Their attention on Nick had started innocently enough, until they became obsessed with it.

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Lily Potter - Minimum Security - Azkaban Prison
A red haired woman lay curled up on the bed furthest corner from the door, in one very troubled sleep. Even down here in minimum security she could feel the presence of the Dementors. It was as though they were drawn to her, and kept coming as close as they could without leaving their patrolling area. None of the guards seemed to care two hoots about it either, merely conjuring mists half an hour later to get rid of them. At first she’d had a cell mate, after a dozen fights she’d been placed on her own. For that Lily was thankful, so was her hair come to that since it was her cell mate’s favourite target. Large clumps of it were gone, you could see that. She wasn’t popular, not once the guards had let it ‘slip’ why she was in prison. Trying to use the Cruciatus Curse on her son? Well it was little wonder she was targeted. You would be surprised by how alike Muggle and Magical prisons were.

A loud series of clangs brought Lily out of her sleep with a jump. “Get up!” four others were getting the same treatment without the deafening loudness.

“James!” said Lily as she woke up.

“Move, face the door.” said the Witch impatiently.

Lily did as she was told immediately, she’d learned the most humiliating way that they didn’t take no for an answer. They were the ones with the wands now after all, and they weren’t afraid to use them. Especially not on prisoners after all who could they complain to? Nobody.

The door was opened and the prisoners were led down to the showers. As they walked, one prisoner stuck their foot out at the last second, causing Lily to go flying to the floor.

“You should watch your step,” said the woman scowling as she stepped over her form making sure to kick her as she did so.

“Get up!” yelled one of the guards, whether she’d seen it or not was anyone’s guess.

Lily immediately scrambled to her feet, holding her tongue and temper, knowing it would get her nowhere. As quick as it had come, it was gone again. She stayed as far behind as possible, before diving into the small shower and cleaned herself as quickly as possible. Relishing in the warmth the shower provided, not that it lasted long. Five minutes then the water went cold on them forcing them out of it otherwise lose the warmth they’d just retained. The shower was pointless, since she had to put the same outfit back on. She waited until everyone else was lined up once showered and
dried before joining them, as she always did after she was met with an accident in the hallway. Sometimes she wasn’t lucky enough and had to endure it the entire way there and back.

“What day is it today?” asked one of the prisoners.

“Monday,” said one of the female guards.

“Is my son visiting?” the same one asked her breathing hitched.

“I believe so,” was her reply.

“Is James coming?” asked Lily quietly. She knew the answer, but she just had to ask, she didn’t understand why he wasn’t visiting her. It wasn’t as if she was in the most secure wing of Azkaban, she wasn’t dangerous or surrounded by Dementors. She missed her kids, missed James…she couldn’t wait to get out of here. She had kept mark of the days in her cell on a free part of the wall. Counting down the days until she was free of this hell hole, but she did count her lucky stars that she wasn’t here longer. Even her therapist couldn’t stand the sight of her, he stayed exactly one hour asking the same questions as if expecting a different answer then left.

“No, he is not.” was Lily’s answer.

Swallowing the lump in her throat, she was the only one who didn’t have someone visiting, and it made her feel so alone.

“Do you have a copy of the Daily Prophet?” was asked.

“You know the rules; you only get it once a week. On Friday.” said the guard but everyone noticed her sliding the paper between the bars winking.

“What’s happening out there?” asked the girl (Sandy) closest to the one who’d received the newspaper once they were all back in their cells and the guards had left them to eat their breakfast. Which was not much at all, a piece of dry toast, a boiled egg, strip of bacon and one tiny sausage. It could be worse, yesterdays breakfast had been a bowl of lumpy porridge.

“He’s attacking again,” said Patty, sounding subdued. “My family is out there.” she choked seconds later.

“And it’s my son that’s going to have to defeat him!” snarled Lily finding her bite at last.

“Don’t worry honey, you only have two months left,” said Sandy soothing Patty as best as she was able. Everyone had ignored Lily’s words as if she didn’t exist, which unfortunately happened all the time. The women there all loathed Lily, especially since she’d done something worse than them and received only a fraction of their sentences. They were determined not to show her any favours in here.

“If anything happens to them I’ll never forgive myself,” said Patty, tossing Sandy the newspaper not wanting to read anything else right now. She had used magic on a Muggle and got caught, after the way the boy treated her daughter he deserved it. Now though she just wanted to get home, to her husband and daughter. Her sister brought her Muggle husband and magical daughter to see her; they couldn’t have come any other way.

Lily sobbed quietly; she wouldn’t forgive herself either if anything happened to her family. Not only was her husband an Auror but an order member and the boy who lived’s father, it made him a triple target along with herself and Roxy. Rocking back and forth reminding herself she only had to ensure this for a further seven months.
Chapter 57

Invisible

Chapter 57

The Harry I’ve created isn’t a genius, he’s worked hard to accomplish all he has, reading and training to be the best he can. Wanting to prove himself better, to be remembered, and he’s accomplished that. He’s worked his arse off to gain his potions Mastery and his O.W.L’s as well - this is what I wanted to show in this story, not for him to be seen as a genius. He’s had help from others to get where he is today, ranging from Eileen, Severus to a house elf who gave him ideas. Being good at a few subjects doesn’t make you a genius :D that’s like me saying that because I went to college and know my way around computers and being creative that I am a genius ;) which by the way I can reassure you I am not :D Just thought I’d point this out.

Harry’s Second Potion

The next few weeks passed rapidly as the changing weather, Harry spent every second of his time immersed in Potion books or brewing when he wasn’t being trained by Severus for the upcoming war. Severus had admitted there wasn’t much he could still teach him, but did continue to train him so his reflexes didn’t get slower, and he would remain in top form. Harry was determined to come up with his second potion before the next Potions conference, which incidentally was also the same week as his birthday. This was when most Potions Masters preferred presenting their work, it gave the new product publicity, and a chance for people to buy it. Which was inevitably what it was all about, publicity, inventions and proving worthy. It also gave Harry a chance to return to Egypt, which was where the next conference was taking place once again. It was no wonder they chose the beautiful country, it was one of the oldest and where potions had been invented. Most people would mistake that potions had been invented in Rome, but they were wrong. Each day they were recovering books and magical artefacts to sell or put on display in their museums, pillaging in the name of preservation as it were. In fact Harry had bought a potions scroll from William (call be Bill) Weasley, who is a curse breaker, he had previously worked in Egypt. He’d been selling it through Gringotts, so no doubt the goblins got commission for it as well.

“I’ve been called to an Order meeting, I’ll see you in a few hours,” said Severus reading a missive.

“Be careful,” said Eileen, as always worried about her child, there was a war going on so it was little wonder. The newspaper reported more and more deaths as the weeks went by. Not only in the Muggle world, but unfortunately families in the magical world were being stuck down also. Mostly those who openly opposed the Dark Lord, as everyone knew, nobody survived to tell the tale of Lord Voldemort. A great deal of them had worked in various departments in the Ministry, being attacked at home rather than in the open. Severus had a walking target on his back, he’d openly defied Voldemort, admitted spying on him. She knew without a doubt that the evil wizard was just waiting to strike against her son. If for only one reason she was grateful to her parents, it would be this, giving him his true inheritance. It kept him safe within the wards of Prince Manor, so the Dark Lord was unable to find him.

“I will,” said Severus seriously, he hadn’t survived this long without being careful. Grabbing his cloak he put it on, deciding against putting his closed robes on. He hadn’t been wearing them since leaving Hogwarts, he had no reason to. He no longer had to intimidate the students into paying attention and doing as they were told. The order members didn’t half stare though, they were used to only seeing him in his robes, well those who had been in the Order the last time around.
“Bye,” said Harry still immersed in his book, but he did give Severus one look of worry before returning to it. Severus knew how to duel better than anyone, he could hold his own. He had to believe that, he was pretty sure Severus wouldn’t appreciate being told not to go. No, Severus had his pride, and if anyone understood that it was Harry. Its all he’d had his entire life, his pride, his accomplishments and of course them, Severus and Eileen. Without them, he knew he couldn’t have accomplished all he had.

Severus strode from the manor with purpose, his wand as always concealed up his twist, with anti-summoning spells weaved inside the holster. He never went anywhere without it, and slept with it under his pillow despite the fact the manor was as safe as it would ever be. Unfortunately it was deep-seated in Severus’ mind; he’d been doing it for years before coming here. Hogwarts may be the safest place in the world, but it wasn’t because of the wards, no it was said because of the simple fact that Albus Dumbledore was there. As much as Severus trusted Dumbledore, he certainly didn’t trust everyone within Hogwarts halls.

Apparating his destination in mind, he found himself there, thinking deeply, a building appeared out of nowhere, like a shimmering waterfall. He wondered if Potter would be making an appearance, he’d never admit it but the fool had become tolerable. He was no longer insufferable, sitting smugly, being the centre of attention just because he was Nick Potter’s father. Nor was he making himself out to be the victim, he just seemed to prefer to fade into the background these days. It had taken his entire family being torn apart but he’d grown up.

“Ah, Severus, I’m glad you could make it,” said Dumbledore smiling at the wizard, his eyes twinkling for the first time in a long time. He truly was fond of the man, and he missed their regular meetings, finding out what he was doing and accomplishing. Instead he was finding out from the newspapers and Potions Journals he read.

“Indeed,” said Severus arching an eyebrow as he took a seat, it’s the first time he’d been in Grimmauld Place in a long time. His eyes were drawn to the framed newspaper clippings about Harry; even in the pictures Harry was trying to avoid attention. He was one of those people who loved what he did because he wanted to help people and genuinely loved potions. There weren’t many people out there like that, and it’s what drew Severus in like a moth to the flame. There was a few people missing, more noticeably the empty chairs that once belonged to Frank and Alice Longbottom.

“Has anyone seen Kingsley Shacklebolt?” asked Albus looking deeply troubled, word had reached him he hadn’t been at his job for two days. Nobody had seen him or heard from him, he’d gone to the wizards home, to find it empty and no sign that Kingsley had been home recently.

“Nothing, I’ve tried looking for him everywhere,” said Tonks.

“He’s targeting Order members again isn’t he?” stated Moody, his face darkening, fury bubbling over boiling point. “I think Madam Bones wasn’t the target of the attack…with the way it’s going he’s started to destroy us.” Emmeline Vance had been killed, but they’d assumed she was a casualty of the war, but not…with more Order members being targeted it was looking to be retribution. Frank, Alice and now apparently Shacklebolt, Merlin, how many were going to be killed this time? He closed his eyes, the image of each Order member killed by the Dark Lord the last time flashing before him laughing and happy unaware of their fate.

Benjy Fenwick, Caradoc Dearborn, Dorcas Meadowes, Edgar Bones and his entire family. Fabian and Gideon Prewitt, Molly’s brothers. Marlene McKinnon and her family as well, such horrible deaths they were, as a battle hardened Auror, it was saying something coming from him. Fear and worry began to reflect on the faces around the table, they hadn’t thought about it if they were
honest. Now that Moody had spoken, they began to put the pieces together…each attack corresponded with an Order member being killed or severely attacked. The thing about the Order though, was they stiffened their resolve, refusing to back down, determined to see it through to the end.

“Shacklebolt is strong, he’s resourceful, if anyone can make it back its him.” said Severus, in a rare move of what? Offering comfort to others. Well there was a first for everything, even Albus gave Severus a curious look, and he’d normally sneer at such sentimentality or worry for their fellow members. After all they knew what they were getting themselves into when they joined. “We do not know what’s happened, until we have proof I suggest we search for him, we cannot afford to lose anymore members. Its tantamount of letting the Dark Lord win, we look after our own it’s what separates us from him.”

“Very well said Severus,” said Albus his voice filled with awe and pride. Severus could have sold ice to an Eskimo, he was that good, but instead usually chose to cut everyone to pieces with scorn. If there was anyone who could deal with taking over the Order it was Severus. That much was obvious, he had calmed the Order down with just a few sentences. Made them stiffen their resolve, determination radiated from all of them.

“Hagrid has left Albus, he wanted me to let you know, and I saw him when he was leaving.” said Minerva remembering the half giants wishes.

“That is good, hopefully they will have more success this time, especially with knowledge of what happened to others of their brethren.” said Albus, his eyes shining with hope.

“Where is he going?” asked Bill curiously, and during the school year as well? Did that mean they were getting a new Care of magical creature’s teacher AND Keeper of Key’s?

“He and Olympe Maxime are travelling to see the Giant’s again, we are hoping to get them on our side, or at least remain away from the war and out of Voldemort’s reach.” said Dumbledore, “With a few of them dying the most we can do is hope they refrain from sending him more. With a little luck, things will go out way this time.” his exasperation showing, Hagrid certainly came with challenges. Dragons in his hut, Acromantula’s in the forbidden forest, now his giant brother Gawp, with Olympe would rein him in and not let him return with his cousins or uncles next, heaven forbid. He did regret not being able to do more for Hagrid, such as ensure he wasn’t expelled for something Albus knew he didn’t do. Unfortunately without definitive proof he was unable to protest the half-giant innocence. Even if he had protested it, Albus didn’t think it would have come to much; back then with creature blood had been barely tolerated. Not that it was much better these days, he thought darkly; in fact for some creatures it was worse. Especially for werewolf’s whom Delores Umbridge had tried to pass legislations to have them ‘put down’ of all the horrendous things he’d read, that was by far the worst he’d heard. Innocent people being killed for something they’d been inflicted with against their will. No, Remus had chosen his friends well, and James Potter had heavily protested against it resulting in the laws being denied.

“They better succeed,” said Arthur, “Or there really will be no coming back for them, they won’t just be exiled anymore, they will be hunted down and killed. The Ministry has taken their attack personally; with so many people dying I can understand that, there will be an outcry. Wizards will swarm around and try and take as many of them out as possible it will be a rebellion.” which could end up resulting in a war between wizards and giants, as if the wizard and goblin wars hadn’t been bad enough.

“I am aware of this problem,” admitted Dumbledore rubbing his temples, showing just how exhausted he actually was. With everyone trying to get him to help them, he never truly had a minute’s peace. With other things also on his mind, well he wasn’t just physically exhausted but
mentally as well. With the war with Voldemort looming dangerously on the horizon they couldn’t afford a different kind of war to emerge. It may very well put the colony right in the Dark Lord’s hands, something he would give his eyes to see not to happen.

“Voldemort has been stepping up his attacks lately,” said Minerva, “It won’t be long before he’s attacking Hogwarts itself.” her worry for the school and more importantly its students deep in her voice. Hogwarts had been her home for so many years, more so than anywhere else. Given the destruction heaped upon the Ministry building, she was right to fear for the school. The Order was so small compared to what they estimated Voldemort’s army to be.

“He won’t attack Hogwarts,” said Albus with reassurance, “If anything he will attempt to kill me first, you can worry about Hogwarts if that does come to pass.”

“Albus!” admonished several of the women in unison at his words; they dreaded to think of such a thing happening to their leader.

“You must take care and keep a watchful eye,” said Albus grimly changing the subject. “Any sign even if it turns out to be false alarm should be reported. As Severus so eloquently put, we look after our own, only then can we hope to succeed.” he really didn’t want a repeat of the last war, they had succeeded but with a great cost to many of the Order members.

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Two hours later the Witches and Wizards began dispersing from Grimmauld Place, having duties and other more pressing matters to attend. Most of the Order members had jobs and families, so they weren’t always able to help when calls came in. Despite their earlier convictions, they were terrified they were next on Voldemort’s hit list. After what happened to Alice and Frank it was no surprise, what happened to them was worse than death. The fact Eileen’s potion had helped them (even if only a little) has been a closely guarded secret.

“James can you stay behind for a minute?” asked Albus, his look hopeful as he gazed at the Auror. “Fine,” said James with less bite than usual when it came to Dumbledore, well in the past four months anyway.

“Sirius, Remus can you give us a minute?” requested Dumbledore politely.

“They can stay, it is their house after all, and this won’t take long.” said James retaking a seat, closer to the door this time.

“How is Nick?” asked Dumbledore his face contrite and hopeful.

“He’s fine,” replied James tersely.

“Recovering well?” questioned the Headmaster ignoring the tense and angry replies.

Sirius and Remus just felt extremely awkward sitting there listening to this. On one hand they understood James’ actions, but they also knew Dumbledore really only did what was best. They were beginning to see though, that the ‘best’ might not be in one person’s interest but the needs of many. Years ago they might have agreed the needs of many outweighed the needs of a few. Unfortunately not when it came to people they loved.

“Better than he would have in your care,” said James blankly. He hated being this way with Albus, after everything they’d been through. Yet his son came first, he couldn’t allow it to be any other way. He’d already lost one son and his wife, well he wasn’t about to lose his two remaining kids.
“James…” sighed Albus heavily, “I am sorry, I acted stupidly, only in a misguided attempt at making sure your son had the best opportunities and chances of surviving. I went about things wrongly; I know that, I can only apologize for not taking this more seriously. Nick will understand one day, when people contact him for help every hour of the day. I would like a chance to make it up to both of you.” he didn’t really mean to manipulate everyone around him, it just happened really. Nick was the only hope the magical world had, so he was going to make sure the young man was ready to face Voldemort.

“I can understand why you did it Albus, but he’s MY son, MY responsibility and I will make sure he survives.” said James his anger wilting against the Headmaster. James knew the kind of pressure Albus was under, he saw all the letters and calls for aid and how often the old Minister had written to him. He was powerful yes, but seeing him right now made it all to clear he was just human. A man who desperately wanted the war to end, along with everyone else who wasn’t a Death Eater in Magical Britain.

“I can help James, I know Voldemort better than any other, I can predict his moves, and I will be invaluable to him. It could save his life, this is what you want isn’t it?” urged Dumbledore, playing to James’ weaknesses.

“It is, you know that Albus,” said James warning in his voice, he knew what the Headmaster was doing.

“It’s a good idea actually,” said Sirius piping in, ignoring the glare James sent his way. “Me and Albus could train him, that way he will gain more experience and observe real duels.” what he didn’t say was that he didn’t want Dumbledore left with Nick. He was still recovering from the core split.

The unspoken reluctant agreement passed between James and Sirius.

“Fine, but he isn’t to be left alone with Nick,” said James, making no attempt at discretion.

“You won’t regret it James, I will make it up to both of you for my lapse of judgement.” swore Dumbledore his eyes filled with regret and remorse. Everyone he cared about had distanced themselves from him and he hated it. Severus, most of all, who didn’t approve of his actions regarding Nick Potter and of course Harry.

“We shall see,” said James impassively.

“I am sorry but I must dash,” said Albus, “There are things I need to do.”

James nodded curtly, not moving wanting to converse further with Sirius and Remus.

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“Healer Smith?” asked Harry knocking on his door. Observing the long blonde haired man curiously, his blue eyes were filled with compassion but tiredness. He was extremely thin and tall much like Severus.

“Yes?” called the healer sounding surprised, he had no further appointments who could be here? He had rounds to start doing, so he didn’t have a lot of time.

“Hi, my name is Harry Peverell; can I speak to you for a minute? I’m sorry for intruding on your lunch,” said Harry standing at the door waiting for the decision to be made.

“Of course, please sit,” said Healer Smith surprised, there was nobody in the magical world who
hadn’t heard of Harry and his potion. They were all in awe of what it could accomplish; it was certainly a surprise, probably to them as well. The young man sounded older and wiser than his age indicated. He was sixteen years old, not far from seventeen years of age.

“You know about Eileen’s Potion? And how it’s helped the Longbottom’s yes?” queried Harry smiling gratefully as he took his seat.

“I do,” said the Healer making no attempt to cover his awe, watching the young boy blush evidently not accustomed to the praise.

“Neville has commissioned me to create a potion to help his parents, I’ll be using Eileen’s potion as a base for it. What I need to know is what part of the brain has been affected? Well actually I need to know everything about the brain too.” said Harry sounding sheepish. “If you can spare five minutes to help I really would appreciate it.”

Smith’s eyes widened at the words coming from Harry’s mouth, he wanted to try and reverse the damage done through the Crucius Curse? That was no small feat, if he did this it would be the biggest breakthrough in medical science in a very long time. He wasted no time in replying, “I have thirty minutes I can spare, it’s a worthy cause after all, so you want to know everything about the brain?” he asked sitting up professionally.

“If you don’t mind,” said Harry, taking a break from his other duties to do this.

"The brain is one of the most complex and magnificent organs in the human body. Our brain gives us awareness of ourselves and of our environment, processing a constant stream of sensory data. It controls our muscle movements, the secretions of our glands, and even our breathing and internal temperature. Every creative thought, feeling, and plan is developed by our brain. The brain’s neurons record the memory of every event in our lives." said Healer Smith.

Harry nodded he understood, he had wanted a more detailed report than that, but considering the wizard was doing him a favour he'd be rude to interrupt.

"There are different ways of dividing the brain anatomically into regions. I'll use a common method and divide the brain into three main regions based on embryonic development: the forebrain, midbrain and hindbrain." explained the Healer.

"Wait, I'm sorry to interrupt, may I use my quill record everything you are saying? I'd like to read it over later - make sure I do not forget." asked Harry.
"Of course," said Smith agreeably.

"The prosencephalon or forebrain is made up of our incredible cerebrum, thalamus, hypothalamus and pineal gland among other features. Neuroanatomists call the cerebral area the telencephalon and use the term diencephalon or interbrain to refer to the area where our thalamus, hypothalamus and pineal gland reside." said Smith.

Harry just stared at him, he may as well have been speaking gobblygook, he didn't understand at all.

"The midbrain (or mesencephalon), located near the very center of the brain between the interbrain and the hindbrain, is composed of a portion of the brainstem." said Smith, flipping through a book and placing it on the table, and repeating what he said gesturing to what he was talking about.

"The hindbrain (or rhombencephalon) consists of the remaining brainstem as well as our cerebellum and pons. Neuroanatomists have a word to describe the brainstem sub-region of our
hindbrain, calling it the myelencephalon, while they use the word metencephalon in reference to our cerebellum and pons collectively.” said Healer.

"The hindbrain is for emotion right? It makes us who we are?” said Harry a little intimidated by the way he'd spoken. It made him feel like five years old, perhaps he should have read a book...brains for dummies maybe.

"It is,” said Smith nodding proudly, not many people knew this.

"Could that be what is wrong with them? They have no problem walking, doing things they are told...it’s the hindbrain I have to research!” exclaimed Harry slapping his forehead for not thinking about it sooner.

"Not necessarily, the hindbrain or brain stem largely centres around the nerves, or it could very well be the Cerebellum, but you could very well be right." said Smith watching Harry's eyes light up, he was truly passionate about this project.

"Okay, so the tissue in the brain?” said Harry collecting himself.

Smith smiled, before continuing on, "The tissue of the brain can be broken down into two major classes: grey matter and white matter. Gray matter is made of mostly unmyelinated neurons, most of which are interneurons. The grey matter regions are the areas of nerve connections and processing.” he said pointing to them.

"White matter is made of mostly myelinated neurons that connect the regions of gray matter to each other and to the rest of the body. Myelinated neurons transmit nerve signals much faster than unmyelinated axons do. The white matter acts as the information highway of the brain to speed the connections between distant parts of the brain and body.” he finished.

“Understood,” said Harry lying bare faced, note to self, and really get that book on brain for dummies if such a book existed. He barely understood a word the Healer had said. He was way out of his league with this, and Harry began to realize this. Someone with a degree in medicine should be the one to do it. What if he screwed someone up more than they already were? Breathing deeply, no, he couldn’t let Neville down. He’d figure it out somehow, he was determined to do that much. Even if it took him years, it was better than never right?

Smith chuckled, evidently not believing Harry the slightest, getting up from his seat he walked over to his small collection of books. His fingers with experience trailed along the spine, until he got to a book a sixteen year old would be able to understand. He only had one possible book in the room, removing it he sat back down, grabbing a piece of parchment he wrote down on it before looking back up at Harry. “This is the only book here you may be able to understand more fully, if not this is two books I used when I first began to study - it simplifies things without making you feel a little...out of your depth, but it should give you the information you need.” a wry smirk on his face evidently having felt that way once.

“Thank you,” said Harry gratefully accepting the book and paper.

“It’s no problem, it just takes time to understand it properly, the brain isn’t something simple, it has many functions with names you are probably unfamiliar with.” said Smith with understanding.

Harry smiled, “Thank you for all your help, and I’m sorry I interrupted your lunch.” getting up, placing his quill and both pieces of parchment in his pocket, still carrying the book.

“It’s for good cause, good luck with your project Mr. Peverell.” said the Healer with respect.
“Thanks again, and bye.” said Harry slipping out shaking of the thoughts running rampant around his mind.
“How many times am I going to have to come here?” muttered a Wizard grumpily passing Harry, “Twice he’s splinched himself trying to Apparate. Time and money, two things I don’t have, blasted boy!”

Harry blinked, and as suddenly as he was thinking about Neville’s…he was thinking of a new idea. Rushing from the building keeping his thoughts in the forefront of his mind desperately. He Apparated straight to his bedroom, flipping on his laptop adrenaline rushing through him, if he could do this…it would be awesome. Waiting on it powering up, his mind drifted to the ingredients one would need for it to work. It was genius in its simplicity, he wouldn’t need much, easy to make…why hadn’t anyone thought of this before? It would help underage wizards as well as those who couldn’t master Apparating. It wasn’t easy to pass the test; he should know he’d had to take it. Then again he had been younger than most were upon taking the test, seventeen was the normal age, and he’d taken it at fourteen years of age.

Typing rapidly, the title, what it did then he began to type away at the ingredients he’d need to accomplish it. Now all he had to do was put it in the right order to which it would accomplish what he wanted. Realising Eileen would worry if he didn’t inform her he was back; he took the laptop and went down the stairs, keeping a tight grip of his laptop. Not that it would break, he’d made sure of that, but he did it out of habit now.

“I’m back,” said Harry as he wandered into the living room, moving to sit on the chair by the fire as it crackled merrily. “Is Sev back yet?” not able to hide his concern.

“No not yet,” said Eileen her voice just as worried.

A Pop in the hall way alerted them that they were no longer alone.

“Speak of the devil,” said Eileen wryly, relaxing now that both her boys was home.

“Speaking about me were you?” enquired Severus entering the living room. “Dobby?”

“Yes sir?” asked Dobby making an appearance.

“Some coffee please, do you want anything?” he asked the others while Dobby was there.

“I think we will all have some coffee Dobby, bring us something light to eat as well,” said Eileen.

“Yes sir, Mistress Eileen,” said Dobby nodding at both of them before he was once more gone.

Slumping down on his favourite chair, he sighed in gratitude glad to be back home. For some reason the looks in the Order members eyes got to him on a level it never had before. Yes they were all terrified, he’d never seen them that way before, and most were always so strong. They had been picked for that reason, and because they were fantastic dullest and powerful, reasons enough for the Dark Lord to want them gone. The fact they’d gotten to Shacklebolt was daunting to say the least, he’d always bet that Shacklebolt and Moody would be the only ones who could beat him in a duel. He didn’t include Dumbledore because the Headmaster never resorted to using the Dark Art’s which left him vulnerable to being targeted with it.

“How did it go?” asked Eileen.

“Disconcertingly,” replied Severus rubbing his temples.

“Why?” enquired Eileen her black eyes filled with worry.
“He’s targeting the Order; the attacks…weren’t as random as we first though. Everyone else caught in the crossfire is just a bonus I summarise. Kingsley Shacklebolt, a very good Auror who’s caught over a dozen Death Eaters in his tenure is missing.” said Severus, for some reason this worried him more than anything else was.

“Could it be for another reason?” questioned Eileen her heart sinking.

“I doubt it; Shacklebolt isn’t the kind to just disappear of the radar. Unless he’s been attacked or is being followed.” said Severus thoughtfully.

“He could have slipped up,” said Harry from where he was buried in his laptop.

“Slipped up?” repeated Severus staring at Harry curiously.

“You said he put a Taboo on his name,” said Harry shrugging his shoulders. He did feel for Shacklebolt, if he was caught then he understood him even more. He too had been the victim of the Death Eaters, and held the proof of it upon his chest. It’s just to damn bad that he couldn’t remove them. Anything made with dark arts, cursed items couldn’t be removed at least the wizard who had hurt him was rotting in Azkaban.

“Perhaps,” said Severus, it would make more sense than him being careless at any rate.

“Thank you Dobby,” said Severus as the elf returned with their refreshments.

“Have you finally got some new ideas?” asked Eileen watching Harry; he seemed more buoyant than what was normal as of late. He’d been ready to tear his hair out earlier on, and then he’d spent hours looking at a potions book without turning the page before leaving for St. Mungo’s.

“I have an idea, yes.” said Harry his voice filled with glee, never pausing in his typing.

“I told you, relax, think about something else and it will come to you.” said Eileen smugly.

Severus rolled his eyes at his mother’s words; they always liked to think they were right, although admittedly she was right this time…and most times. His eyes drifted to Harry, when was the last time he’d sat down and actually tried to invent a potion? A very long time, Eileen’s potion didn’t count, since it had been mostly Harry’s work. He’d forgotten why he became a Potions Master in the first place. Harry was reminding him as the days went by, especially with all the ideas he had for new inventions. His ideas were mesmerising, certainly not ones he would have thought up. Harry had a way of thinking outside the box, he didn’t let Potions tell him what to do, he told it what he wanted. He had so much passion for the art, it’s as though he wanted to brew as many as he could…but for what? Did he think he wouldn’t survive? No, Harry had never given him that impression. He had a thirst for survival that rivalled his own.

“What’s this new idea of yours?” asked Severus, grabbing a sandwich just looking at them was making him hungry. He never ate anything offered to him in Grimmauld Place; he did not trust that house elf or Black come to that. It mattered little if he’d been poisoned the others would have as well.

“Apparation,” said Harry peeking up at him with twinkling green eyes before they disappeared once more.

“Hmm,” said Severus, not the answer he was expecting, it seemed he would have to wait and see.

“Yes!” crowed Harry, jumping from the seat and disappearing, instead of going up the stairs, he went down to the lab.
“I think he got it,” said Eileen amused.

“You think?” said Severus sarcastically, “He left a vapour trail.”

Eileen laughed in amusement, oh her son had such a tongue on him, and his sarcasm truly knew no bounds.

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“Harry,” said Severus as he stepped into the lab, “It’s after dinner time, go up and get something to eat.”

“Watch!” said Harry grinning wickedly a vial in his hands.

Severus arched an inquisitive eyebrow in Harry’s direction, watching him expectantly.

Harry threw the potion on the floor; confusion filled Severus, had the pressure finally got to him? A cloud of smoke obstructed Harry from view. He would never admit what happened next, not even on pain of death. He jumped, he Severus Snape, a spy, when he felt a finger prodding him in the back. Turning around, wand at the ready, a curse on the tip of his tongue before he reined them in when he realized it was only Harry. The person he wouldn’t want to hurt for all the potion ingredients in the world. Then it finally dawned on him what Harry had meant earlier…Apparation indeed. He’d figured out how to make a potion Apparate someone without them actually Apparating.

“What do you think?” asked Harry his grin still on his face, almost jumping up and down in glee.

“Very well done indeed,” said Severus impressed. He had no doubt the potion would be banned within Hogwarts within a day of them being published. “I wonder…if they would work in and out of warded buildings.” his black eyes gleaming in wickedness.

“I don’t know,” said Harry shrugging. it’s not why he’d done it.

“What on earth made you come up with this?” asked Severus completely amazed.

“When I was walking away from Healer Smith’s office a guy bumped into me, grumbling about some boy having been splinched again.” said Harry. “That’s when I thought about it, its not Apparating though, its more like teleportation, just think of where you want to go, throw the potion and it and your magic does the rest.” his voice was filled with smugness.

“Healer Smith?” asked Severus.

“Yeah, I went to see him,” said Harry exasperated. “I didn’t understand half the stuff he said though, isn’t going to be as simple as I thought.”

“Nothing worth doing is,” said Severus honestly.

“True,” said Harry thoughtfully.

“Congratulations Mr. Peverell, it seems you’ve just successfully passed your mastery.” said Severus, his black eyes gleaming with pride and warmth. He had picked his apprentice well, one who had not let him down once, surpassed more anything he could have imagined. One who would go on to take Potions to a whole other level, and he was proud to be a part of it.

“Thank you,” said Harry beaming in happiness, he’d done it! After years of struggling, he’d finally succeeded. He was now a Potions Master, and the elation he felt was worth the work and effort.
he’d put into it. Severus being his didn’t come into it, nor did the fact he’d become the youngest Potions Master in the world. All that paled in significance because he had done what he wanted to do since he was eleven. Part of his life’s ambition was complete, and for some reason that left Harry completely and utterly exhausted! He had never imagined that in the start of all this. The concerns he’d had about the information he’d found in the Potions book was wiped from his mind.

For now.
The week leading up to the conference was rather busy, Severus had assumed his no longer apprentice would sit back and relax. Yet he’d barely seen him, Harry either spent his days reading or he was out somewhere, which admittedly left him worried until he got back. Severus had taken that time to get Harry his birthday gift, which was a holiday, after all, his hard work he deserved it. Two week cruise in the Caribbean, visiting the magical islands, with a bit of luck they could gather Potion ingredients they didn’t know about. What could he say? He was a Slytherin he’d definitely take advantage of it. It wasn’t just Harry being busy, he seemed extremely worried about something, and he’d never seen Harry like that before. He’d vowed to talk to him, but with their busy schedules he was having trouble actually catching him long enough to say something. Even his mother had noticed, and so Severus had stayed up longer that night brewing so he had time to talk to Harry properly. He would need to catch him in first, which he most certainly wasn’t right now, since he was currently out of the Manor.

Harry was standing outside Grimmauld Place, wondering if he would be in this time. Knocking on the door before he chickened out, waiting impatiently for Sirius Black to answer. He’d been here twice already today, and he was getting beyond exasperated. Not only that he wasn’t sure if he wanted to share what he’d found with Black, because he’d probably go straight to Dumbledore. As much as it turned his stomach he knew Sirius was in the Order, and probably put the war before him.

Then he finally heard the door opening, Sirius stood there looking exhausted and still in his Auror robes. “Hey, Harry, come on in!” said Sirius his tired look disappearing as he beamed at Harry looking extremely happy to see him. It’s the first time he’d see him since that day he’d come about the Animagus Potion or whatever Harry was calling it.

“Thanks,” said Harry stepping inside the building, and making his way to the kitchen, fingering the book in his hand.

“How are you doing?” asked Sirius, before adding as he too got into the kitchen. “Coffee? Or juice?”

“I’m fine, orange juice if you have it?” replied Harry sitting down his green eyes a little dark.

“I do,” said Sirius grabbing two glasses and filling them with the requested orange juice. Passing one over he took a seat himself, observing that Harry looked extremely happy to see him. It’s the first time he’d see him since that day he’d come about the Animagus Potion or whatever Harry was calling it.

“You don’t need help with another potion do you?” he asked with dread.

Harry snorted in amusement a small smile twitching at his lips as he replied. “No.”

“Oh, good.” said Sirius relieved beyond belief.

“Do you know who last used this potions book?” asked Harry sliding it across.
Sirius stared down at the potion book, shaking his head, he certainly hadn’t and he hadn’t been around to say for sure. “I have no idea, I left when I was sixteen years old, I went to your grandparents house, they took me in and all but adopted me as their own. I was disowned for that, my mother blasted me off the family tree. I was lucky though, my Uncle Alphard gave me a sizable inheritance.” admitted Sirius, his bitterness at his mother showing. “She then removed my Uncle for that, they believed deeply in dark arts, and marrying purebloods, my parents were actually cousins.”

“Were your parents Death Eaters?” asked Harry curiously.

“No, no, but believe me, they thought Voldemort had the right idea, they were all for the purification of the wizarding race, getting rid of Muggle-borns and having Pure-bloods in charge.” said Sirius.

“I guess they didn’t know he was a Muggle born himself then?” asked Harry saying that part particularly loud, knowing Sirius’ mother resided behind a curtain out in the hall. Well that blew his theory to hell, just who the heck had written in the damn book? It was obviously someone who had access to Grimmauld Place who regretted their choice.

“No,” said Sirius adamantly.

“So your family didn’t become Death Eaters?” said Harry, feeling deeply confused.

“My brother Regulus became one, my parents were so proud of him, he was the better son.” said Sirius sarcastically.

“What happened to him?” asked Harry perking up evidently taking an interest in that.

“He disappeared, died, his date of death appeared on the family tree, my mother was inconsolable…my father died not long afterwards.” said Sirius not a care in the world when it came to them.

“You don’t know how he died?” stated Harry.

Sirius hesitated before continuing on, Harry was old enough to hear this. “He was murdered by Voldemort. Or on Voldemort’s orders, more likely. I doubt Regulus was important enough to be killed by Voldemort in person. From what I found out after he died, he got in so far, then panicked about what he was being asked to do and tried to back out. Well, you don’t just hand in your resignation to Voldemort. It’s a lifetime service or death.”

Harry nodded his head, he began to realize that this R.A.B was actually likely to be Sirius’ brother, it all added up. “Did he have a middle name?” he enquired.

“Arcturus,” said Sirius. “Why are you asking me all these questions about my family?”

“One last question…is this Regulus’ handwriting?” asked Harry, sliding the book over, the writing plain to see, despite the fact there was a diagram under the ink. Harry’s finger conveniently hid the one word he didn’t want Black finding out about. He didn’t know if Black knew what Horcrux’s were, but his brother obviously had. Harry did, he’d spent the last week trying to figure it out. He’d finally found it in Secrets of the Darkest Art, in his Peverell vault it was as ancient as they come. Harry had felt a deep sense of foreboding just reading it, it made his skin crawl. Given how insane Voldemort was…well Harry was terrified he’d created more than one. It explains in the book what it does to you when splitting ones soul. Death would have been preferable to Harry, it truly horrified him and even worse…he didn’t know what to do. There was only one way to rejoin the
soul, and it was excruciatingly painful, and required the wizard to feel remorse, something Harry didn’t see happening, ever. No hell would freeze over before Voldemort felt anything close to resembling remorse. Even worse, there was no known way to destroy them.

“Yes,” said Sirius sounding subdued as he looked at the words, but before he could properly read them Harry closed the book with a snap.

Harry shuddered keeping the book close; he was supposed to be enjoying himself now that he’d completed his Mastery. It had been what he wanted more than anything else in the world. Yet he hadn’t been able to, his thoughts had remained with the words he’d found when reading this potions book. The words Horcrux and meet your match mortal once more, had him insanely curious and worried. He’d had ever right to be as he’d finally discovered last night.

“Harry?” questioned Sirius cautiously, what on earth was wrong with him? He looked defeated, worried and maybe down right terrified.

“I’m fine,” said Harry attempting to smile but it came out a grimace before drinking his orange juice.

“How’s your Mastery going?” asked Sirius.

“I’ve completed it, my second potion has been done, I’ll be showing them to the convention in a few days, I can get you a ticket to come if you like.” said Harry, grateful for the change of subject, but his mind…was never of the subject of Horcruxes. It was little wonder, with the news he’d just discovered.

“Yes! I’d love to come!” said Sirius adamantly, well he had little doubt he’d be bored to tears, he didn’t care for Potions but anything to spend time with Harry, his godson.

“Alright,” said Harry, “I have to get back.”

“What? So soon?” asked Sirius looking as if someone had just taken away his favourite toy.

“Aren’t you going to tell me about your second potion?” trying to keeping Harry there for a while longer.

“You’ll see soon enough,” said Harry wryly, tightening his hold on the book. “It’s pretty cool, I think even you will like it.”

“Can’t wait!” said Sirius. “When is it?”

“Friday, we’ll be leaving at eight am, but the conference doesn’t actually start until twelve noon. I want to have a look around Egypt again, it’s beautiful.” Harry told Sirius a small smile playing across his face.

“Egypt?” spluttered Sirius, surprised.

“Yeah, you’ll get a Portkey along with your ticket so don’t worry.” said Harry rolling his eyes misinterpreting Sirius’ words and actions.

“Good,” said Sirius, international Apparating required more than two days, to get permission for such a trip, even as an Auror. Not only that it took a great deal of magic and time, since you have to Apparate into around five different countries before getting to Egypt at least if you go through the official channels. Since he was an Auror he had to do it the proper way, otherwise he could end up prosecuted then lose his job.

“I’ll talk to you later,” said Harry waving absently before using Sirius’ Floo to get back to Prince Manor.
Harry shook his head, getting rid of the soot and ash with a flick of his wand; you’d think they’d clean out the network now and again. Yes the grate was cleaned by the house-elf’s but the network itself wasn’t which made it irritantly dirty. He blinked when he saw Severus sitting in the chair waiting expectantly, if the look on his face was anything to go by.

“Don’t you have potions to brew for St. Mungo’s?” enquired Harry slipping into one of the seats feeling exhausted and it wasn’t even dinner time yet.

“They are done,” said Severus, he wasn’t sure how much longer he could keep the contract, he just finished one batch before more and more demands were made of his time. It was too much for one man to do, even with Harry and Eileen helping him now and again. Despite the fact he was brewing three different cauldrons full at a time, he couldn’t get much time to himself. He certainly wouldn’t be surprised if they got in touch tonight asking for another batch of different potions. He was beginning to see why he preferred being an independent brewer not tied down to one contract.

“Already?” said Harry impressed, he must have been up all night! He’d seen the list himself and it hadn’t been a small one.

“Indeed,” said Severus his lips twitching, “Do you want to talk about it?” staring at Harry as if daring him to refute the statement and insist it was incorrect, that there was nothing wrong. Harry sighed, he wasn’t surprised by Severus’ question, or statement as it was. He’d known it would come sooner or later. He’d been quieter than normal; he’d barely spoken to either of them all week, which was extremely unusual for him. Harry had shut himself off, reading in his room or leaving the manor.

“Harry if there is someone else, I’d rather find out about it from you, not someone else.” said Severus, his voice severe a hint of harshness bleeding through. It was a natural conclusion to make for all the time he spent avoiding them and staying outside.

Harry’s jaw dropped as he gaped at Severus unable to believe his ears, “NO! That’s not it at all!” snapped Harry, hurt and angry at the accusation. Although the way he’d been acting, he supposed it was a valid question. People avoided others when they were feeling guilty, but what Severus didn’t understand was that he hadn’t purposely avoided him or Eileen.

“Then what is it that you are so reluctant to tell me?” asked Severus, relieved that Harry hadn’t gone back on his word.

Harry rubbed at his forehead; he was still trying to get his head around it, now he was going to have to tell someone else? If there was anyone he trusted the most it was Severus, if Regulus knew about the Horcruxes maybe Severus might know. He sat there with the elbows on his knees and his hands in his hair. How did he tell someone that he would have to kill someone who was immortal? That he would just continuing coming back thanks to the damn Horcruxes he had out there somewhere?

“Harry?” said Severus his voice going soft and probing, removing himself from the chair and kneeling on the floor at Harry’s feet. Deftly lifting his chin worry was churning in his gut, what could be so bad Harry was hesitant to talk to him about it? He knew everything about Harry, absolutely everything; he’d never held anything back. That was until now, of course, he began to wonder if he truly wanted to know.

Grabbing the book from the side of the armchair, he opened it at page 102 where the inscription was. He held it out to Severus, pointing to it, letting him take it. Severus stared at the page his mind whirling with confusion, and then he noticed what Harry was pointing to. He almost had to squint to make out the writing, the diagram making it difficult but not impossible.
To the Dark Lord,
I know I will be dead long before you read this but I want you to know that it was I who discovered
your secret. I have stolen the real horcrux and intend to destroy it as soon as I can. I face death in
the hope that when you meet your match you will be mortal once more."
R.A.B

As soon as Severus read the words bile immediately rose like an inferno from his chest, he just
managed to get himself up and through to the kitchen before he was sick. He paid no mind to the
surprised house-elf’s as his stomach continued to rebel dangerously.

“Does Master Snape want a potion?” asked Dobby staring at the wizard in concern; this wasn’t his
Master’s usual behaviour.

“I’ll be fine,” said Severus straightening his spine, refusing to show them just how badly he felt at
the moment. Opening his fridge he drank some juice from within it to wash the taste away. Merlin,
to think Harry knew what these things were, it quite frankly horrified him. This wasn’t magic
anyone should know about, in fact most people didn’t know about it, but it wasn that easy to make
people forget, and especially not when it was in books to read about. It wasn’t easy to make even
books disappear, banned or otherwise. Even he didn’t know much about them, he’d come across it
while reading Magick Moste Evile, the information regarding them was less than a paragraph long.
Everything made sense with a startling clarity he hadn’t had just moments prior. How the Dark
Lord had not died, why the Dark Mark hadn’t faded and how he came back. Where was the
Horcrux? Obviously Regulus hadn’t succeeded in getting to it, no he’d said he’d stolen it, so it was
somewhere out there…a very daunting thought. Just how the hell were they supposed to find it? It
could be anything, anywhere, and more than likely heavily protected. Severus slashed water across
his face, his mind processing everything as rapidly as it was able. He was dead, so he had failed,
did the Dark Lord take it? No it wasn’t possible, the Dark Lord had been furious, he’d demanded to
know where the boy was. What had happened them? Where had he gone and how had he died? It
was the key to figuring all this out. Then it dawned on him, even if they found it he had no way of
destroying it…how did one go about destroying a Horcrux? Information on them was extremely
limited.

Severus walked back through to the living room; Harry was sitting in the same position as before.
How the hell had Harry managed to come across information on them? In a week? Harry continued
to amaze him, he was resourceful, very much so. “Where did you find this book?” asked Severus,
although he had a good idea.

“Sirius Black offered me some books, I couldn’t resist.” said Harry slightly sheepish.

“Of course you couldn’t,” said Severus wryly, he was a Ravenclaw for a reason.

“He was the one that tested my unlocking Animagus potion, we sort of got talking, I’ve only seen
him twice,” said Harry feeling the need to defend his reasoning. “I’ll never forget what he done,
and we’ll never be close.”

“I assume you know who R.A.B is?” asked Severus.

Harry nodded jerkily, “Black told me, he thought his brother got in to deep and wanted out, and
was killed on the Dark Lord’s orders.”

“That’s about right; anyone not a Death Eater would tell you the same thing. However, we know
he didn’t have anything to do with it. He was baffled by Regulus’ disappearance and furious that
he’d lost a follower.” explained Severus. “How did you find out what Horcruxes were?” he didn’t
need to wonder why he’d started looking for information, after all if one wasn’t mortal, they had to
be immortal didn’t they?
“I searched every book I had, took me nearly all week, but I couldn’t find anything, as a last resort I searched my vault, and I’m glad I did. I found the information I wanted in it. It goes into detail about the Horcruxes, splitting your soul makes you go mad, and according to the book there’s only one way to repair the damage done to it. More of a footnote than anything else, you have to feel remorse, genuine remorse for what you’ve done.” said Harry his mouth dry as hell.

“Bring me the book,” said Severus, determined to find out everything, it wasn’t in his nature to lie down and die, no he would fight as long as he had to.

“Accio Secrets of the Dark Art,” said Harry flicking his wand out, summoning the book to them. Catching it with ease, he passed it over; in all honesty he didn’t want to read it again. Once had been enough, the magic in that book was absolutely foul; nobody should be allowed to read it. He wasn’t prejudice, he didn’t believe magic was dark, it was just the intent, but that book was an exception. Once day, if he survived this and it was over, he swore that he would burn it, so no other could find out how to create these things again.

Severus flipped through the pages, until he reached the chapter he wanted. Merlin there was a lot of information here on Horcruxes. He read through the passages and certain paragraphs caught his attention, making it seem all the more obvious it was what the Dark Lord had done.

A Horcrux is a powerful object in which a Dark wizard or witch has hidden a fragment of his or her soul for the purpose of attaining immortality. Creating one Horcrux gives one the ability to anchor one’s own soul to earth if the body is destroyed; the more Horcruxes one creates, the closer one is to true immortality. Creating multiple Horcruxes is costly to the creator, by both diminishing their humanity and even physically disfiguring them.

Diminishing their humanity, well nobody could accuse the Dark Lord to being human, added to the fact he was physically disfigured. Even before he fell and ended up with his new body, he hadn’t been…right his good looks had continued to deteriorate alarmingly. Which by the way had been the main reason his Death Eaters had begun following him, his charm and charisma as well as his power.

There was a lot of information on Horcruxes especially how to create them, too much for his comfort but not enough in regards to destroying them. Where had the Dark Lord found information on these? It couldn’t be his followers, no he’d reckon Regulus had found out by sheer happenstance, in fact he’d bet his fortune on it. He had no idea where to start, but Hogwarts would be a safe bet, since the Dark Lord had been raised in an Orphanage, he hadn’t known about magic prior to being accepted into the school. He would need to do an extensive search on Riddle, one like he hadn’t before. It still of course didn’t help him track the Horcrux down.

“Harry I don’t want you worrying about this, I will do everything in my power to find it,” said Severus, trying to protect him, he was sixteen years old! Yes he might be nearing seventeen but damn, how the hell was Harry managing to get sleep with this knowledge?

“It? Didn’t you read it properly? Severus…I think he has more than one.” said Harry his green eyes filled with fear.

“That’s…” started Severus.

“Insanity? Yeah, and he is insane.” said Harry.

Severus nodded his head curtly, if he was being honest with himself, the thought had occurred to him, he just didn’t want to believe it. To split your soul once was…sickening, the thought of him having created more was terrifying. If they didn’t get them all, the Dark Lord would just keep
returning and terrorising the world. His mind drifted to Dumbledore, did he tell him? This information was big, he knew the more people that were informed the more chance it had of getting out. The Dark Lord would go into defence mode and protect them, possibly end up creating more in desperation. Dumbledore would tell the Potters, the Order and there had already been a spy within its ranks once, what’s to say there wasn’t another? Not that there was a traitor needed, all they had to do was be captured and tortured, then the information would just be spilled out in the open. His heart rate increased, what was he supposed to do? Forcefully calming himself down, panic did not help him or the situation.

“Lets just concentrate on one thing at a time,” said Severus.

“On what and where one of them could be?” guessed Harry.

“Indeed,” said Severus. “Regulus Black lived in Grimmauld Place; there is a possibility that it could be hidden there.”

“That would mean getting Sirius Black involved!” protested Harry; he’d gone to great lengths to get the information from him without giving anything away.

“Not necessarily, if its anywhere perhaps it could be in Regulus’ bedroom,” said Severus thoughtfully, “You and Black are on speaking terms, you could try and sneak in and look around.”

“I wouldn’t know what I’m looking for! It could be anything.” said Harry wide eyed.

“True,” said Severus rubbing at his chin deep in thought.

“This is impossible,” said Harry bitterly.

“That’s impossible, it’s just a bit…unlikely.” replied Severus. “If we give in, we may as well prostrate ourselves at Dark Lord’s feet and lay down your wand in defeat.” he said the right thing, fire lit up Harry’s green eyes, determination thrummed in those beautiful green orbs. Harry wasn’t about to let Voldemort win, he’d rather kill himself first before that. Harry was nothing if not the most determined and ambitious young man he’d ever met, potions, O.W.L’s, Mastery, wanting to create a potion to cure insanity…oh yes, unwavering he was. Severus liked to think some of his had rubbed off on Harry.

That’s not to say it was going to be easy, in fact both of them knew it was down right near impossible, but unless they wanted to let the Dark Lord take over…they had to do everything in their ability to right the wrong. It wasn’t natural what the Dark Lord had done, it was wrong on so many levels. Everything had its time, and everything died, it was the natural order of the world.

“As of right now you concentrate on your Mastery potions, I mean it Harry, you only have a few days before you go before the committee. You haven’t worked as hard as you have to give it up for this.” said Severus seriously, tapping the book with his fingers to demonstrate. “It can wait a few days, in the meantime I will look into it, and I’m not saying I’m stopping you.” he added upon seeing Harry’s indignant look, his pointer finger raised in warning.

“So far you’ve found a lot of information, it would be at the height of stupidity to not include you Harry. All I am asking is that you concentrate on your Mastery, afterwards you can do all the research you want.” finished Severus.

“Alright,” said Harry agreeably, knowing Severus made sense, he hadn’t come this far to screw it up by thinking on the Horcruxes. He had to brew at least ten batches of his new potions, so they could be tested and people can buy them at the conference. Which would take up the majority of
his time in the next few days anyway.

“I can only imagine how you felt upon reading that book,” said Severus sighing sadly, “I wish you had come to me sooner, I would have been able to tell you without the gory details.”

Harry leaned into Severus, relishing in the closeness, his birthday couldn’t come soon enough, and it really couldn’t. “Part of me wishes I had,” admitted Harry, his voice muffled by Severus’ clothes.

“No doubt,” replied Severus carding his hand soothingly through Harry’s hair and down his back. They sat there lost in thought for hours, just getting over the shock of the information they’d found out.

“Have the house-elf’s made dinner?” asked Eileen walking through.

“Shh!” said Severus, hushing his mother not wanting to wake Harry up.

Dread flashed over Eileen’s eyes, “Is everything okay?” she asked had Harry finally told Severus what was bothering him and why he’d been so secretive.

“Everything is going to be fine,” said Severus immediately and adamantly, he would make sure of it if it was the last thing he done. He’d leave no stone unturned to uncover the truth; someone out there had to know more information.

“What was wrong?” asked Eileen, she wasn’t a stupid witch, yes she made dim-witted decisions, but when it mattered she wasn’t thick.

“Trust me, you do not want to know.” said Severus his voice grave.

“Very well,” said Eileen seeing how serious Severus was made her back down, it was obviously extremely bad if her son didn’t want her to know. She would respect his decision, and if one day he told her that was fine by her also. “Perhaps I should have the elf’s make dinner later today.” Harry needed sleep, if anything he’d slept less this week than he had during his Apprenticeship. Which did seem impossible, it’s a wonder really, how many teenagers stayed functional with only five hours sleep if he was lucky. No most teenagers were content to sleep the day away and remain up for ten hours during the afternoon. Even her son had been like that at Harry’s age.

“I think that’s best,” said Severus, hopefully the house-elf’s wouldn’t mention his…momentarily lapse in composure. Only Severus Snape could call puking his guts up a momentarily lapse in composure.
Chapter 59

Invisible

Chapter 59

The Committee and Conference

Severus, Harry and Eileen all appeared in the hotel having come by Portkey, it was filled with an assortment of people all magical or squibs who could see magic. Muggles couldn’t happen upon the privately owned property, there was every safeguard upon the hotel and its surroundings to ensure it. Goblin’s, elves, hags, Vampires, Werewolf’s, wizards and witches all under the same roof it certainly wasn’t a sight they saw every day. Everyone was so distant to creatures and people they believe beneath them. Witches and Wizards in Magical Britain believed themselves so superior to them; it was no wonder most of the other magical worlds were more advanced. Walking out of the Portkey room they were immediately greeted by a hotel worker with a clipboard in her hand.

“Welcome to the Arden Hotel, names please?” said Polly smiling at them, waiting patiently for their answer. It was a busy day, hotel was fully booked for the conference they were having. Which was in five hours time, she had to get tables and chairs put in the meeting room. With magic it would only take five minutes so she wasn’t worried. She did have to get some food taken into the private room set up for the directors of the Potions society though.

“Prince-Snape.” said Severus curtly.

“You are booked into the Executive suite, if you follow me I’ll show you the way.” said Polly, summoning the key from the concierge desk. Only the people employed can summon the keys, otherwise it would be risky indeed; even the magical world had thieves. The doors couldn’t be opened with a simple Alohomora spell either. They were taken up a grand staircase, with the largest chandelier they’d ever seen. Once they were up the stairs, they came into view of two elevators. Pressing the button to summon one of the elevators, the beauty of this hotel was it had ‘Muggle’ aspects. Such as the elevators, the magical ones made some people queasy and sick, the last thing people wanted on holiday. Pressing the top button for the executive suite which took up half the entire floor. There were two executive suites in the hotel, both on the top floor; the view was spectacular and expensive.

“I hope you enjoy your stay, if there’s anything you need please don’t hesitate to ask,” Polly said, as she opened the double doors giving them the first view of their rooms. Smiling slightly at the dumbfounded look on the youngsters face. It reminded her of the first time she had set eyes upon it. She handed the key over to Severus, before departing.

“This place is awesome,” said Harry gazing around in awe, a bowl full of fruit caught his attention and he picked a few grapes from it. They were fresh, plopping them in his mouth he walked over to the glass doors, opening them and out into the balcony seeing outside for the first time. He was surprised to see a large outdoor pool and Jacuzzi. “I thought this was a magical hotel?” questioned Harry. It was different at the other hotel it had been half Muggle half magical, meaning it was preliminary a Muggle place and not to openly use magic unless you were in a room Muggles couldn't get into.

“It is, doesn’t mean we cannot have a few pleasures brought to us by the Muggles. Most countries like America and of course here in Egypt aren’t as behind in taking ideas from them. It’s just us
that’s too proud to take ideas from people who they believe are beneath us.” said Severus. Looking out at the spectacular view, as a child he wouldn’t have imagined seeing never mind mind living in such a luxurious place.

“What’s next?” asked Harry staring at Severus hungrily, how he wanted him, his birthday couldn’t come quick enough. Part of him was still stinging by the fact Severus thought he would just up and leave him for someone else. He hadn’t waited two years, well a year really since they made their little pact, just to back out now. Sometimes it scared Harry how intently he felt for Severus, it made a mockery of the feelings he’d had for Viktor. Harry knew what he wanted though, he’d been lucky that way, both in his career choice and partner. The reason Harry had gotten into potions was because Nick couldn’t brew to save himself. It’s what made Harry initially determined to do it, now look at him, youngest Potions Master in the world.

“We have a meeting with the Masters in an hour,” explained Severus giving Harry a pointed look when he got closer to him. Severus didn’t understand what the soon to be seventeen year old saw in him, but the teasing was getting to him. His dreams had been filled with Harry for weeks; Harry wasn’t the only one looking forward to his birthday. The best part was they would have an entire fortnight to themselves, nearly secluded from everyone and everyone they knew. “Go on, get something less warm on, it’s hot here.”

“You don’t say,” said Harry dryly, he was drenched with sweat and he’d only been standing here for less than five minutes. He hadn't put on his summer clothes before coming, perhaps he should have done. “I’m going to go for a shower…if I can find it.” he said looking around.

“It’s Ensuite, the bedroom,” said Severus pointing in the right direction.

“Have you been here before?” enquired Harry, closing the doors of the balcony once they were inside. Which made the room stuffier than before, if it was possible? Just then a blast of cold air hit them. The magical air conditioning began to cool the overheated room.

“No,” replied Severus opening the mini-bar, if it could be called a mini-bar, inside it looked bigger than a normal fridge the contents evenly displayed. Chocolate Frogs, Bertie Bott’s every flavour beans, Cauldron cakes, Pumpkin Pasties and different bars of chocolate both magical from Honeydukes and Muggle sweets. Fire whiskey, bourbon, Pumpkin Juice, Butterbeer, Berry bliss, Ale, Brandy, champagne and even Daisyroot draught, which by the way only a few people drank. There were even Muggle cans inside, Diet Coke, Coke Cola, Sprite, Lilt, Dr. Pepper and even Lemonade.

“I’m taking the sofa bed,” said Eileen, flicking her wand and the seats on the sofa magically floated to a corner one on top of the other. Sheets began to make itself on the bed, until it was perfect for her to sit down on. There was only one bedroom she’d discovered, a king size bed, one that Harry and Severus would have to share.

“I think I will go and do some shopping while you both are at that meeting,” said Eileen, it was such a beautiful day, too beautiful by far to be stuck in a room, albeit a beautiful room. She would have to wait until Harry finished his shower before she could change. It would be nice to get out and about, without fear that the Dark Lord Voldemort may attack. She hated worrying constantly about her boys as well, so yes, she’d take this rare chance to relax and have some fun. Hopefully the hotel would have a few shops inside it, for her to look through at least until tomorrow where they could actually go shopping in the market.

“We shouldn’t be too long, I do not think there are many others graduating, so to speak,” said Severus wryly. Harry had already completed his Mastery; it was just a technicality to go through now. Get his two potions published, let the public know he was good and he’d have people desire him to work for them, or brew potions independently or as Neville Longbottom had already done -
commissioning him to invent one. Harry just had to decide which door he wanted to enter at least for now.

“How many?” asked Eileen from where she sat, unshrinking her bag, and pulling the clothes she wanted to wear out of the bag. She didn’t bother putting the rest into drawers; they weren’t going to be here long enough to get truly comfortable. The room was booked for only two days, and then they would be on their way home via Portkey again.

“Two perhaps three,” said Severus finishing off his bottle of Butterbeer, and placed it in the bin. He really shouldn’t use the stuff in the Mini-bar, it was always more expensive than going to one of the bars the hotel had within it. Says the man staying in the one hundred and fifty galleons a day hotel. The shower shut off indicating Harry had finally finished.

“I wonder what new creation they have for us,” said Eileen, she’d bet her wand it wasn’t as brilliant as Harry’s, but she was prejudice so who was she to really say.

“We will know soon enough,” said Severus his eyes gazing at the still picture of Merlin on the opposite wall. Despite trying not to think on the Horcruxes he was failing. He knew he’d at least temporary distracted Harry about it, but it wouldn’t last forever. He was worried, he didn’t know what to do at all, when he got home, he would have to pull all his research on Tom Riddle out and fill in every detail of his life, right down to the last crevice. No, today was about Harry, he’d get through this first, it’s the least Harry deserved after all these years of hard work.

“You’ve both been very distracted lately, I did promise not to pry…are you sure it’s not something I can help with?” asked Eileen.

Severus sat up, wondering why it had taken him so long to join the dots. “You went to school with Tom Riddle?”

“Yes,” she said guardedly. She didn’t like speaking about it, the Tom she knew from school was so different from the evil wizard he’d become - or so she liked to think. Both of them had been in the Slug Club, as a pureblood he’d had nothing against her per say, just her lack of magic.

“Was he close to any of the teachers?” asked Severus staring at his mother intently, conveying how important he felt the answers was.

“Only one, our Head of house, he was the only one who tolerated Slytherin’s.” replied Eileen, wondering what the hell was going on. Her son had never asked her about Tom Riddle’s school years. It was obviously going somewhere, she had a feeling she’d never know.

“Slughorn,” said Severus unsurprised. Which meant he may be able to go to him for answers, the possibility was probably slim though. Riddle wouldn’t trust anyone, surely…not with knowledge of his immortality. Slughorn was also close with Dumbledore, so if Slughorn knew surely he’d have told the Headmaster. It was risky going to Slughorn if he didn’t know anything, but a minute alone with him would either confirm or deny his suspicions.

“Yes, Severus what are you up to?” asked Eileen resigned.

“What’s who up to?” asked Harry coming back into the living room, with his summer gear on, a pair of blue baggy shorts, and a white vest on.

“I believe it’s my turn in there,” said Eileen, grabbing her own things and making a beeline for the bathroom.

“Did you tell her?” asked Harry bemused.
“No, I don’t want this getting around Harry,” cautioned Severus, “The more people, who know, the greater the risk of the Dark Lord finding out.”

“I know,” said Harry grimly.

“Good,” said Severus. “We have thirty minutes before we must go.”
“What happens in this committee meeting?” asked Harry his green eyes apprehensive.

“You present your potions to them and your findings, they are tested and approved before them and you’ll be given your Potions Mastery certificate and documents.” said Severus. “More than likely they will be added to the Potions of the decade book.”

“I doubt it,” said Harry doubting his own ability, he didn’t see what he was doing as extraordinary, just something he loved and happened to be good at. It didn’t seem to matter that one of his other potions had successfully been added to the book.

Severus shook his head decided against saying anything right now, Harry would eventually come to realise his potential sooner or later. It was obvious he would have to find his self worth for himself, it didn’t matter what anyone else said he just couldn’t or wouldn’t believe them.

“Is there a place we can get something to drink?” asked Harry, he wanted to see more of the hotel than just the room.

“The mini-bar has everything,” replied Severus.

“No I want to go and have a look around,” said Harry shaking his head, tapping at his pocket making sure his money was still there, he put his leather strapped sandals on and left the room with a quiet ‘Bye’. He spent ten minutes looking around the incredible place. Not that it was enough time to look around it completely, but enough for him to know it was extravagant. He did find a pub, but only got himself a pumpkin juice to take away he needed to find his way to the conference room, the last thing he wanted was to embarrass Severus and himself in front of the Potions Master’s society by being late.

“I’m not late am I?” asked Harry skidding to a halt outside the meeting room he’d been directed to by ironically enough Polly. Exhaling and inhaling, regaining control of his breathing, sitting down next to Severus and drinking the Pumpkin juice he’d bought in three large gulps, wetting his parched throat.

“Still five minutes,” replied Severus wryly.

“Where’s Eileen?” enquired Harry, it wasn’t often Sev’s mother left their sight for long. He knew it was mostly down to worry she felt for them.

“Shopping, they have a few shops at the side of the hotel, for those that don’t want to go near the Muggle population.” explained Severus.

“Oh, I didn’t see any, after this I might go see what they have.” said Harry.

“Well there are a few hours between this and the conference.” mused Severus. “I would like to look around a few bookstores, perhaps even the market.”

“Sounds like fun! Can I come?” asked Harry.

“Like I’m leaving you in a foreign country by yourself,” said Severus dryly. No, he wasn’t going to take the chance that anyone here could harm Harry. There were many American’s and people from...
the UK attending this thing; the possibility of a Death Eater finding out was big. So he would prefer to keep Harry close by at all times.

“Brilliant, brought enough money this time!” said Harry, the last time he hadn’t and there were so many ingredients he’d wanted to buy. Cool and unusual ingredients he didn’t hear a lot of back in the UK, but thankfully Severus had brought a great deal of it back home using them in his experimental potions. That was before he’d taken on the post of Potions Master for St. Mungo’s, now all his time was poured into brewing potions for them. He didn’t think Sev would last long though, Harry could tell he preferred trying to create and experiment with potions rather than just brew them.

“I can hear that,” said Severus smirking at Harry wryly.

“Oh Slughorn is here by the way,” said Harry, “I saw him in one of the corridors, ducked to avoid him otherwise he would have kept me forever. Every time I see him he constantly wants to talk about potions and what I’m doing.” it wasn’t necessarily always a bad thing, but when he was pressed for time - it was.

“Really?” enquired Severus, thoughtfully, interesting, perhaps he could catch him here and speak to him. He didn’t have a big window of opportunity; chances were Slughorn was only here for the conference.

“Yeah,” said Harry, jumping when someone shouted out a name.

“Terrance Whittaker!”

The named boy got up looking sick to his stomach, Harry smiled at him in sympathy, he seemed so nervous. Which made Harry realize he wasn’t…how odd was that? There was still time, his name hadn’t been called added to the fact he’d been distracted too. He disappeared into the door and it closed, nothing could be heard from within evidently there was silencing spells woven into the meeting room, or they’d been erected by the Potions society Masters.

“Is anyone else been in?” asked Harry looking around in confusion; it was deserted all bar him.

“Do the Master’s not usually accompany the Apprentices?”

“Nobody else has been in,” said Severus, “Usually they do, either his Master is on the panel which might explain his nervous disposition or he isn’t coming.”

“That’s a shame,” said Harry feeling a deeper sympathy for Terrance now.

“It is, this is a tough time for Apprentices, it’s the make or break for all of us at this stage.” said Severus, inwardly remembering how he’d felt. Severus hadn’t shown it of course, showing emotion had been a sign of weakness, still was actually. No matter how sure he had been of his potions that had inevitably passed his Mastery, he had been nervous as all people were when it came to something important. It had been Severus’ life, potions still was, but it didn’t have his sole focus anymore. No he had his mother and Harry in his life, as well as potions now.

“Yeah,” said Harry his stomach clenching uncomfortably, both his potions worked he knew that, surely he had nothing to worry about? No, he would go in there, show his potions to them and get his certificate. Damn now he really was nervous, he actually had butterflies! He hadn’t had butterflies since he’d kissed Severus. A delicate blush drove up Harry’s cheeks as he thought about it. Then of course Severus’ hadn’t returned his kiss, they say you forget things when your drunk…part of Harry wished he’d forgotten that, the other part though knew him remembering had led to their pact. He hadn't got himself wasted like that again, and wouldn't.

“Do not worry Harry,” said Severus spookily, as if he understood, which of course he did. “You
have passed. The potions are fantastic.”

Harry attempted to smile but it came out more like a grimace.

Terrance came out the room and ran right by them; they couldn’t tell if he’d had good news or bad news. They hadn’t got a clear look at his face at all. “Err you do come in don’t you?” asked Harry feeling panicking yet not showing it, at the thought of facing whoever was behind that door alone.

“If you wish it then yes, I can come.” said Severus, he hadn’t requested his Master to come, electing instead to go and face them alone. He felt asking someone for anything, was tantamount to asking them for a help and Severus didn’t ask for favours or help.

“I do,” said Harry a little too quickly giving away his panic.
“Then I shall,” said Severus as if it sorted everything.

“Harry Potter,” said the same guy as before who’d called on Terrance. He didn't look like a hotel worker, so he was either a Potions Master or one of the potions society masters.

“It’s Peverell.” said Harry grounding his teeth in a painful manner glaring ferocically at him. He didn't care who he was at this point, it just infuriated him beyond all measures being called Potter. Since he was fourteen, he'd tried his best to distance himself from his blasted family and their name.

“I’m sorry, I must have it written down wrong.” said the Liam looking down at his clipboard, wincing slightly he should have read it properly before shouting. He’d read the Potter name on the ‘known by any other name’ list, crap. “Harry Peverell.” he said more firmly. Inwardly still cursing his stupid mistake.

Harry stood up, moving towards the room still fuming inwardly at the wizard. At least he wasn’t feeling so nervous now, the meeting room was filled with middle aged wizards with only two witches Harry noticed. Harry also recognized a few of them, much to his surprise, he hadn’t known Severus was friends with the society Potion Masters. They had been at the Ministry when he got his medal for Potions, so it should have dawn on him sooner. The peppery hair of Master Grimm, and there was Master Russell and Master Sorens who had all made an appearance at his medal of honour. They were all staring at him, and truth be told it unnerved Harry completely. It made his stomach begin to churn, he’d spent forever blending into the background, he had to remind himself he wanted this.

“Hello,” said Harry having to refrain from looking behind himself to see if Severus had come in like he asked. He felt ridiculous for wanting reassurance, but damn it, he hated crowds and worse still people staring at him.

"Take a seat," said Master Russell, and Harry did so.

“Welcome to the Society of Potions Masters, Mr. Peverell, which two potions have you brought before us today?” enquired Master Grimm, nodding at him as if he was trying to soothe Harry or make him feel welcome.

“Resero Animagus and Promoveo potions,” said Harry revealing the chosen names for the potion, as they presumably wrote it down on the paper in front of them.

“Have both been tested?” enquired Master Russell staring at Harry deeply impressed. He was slightly confused at what the second one could do so he was looking forward to learning what the boy had done now.
“Yes,” said Harry feeling a little bit more calm, less nervous as they spoke about potions.

“Are they here today?” he then asked.

“He is coming to the conference,” said Harry, he hadn’t realised he needed Black for this meeting. “I tested the second one myself.”

“Tell us about both potions, and any affects they have.” said Master Grimm.

“Resero Animagus is pretty self explanatory, it unlocks all potential Animagus’ you have, whether or not you’ve successfully chosen or became an Animagus. Although I don’t know the affect it would have on someone who hasn’t became one.” said Harry, he hadn’t really thought about testing it on someone who wasn’t an Animagus yet.

“It unlocks all of them? You can transform into each one at will? For how long?” asked Master Sorens sitting forward interested in this one.

“At will yes, and I made it to be permanent and so far nothing has happened to indicate otherwise.” said Harry.

Sorens nodded in understanding, “Side affects?”

“From what I observed and was told after it was consumed it was like transforming into your Animagus form.” said Harry, “No negative ones have been picked up as of yet.”

“Are you patenting it?” enquired Sorens.

“I thought about patenting both of them, at least until after the war…I mean the potions are kind of dangerous in the wrong hands.” said Harry, not wanting them to assume he was doing it to make more money, although it was an added bonus. The disadvantage was the fact he’d be hounded for the potions. Especially with the new quest they had planned, but it was safer for the world if he didn’t let everyone know how to brew those potions.

“The second potion?” enquired Russell, deeply curious about this one, in Latin the potion meant move.

“The second potion isn’t for consumption, you throw it at the floor and it transports you to wherever you think about wanting to go.” explained Harry, cringing at the looks of incredulity that followed. Right now he just wanted to throw at potion and get back to the hotel room post haste!

“How does that work exactly?” asked Master Cooper incredulity coating his voice.

“You throw it, and it transports you to where you want to go.” said Harry his voice hardening and sarcasm leaking in. He couldn’t believe they were doubting him, it was a blow to the pride Harry hadn’t realized he had.

“Perhaps a sample may settle this,” said Sorens butting in, seeing the twin looks of darkness upon Severus and Harry’s face. They looked ready to explode, and he didn’t want this to become heated. Cooper was a right piece of work, he liked to upset as many people as he could. Terrance had nearly had a nervous breakdown because of him! His potion had been rather ingenious as well. Cooper didn’t want to get on the wrong end of Snape or the wizard would leave all Coopers shit bare. He would need to speak to the others before he went too far. Whether he believed a potion could do it or not, it wasn’t his place to judge per say.
Harry stared at them revealing nothing, grabbing the potion from his cloak pocket and flung it with such force the glass shattered into a million pieces as smoke obscured him from view. The Potion Master’s society stared bewildered, it seemed genuine they hadn’t heard any signs of Apparation sounds.

Severus smirked at them, flicking his wand and banishing every piece of the broken glass. Waiting on them noticing where Harry was, he wasn’t about to clue them in. Truth be told he was furious with the idiot for his scepticism. He had been like that during his meeting if he remembered correctly, the only difference was he had white hair now not ginger as it had been back then.

Harry rolled his eyes and ‘heck-hemmed’ from his position giving it away, causing Cooper to jump out his seat in fright. He glared angrily at the teenager, but Harry just rose his eyebrow in thinly veiled disgust before moving away, passed the seated wizards to stand back at his original position.

“You say you tested this yourself?” asked Cooper.

“Yes,” said Harry impassively.

“The affects?” enquired Russell writing on the clipboard in front of him again.

“Nothing, you just spontaneously transfer from one place to another. No feeling as though you’ve been sucked through a tube, no whirling like a Portkey. I made it for those who have trouble Apparating.” said Harry.

“Can it get you passed warded areas?” asked Sorens interestedly.

“No, I tried that, I couldn’t get into Hogwarts with it, it just led me to just outside the wards. Although you can get out of warded building you just cant get in.” said Harry.

“Interesting,” said Grimm thoughtfully.

“Well Potions Master Harry Peverell, congratulations, you’ve successfully passed your Potions apprenticeship.” stated Master Joel.

“Thank you,” said Harry grinning at him, all previous tension especially with Cooper was forgotten with the onslaught of relief.

“It’s my pleasure,” said Joel a small smile on his face as he came around and presented Harry with his papers, certificate and shook his hand.

“He truly is a credit to you Severus, well done,” said Joel shaking Severus’ hand as well. “His exam results surpass even yours!”

“I know.” said Severus dryly, he’d been there when Harry opened his results, he was undeniably proud of him. Then again it had been him who taught Harry everything he knew, so what’s not to be proud off?

“Of course you do,” said Joel, “I look forward to purchasing his new potions!”

“Indeed,” said Severus.

“Will you both be celebrating tonight Severus?” asked Sorens no longer pretending to be professional butting in and taking over from Joel who wandered off to talk to someone else.
“He hasn’t turned seventeen yet,” said Severus dryly.

“And? This is a great night, let him a drink or two!” said Sorens. "Plus its only a few weeks away! Let him live a little before he becomes another dungeon bat."

Severus blinked and arched an eyebrow they didn’t know how Harry got when he was drunk… which frankly was a good thing. “We’ll see,” replied Severus smirking in amusement. If they did go, he’d be carrying a hangover cure, he wouldn’t let Harry do anything stupid.

"Good, I'll get my answer at the conference, I'll see you both later." said Sorens patting Severus on the shoulder only once since he knew the man didn't like much physical contact before walking from the room.

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"So how did it go?” asked Eileen coming into the hotel room, arms ladeled down with bags, as she stared- waiting with bated breath for the outcome.

"I passed!” grinned Harry helping to remove the bags from her hand, and placed them on her sofa bed.

"I knew it!” crowed Eileen beaming at him proudly.

Harry just looked at her a little sheepishly. It was still odd even after these past few years being praised or having someone proud of him. It did make him feel warm inside though, and he'd do anything to feel it again. Once the bags were down Eileen hugged him tightly, giving him the same treatement she'd given her son - who hadn't minded for once to elated at having passed to mind her emotional display of happiness. Or it might have had something to do with the fact he'd been drinking.

"It shouldn't be a surprise," said Severus watching them with an odd twinkle in his eye.

"How was the meeting?" she asked sitting down on the bed.

"Alright," said Harry sitting down on the chair, grabbing an apple from the bowl twisting it around rather than eating it until the stem fell off.

"Just alright?” asked Eileen frowning.

"Cooper started on him," said Severus his voice filled with disapproval.

"It wasn't just him," said Harry quietly, "All of them didn't believe me, probably still don't and won't until they actually try the potion themself."

"It is an unusual consept, its the first potion that doesn't require consumption." said Severus.
Chapter 60

Invisible

Chapter 60

Conference

The British trio Apparated to one of the biggest Egyptian markets, which of course was magical, at least part of it. The area for Apparating into was covered with spells stopping any Muggles in the area staring at it or being surprised when someone Apparated. Nobody wondered why part of it was always empty, or why they suddenly felt the need to go in a different direction. Nothing like remembering an appointment or such, just veering off as if they’d meant to go that way all along. If they did have Muggles wandering off to appointments they suddenly remember, then they’d lose business and it was dangerous since most people here were actually on holiday. Since the magical communities worked so closely with its Muggle counterpart here in Egypt, it was important to them.

“These would look fantastic in the garden!” said Eileen veering towards a stand already interested in something. The table was laden with an assortment of things, mostly weapons, swords to be specific and rather ancient looking. Harry had never understood why they made things to look extremely old and ancient as the real thing. He supposed they wouldn’t be replicas if it wasn’t the case. However, Eileen wasn’t interested in weapons; their wands were enough for them. No she was looking at the Rushlights, used by the Egyptians for light, they were created by soaking dried pith of the rush plant in fat or grease.

“How many would you like?” asked the Egyptian wizard, speaking in perfect English but his Egyptian accent was very noticeable.


“Two Galleons’ per item,” said Amun. “Or eleven Egyptian pounds.”

“Fourteen galleons for eight of them,” said Eileen, getting right down to it, she wasn’t good at haggling, but did fairly well by only shaving a bit off the price.

“Deal,” agreed Amun immediately. Not many wizards cared for them since they could create light and fire out of their wands. He was lucky enough to sell them, so considered it a bargain. Once upon a time they had been easy to make, not so much anymore.

Harry shook his head and wandered off, curious about the other stalls; he stopped at a jewellery stand when a choker caught his attention. A vintage choker necklace, multicoloured and it made him think of Luna, if he got something for Luna though he’d have to get something for everyone else. Ah what the hell, he was celebrating his passed Mastery, he could splurge a little. He decided upon some bangles for Cho, reluctantly of course, he wasn’t close with her but didn’t feel right leaving her out. He got a similar choker which had an Ankh in the middle dangling down instead of a small silver Horus eye for Fleur. He didn’t know what the hell to buy the guys, but hopefully something would catch his eye. Paying for them without haggling he taught back up with Eileen and Severus, whose hawk eyes were observing his surroundings as always.

“Look at the spices! Don’t they just look delectable?” said Eileen.

“Mother, come on, we have all the spices we need at home!” said Severus rolling his eyes.
heavenward.

“Why do they have Rosetta stone replicas here?” asked Harry, his eyebrows raised in curiosity. Noticing them on a stall opposite them, of course they were smaller and the writing, pretty much indiscernible.

“The stone was found here first,” said Severus wryly. “In fact the Egyptians want it back where it belongs.”

“Yeah I know, but it seems like something they should be selling in London,” shrugged Harry, which was the stone now resided.

"They do," replied Severus, he had visited the Museum with Lily and her parents during his childhood. He decided against mentioning it, he didn't want to spoil the day mentioning something that made Harry quite rightfully furious. The Potter's were Harry's weakness, something he worried over. Especially if the Dark Lord found out which buttons to push, angry people made mistakes, and it would be all it took for the Dark Lord to get the upper hand. He did wonder if Lily had taken them to visit the Museum or if she'd began to believe the Muggle world held no wonder or joy now.

Harry made a non-committal noise as he continued walking, evidently finished with the subject at hand. They found stalls that peaked their curiosity, and went to investigate but always remained close to each other, never going further than two stalls apart. Severus mostly just kept an eye on Eileen and Harry, until he got to the books of course. Which was Severus’ main purpose. He was hoping to get lucky and find more information on Horcruxes here. If he couldn’t find it in the Prince library then really... would he get lucky here? Considering Egypt was one of the Seven Wonders of the World, and one of the most ancient places in existence, perhaps he would find his answers. He needed to know how to destroy them; it came first before hunting them down. He'd already searched one of the most recommended book stores in Cairo to no success, so his hope had greatly diminished but Severus refused to give in. Their very lives depended on it.

“What are you looking for?” asked Harry when he noticed Severus yet again looking at books. He loved reading, but even this was ridiculous! The shop he'd been dragged to had been sweltering; they’d done so much walking his back was beginning to ache. Severus was obviously on a mission, to find what he didn’t know.

“Answers,” said Severus, mysteriously, as wizards and witches passed them on either side, and the stall keeper kept an eye on them. “To our quest.”

“Oh!” said Harry his eyes lightening up, of course.

“Indeed,” said Severus his voice teasing.

“You really think we will find anything here?” asked Harry picking up a book but it was in another language, Egyptian of course. “Put the Linguam Intelligere spell on me.” He added before Severus could speak.

Severus’ lips twitched unsurprised that Harry knew the spell; flicking his wand muttering the words the spell hit Harry. Who then looked down at the book, which began to blur, twist and turn before turning from Egyptian to the English written word. “As for my answer to the question, our life depends on it, so we better come up with something fast.”

“I might even find something to help Neville’s parents,” said Harry, going through the mountain of books. They weren’t in any semblance of order; it would take ages to get through them all. Even worse there was no space, so they had to take care not to miss anything, which was next to impossible to do.
Harry found five interesting books about Potions and three possibly helpful books where souls were mentioned. Although souls were mentioned a lot, Egyptians were zealots in protecting their souls. Sarcophagi were invented to seal in the soul, or so they liked to believe. The Egyptians even magical beings, believed in preserving the human body, through mummification, the process lasted up to seventy days. They even preserved animals as well. They thought if they preserved their bodies in life, they could use them in the afterlife. Harry knew a lot about Egypt, he’d read upon them a lot, he was fascinated in their culture. It hadn’t diminished the slightly even after visiting the last time.

“How much?” asked Harry.

“Twenty galleons,” said Ahmed speaking Egyptian but Harry and Severus understood him thanks to the translation spell.

Harry arched an eyebrow curiously, twenty galleons for eight books? It was a bit pricey, but he really liked the look of them. “Ten.” said Harry deciding to haggle this time.

“Nineteen,” replied Ahmed.

“Eleven,” argued Harry.


“Twelve,” said Harry.

“Seventeen,” responded Ahmed.

“Thirteen,” countered Harry.

“Alright meet in the middle, fifteen galleons.” Ahmed said defiantly, he wasn’t going lower than that.

“Done,” said Harry digging into his pouch, the beauty about them was only he could retrieve the money. It was attached to his magical signature, so if it was ever lost or stolen nobody could use it. He passed over the fifteen galleons, one at a time before putting his new purchases in a bag he’d brought with him. It weighed nothing, since he had placed a feather light spell upon his bag during his first year. After that he placed the jewellery he’d bought for the girls too. His pouch was placed back into his shorts pocket.

Severus would have shaken his head in amusement if his pile of books hadn’t been bigger.

“If you boys don’t stop buying books we are going to have to convert one of the bedrooms into another library.” said Eileen coming up as Severus asked the stall keeper how much his pile was. “I somehow doubt that,” said Severus turning to face his mother greatly amused.

“I have a feeling you’ll both try,” said Eileen her lips twitching.

“Power is knowledge,” insisted Harry swinging his bag around and onto his shoulders, his feet were killing him. “Can we go now? We have a conference to go to in two hours and I want to rest my feet and shower again before I do I’m sweating like crazy.”

“It is hot,” agreed Eileen, fanning her face with a hand fan she bought a few stalls back.

“Just five more minutes,” said Severus after paying Ahmed, not giving him the trouble Harry did by haggling. “One more stall, then we can head back.”
“I don’t suppose you can think of something I can get for Viktor, Neville and Cedric?” asked Harry as they moved away from the stall.

“Perhaps a book?” suggested Severus wryly.

“Hmm, I think I might have to, I can’t think of anything else.” said Harry shrugging his shoulders.

“Or one of your potions,” added Eileen.

“I’ve already bought stuff for the girls though,” said Harry, “It’s not really fair giving them something I brewed.”

“Still would be handy to have, are any of them Animagus’?” enquired Eileen.

“Not that I know,” admitted Harry, he didn’t think so though.

“Are you searching for a specific book Severus?” asked Eileen as they were dragged to another stall with a million more books.

“No,” said Severus beginning his search, thankfully these books weren’t stacked up in bundles, but in a straight line shelved.

“Then what are you searching for?” asked Eileen, watching both Harry and Severus beginning to look at the backs of books one after the other. Replacing them after reading it or setting it aside.

“Right don’t ask don’t tell,” said Eileen sighing in exasperation when neither answered her.

“Sorry,” said Harry feeling bad for excluding her, but this wasn’t something easily spoken about.

“Its fine,” said Eileen shaking her head in amusement, if she’d wanted to she knew she could worm the answer out of Harry. He was a Ravenclaw not a Slytherin, and chances are, the guilt would get him talking rather quickly. She was tempted, but she had also promised her son, and she kept her promises now. She looked around in curiosity, trying to think of something the boys would like from Harry.

“Harry look at this stall,” shouted Eileen so the young man in question could hear her.

Harry walked over curiously, giving Severus the books he’d collected on the way. He knew immediately what Eileen was talking about; it was a set of nine protective Egyptian amulets for divinatory oracle set. They say amulets but they were more like stones with gold Egyptian hieroglyphics on them. Luna would just love them, damn; he’d already gotten her something.

“How much is the Ankh?” asked Harry seeing the large silver pendant in amongst the items.

“Twelve galleons,” said Mohammad, seeing the rising eyebrow of his customer he hastened to explain. “It has protective shields woven into it, it will help against all minor and some major hexes and jinxes.” most curses were too strong for any itemized shield to protect from.

“I think I’ll get that for Cedric,” he was an Auror and his job was the most dangerous. He also added the divination/oracle set for Luna, what could he say? He was weak and Luna had been there for him when he needed her most. Then he saw it through the corner of his eye, a chess set. It was themed; Egyptians versus the Romans, Viktor would get a kick out of that. Grinning widely he added it to the pile, now for Neville; unfortunately he didn’t think anything could really cheer him
up, except getting his parents back.

“I don’t suppose there’s anywhere I can pick up a nice rare Egyptian plant?” murmured Harry.

“I have a box of seeds,” said Mohammad immediately digging under his table and thumped it on it.

“They’re all magical?” asked Harry flipping through them, eyeing the pictures on the front.

“I think I might have some as well!” said Eileen head to head with Harry as they searched the box filled with plant seeds. Prince Manor had a greenhouse full of various plants, from all over the world. Her parents had made sure to have the best of everything; her father who had been a Potions Master had loved experimenting with them. He had never created anything after passing his Mastery, but he’d enjoyed it. Or at least he had liked spending an inordinate amount of time in the dungeons.

Eileen picked up every packet that was different, double checking them afterwards to make sure she hadn’t picked two the same. Harry actually decided to follow Eileen’s lead and get Neville them all. He wasn’t sure what plants he had, so this was the best way to go about it, with a bit of luck he wouldn’t have every kind he was bringing home. Handing the money he once again put it all in his backpack. A yawn broke free, Merlin he was so very tired - it was going to be a long day.

“Thank you,” said Eileen as they left the stall.

“Do you want me to put them in my bag?” Harry asked as they looked for Severus to find him buried under books.

“No, this is fine,” said Eileen smiling at him.

“Alright,” said Harry, “Need any help?” he asked Severus as they neared him.

“I’m just about done, did you get everything you need?” asked Severus straightening up, he had a feeling he’d need to take a muscle relaxant. His back and feet ached like blazes; he was exhausted probably because of the heat.

“I found a few things they’d like, I’ll show you when I get back!” said Harry excitedly.

“Did it not occur to you to buy something for yourself?” asked Severus, Harry had nothing but books and clothes in his house. Nothing to stamp on his personality, you could tell he still wasn’t used to spending money, especially on himself.

“I got some books,” said Harry staring at Severus curiously, not really understanding his point.

“Exactly, books, again, you’ve never bought anything for yourself but books or potions.” said Severus.

“Have so,” said Harry defensively, which got him thinking, and he had bought stuff hadn’t he? For himself? Hmm he couldn’t remember, maybe he hadn’t. “Well…it’s not a bad thing.”

“No it’s not, but it’s the fun of it, your nearly seventeen, most seventeen year olds would want stuff to show off where they had been.” said Severus, “I certainly did at that age.”

“You did?” asked Harry curiously. Truth be told he couldn’t really remember what Severus’ room looked like, he really should have savoured it, but oh well, he’d been practically a walking zombie at that point.
“Of course,” said Severus wryly, “I bought my mum a box of sweets wherever I went.” at that point though it had been all he could afford. He’d just passed his Mastery and hadn’t had the Prince estate yet.

“Oh yes, the sweets from Belgium were so tasty,” said Eileen pitching in delighted.

“Belgium?” said Harry surprised, wondering what it would be like. The only conferences he’d known about so far were America and Egypt. Both beautiful and warm countries no doubt, not only was he inventing Potions it was giving him the opportunity to go all over the world.

"Indeed, now let's depart.” said Severus. Handing over the gold and silver coins for the books. Then promptly handed Harry the books he'd given Severus not five minutes ago. "Does anyone want a drink? I brought some water and bottles of Butterbeer." said Harry as he opened his bag and put his books inside. "It has cooling charms on it." he added so they knew it would be cold.

"Indeed, Butterbeer please," said Severus immediately. He'd been thinking about going to a vendor the first time he passed one, he guessed that was no longer needed. Accepting it he drank the entire thing in one go.

"I'll have water,” said Eileen amused, accepting the bottle wondering how Harry was so grown up all the time. Severus was right; Harry needed to let his hair down and act like a sixteen year old.

Once they were finished, Severus Apparated his mother and himself back to the hotel. Harry on the other hand, had been Apparating for nearing three years; he had passed during the summer after his fourth year, so he was able to Apparate himself.

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Harry entered the hall where the committee was today, he stalled at the door looking around wide eyed. Blinking, didn’t work, they were still there. Gulping in worry, he place was flooded with people, all the seats were taken and there were people standing all in any available space. Around thirty of them were press, if their cameras were any indication of their profession. Oh, he hated this; it was one public gathering after another. He’d assumed he’d be left alone, to brew potions in his lab to his hearts content. He inwardly scowled when he noticed Cooper was there, he had better not start anything, he wasn’t in the mood to deal with him. He had his certificate, so he wouldn’t hold back - this time.

“Harry?” said Severus exasperated, grabbing Harry’s shoulders he pushed him into the room but thankfully there was too much going on for anyone to take any notice of him. Sitting him firmly on the seat, he sat down as well. He noticed Terrance was once again alone; the seat reserved for his Potions Master was empty.

“Was it like this at yours?” asked Harry.

Severus wanted to lie to make Harry feel better, but he couldn’t, so chose to slightly mislead the conversation away from Harry's question. “The Potions community is much larger than it used to be, and not only that but wizards and witches have taken a deeper interest in potion experiments. Such a families with someone sick or hospitals. Potions are the first thing people think of these days to make you better.” which wasn't misleading at all, but not the whole truth - since it wasn’t larger per se.

“Oh, right.” said Harry, getting up he went to the buffet and plated himself some food, he was starving. At least he wasn’t sore anymore, or sweaty! He’d taken a shower and mild pain reliever upon returning to the hotel room after their long shopping trip. He didn’t take too much, since they were going out for a celebrator meal afterwards.
“Excuse me,” said Harry squeezing by the standing witches and wizards. “Sorry!” he said to the goblin he bumped into, the room was too crowded for words. He gratefully sat back down a few minutes later, staring at the mouth-watering food. Crunching through the carrots, he continued to look around still overwhelmed by the largeness of the event.

“Want a bit?” asked Harry handing it towards them so they could take their pick.

“After a dozen of others touching it? And who knows where their hands have been.” said Severus immediately.

“Severus!” admonished Eileen shaking her head at her son’s words.

Harry paused in mid bite, his stomach clenching at the thought. His green eyes stared longingly down at the square vanilla slice, damn Severus to hell. His hand reluctantly placed it back on the paper plate. Standing up he threw it in the bin at the corner of the room before sitting back down. He glared half-heartedly at Severus whose mouth just twitched in amusement.

“So not funny,” grumbled Harry.

“You weren’t staring at your face,” chuckled Severus; it had taken him biting his tongue to stop himself full out belly laughing. Not something he would ever do in public, wouldn’t want to spoil his reputation. Or be called Teddy Bear Snape, Merlin, it caused him to shudder just thinking about it. Although the likelihood of actually being called Teddy Bear was slim to nothing, it would be something just as sickly sweat.

“I’m bloody starving,” complained Harry.

“Well, it’s only going to be another hour or so before we leave,” said Severus, stating just as calmly “I did warn you to eat something before we left.”

“I wasn’t hungry then, my stomach was doing back flips!” protested Harry.

“And I told you dry toast helps,” said Severus non-pulsed.

“I give up!” cried Harry exasperated; it didn't look like Severus was going to take pity on him anytime soon anyway.

Eileen burst out laughing, honestly they were like an old married couple, and they hadn’t officially been out on a date yet. She laughed harder when both of them stared at her unimpressed. Oh, she couldn’t wait to see how they would evolve once they began dating properly. Her breathing still hitched she tried to get herself under control, when a wizard went onto the raised platform to announce the start. It wasn't just her of course; the entire room had fallen silent.

“Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the monthly potions conference, today I’m pleased to announce we have two distinguished young men, who have successfully passed their mastery!” said Liam loudly, and cheering and polite clapping began for the two men. Harry slunk further into his seat, Terrance on the other hand, seemed quite happy to revel in the praise. He didn’t seem hurt the slightly that his Master wasn’t there to celebrate him coming to his own. No not his master anymore, since he was one himself now, they were on equal footing.

Liam raised his hand to quiet the room, as he spoke again. “Please help me welcome Terrance Whittaker!”

Everyone cheered politely, as whistles started up at the back, no doubt Terrance’s friends or family. Terrance grinned back at them as he headed for the podium. Both Harry and Terrance had a seat in the front so it wasn’t far to walk. Flash bulbs went off, and Harry couldn’t help but wonder what he
“Hello,” said Terrance not bothering to cast a sonorous charm on himself, since it had immediately gone quite again.

“What two potions have you created?” asked Cooper his boredom showing from the panel behind Terrence. Four Potion Masters had taken seats to watch everything basically repeating the questions they had already asked earlier.

“Ooo I hate him,” muttered Harry irritated.

“I assume that is Cooper?” whispered Eileen.

Severus nodded curtly without saying anything.

“I created two, one that allows for twenty four hours, for two people to communicate telepathically.” said Terrance smugly.

“Wicked,” said Harry in admiration.

“Just two people? How?” asked a reporter from the audience her notebook floating in midair with a quill poised just above it, writing everything that’s said.

“By placing one drop of each person’s blood into the potion, and drinking half each,” said Terrence.

“Side-affects?” asked a male reporter, if Harry wasn’t mistaken the badge was for the Daily Prophet.

“Perhaps a headache if they don’t shut up,” said Terrence giggling madly, evidently remembering something funny. Everyone laughed with him, finding amusement in it as well. “But no other side-affects.” he finished seriously once everyone quietened down.

“The second one?” asked the same reporter curiously.

“My second potion helps shield against intrusions of the mind,” said Terrance.

“For how long?” asked Severus, genuinely curious.

“Twelve hours,” conceded Terrance slightly dejected, he’d tried to get it for a longer period of time to no success.

“Side-affects?” enquired Severus.

“It can’t be used long term, there’s some ingredients in it that shouldn’t be taken all the time.” said Terrance.

“Can it help one master Occlumency?” asked Severus, and everyone was looking like they were enjoying a tennis match. Going from Terrance to Severus every time he asked something.

“I have no idea,” admitted Terrance looking baffled.

“Would it hold against a powerful Legilimens?” said Severus, truly curious about the potion.

“It should,” said Terrance looking overwhelmed by the influx of questions.

“Severus! You’re overwhelming the boy,” admonished Eileen.
Severus just stared at his mother drolly.

“Thank Merlin his Master isn’t here, or I’d be dog food,” said Harry sliding further down his seat.

Severus chuckled, “I very much doubt it.” he told Harry. He did keep quiet and let the young man continue to answer questions from the others. Not that there were many, and it wasn’t about the potion itself, just the price, if he was

“Is anyone who tested the potion here?” was shouted from the crowd.

“No, they couldn’t make it, but I have sworn statements from them here,” said Terrance disheartened, he’d given them to the committee members.

“Are they patented or can anyone brew them?” asked Severus.

“Anyone can,” said Terrance. He didn’t want bombarded with requests, he was going on a well deserved holiday to regain his sanity. His Potions Master had driven him to the brink and he was glad to finally pass. Cooper was no help at all, not once had he made this easy for him.

“Alright everyone, if anyone’s interested in the potions you can get them after the conference is over!” said Liam coming back. “Let’s hear a round of applause for Master Whittaker!”

A polite round of applause followed Terrance off the podium and he gratefully retook his seat.

Harry noticed he wouldn’t look in Severus’ direction; he smothered his amusement still feeling slightly sorry for him. Although he should have been prepared for all kinds of questions coming his way.

“Next up, someone you no doubt have heard a lot about in the past few years. Please help me in welcoming the youngest Potions Master in the world - Harry Peverell!” said Liam, making sure to remember the right name after the earlier fiasco.

The applause was deafening as Harry took to the stand.

“Hello everyone, as you know my name is Harry Peverell, thank you for the warm welcome. I wish to thank everyone who has helped me get here today. First and foremost my Potions Master, Severus Prince-Snape, his mother who helped me have confidence in myself, Eileen Prince-Snape.” said Harry thanking them from the bottom of his heart.

Severus’ lips twitched, and Harry wondered why everyone wanted to know what he was doing? The press were eating it up, their eyes tearing slightly for his bad childhood. No doubt tomorrow he’d be reading a full recap of Harry’s life in the paper. Poor Harry, perhaps in time some of his Slytherin nature would rub off on the Ravenclaw.

“What potions have you created?” asked Cooper sarcasm dripping of every word.

“Resero Animagus, as the Latin suggests it unlocks all your possible Animagus’, it has no side-affects it’s been described as turning into an Animagus form. He’s had no problem changing forms or turning back.” said Harry before anyone could ask.

“Is he here today?” asked Cooper scorn lacing his voice.

“Yes,” said Harry, gesturing to the side of the room, “To prove the worthiness of my potion welcome Sirius Black.” his chin jutting out in defiance aimed at Cooper. Watching his eye twitch in obvious irritation. Thankfully Severus was already aware of Sirius’ presence

Sirius stalked towards the podium still wearing his Auror robes, he had come straight here from work. He’d be leaving again straight after unfortunately, he had Nick to teach, he’d promised
James not to leave Dumbledore alone with him. He immediately turned into Padfoot, wagging his tail as everyone clapped politely. The applauding got louder as he transformed into a badger, squeals rented the air when he turned into an Asp, then to everyone’s curiosity because they couldn’t see him - a fly. Gasping when he turned into a chameleon and blended in and out of the background.

“What if they aren’t an Animagus?” asked the reporter from the Daily Prophet.

“I have no idea, I assume when they learn they’ll be able to turn into whatever they want.” said Harry.

“What about someone just learning?” asked Rajesh a Potions Master from the American branch of St. Mungo’s.

“Same thing,” said Harry.

“What if they turn into more than one of their Animagus forms?” asked another reporter from the American Digest.

“They can’t, I asked Sirius to try,” said Harry sniggering.

Sirius nodded that it was true.

“Have you patented it?” asked a witch from Potions weekly.

“I have,” said Harry firmly, which got people talking surprised by his response.

“What’s your second one?” asked Rajesh excited.

“My second one is Promoveo, its for people who cannot get the hang of Apparation.” said Harry. “You don’t drink it, you throw it on the floor, think of where you want to go and it takes you there. Probably very handy in a rush, it can take you out of warded building but you cannot get into them.”

“To prove its worth, I’m going to ask someone to come and test it who’s not been involved in the process.” said Harry, eyeing them wondering if any of them had the guts to agree.

Sirius goggled wide eyed at Harry, unfortunately he’d already tried one of his potions, and he didn’t want to go through that again any time soon.

“I’ll do it,” said Cooper standing up and strutting forward as if he owned the place.

“Remember to think of a place,” said Harry handing one of the potions over, “Preferably a volcano.” he whispered to himself.

“Fine,” said Cooper.

Severus’ nostrils flared once again, he was getting truly irritated beyond belief by this man. He could see the others on the panel were just as exasperated at him, he knew them all well enough to read their tells.

Cooper threw the potion with confidence and one second he was at the front of the room, the next he was at the side of the room right next to the double doors. Everyone began whispering again, completely awed by the potion. Cooper’s brow puckered, he had evidently not expected it to work.
“As you can see it’s fast and just as easy as Apparating, I’ve looked up the laws there’s no permit required. I tested it myself, there is no side-affects and it can be used as often as you like.” said Harry confidently, smirking at the look on Cooper’s face.

“Is this patented as well?” asked the reporter from the Daily Prophet writing hastily.

“Yes,” said Harry.

“How many do you have for offer?” shouted out one of the seated people.

“There are five hundred potions,” said Harry wide eyed, was he going to be trampled for them? Oh Merlin, he hoped not…maybe patenting it wasn’t a good idea.

“How much?” asked another.

“A galleon,” said Harry, truth be told he only got half as profit by the time he bought all the ingredients.
Chapter 61

Invisible

Chapter 61

Partying, Slughorn and Going Home

The guy’s had eaten a lovely dinner before going back to hit one of the pubs inside the hotel. They tried to find one of the quieter ones, but it was nearly impossible to do with so many people there. It seemed most people had decided to stay the night at the hotel after the conference. The Potions Masters just squared themselves away at a back table, getting the drinks in; Harry for most part remained on Butterbeer but had two fire whiskey shots. Harry had never felt more accepted in his life, just sitting talking to everyone here. He’d never imagined this, any of it, but he was grateful for it nonetheless.

“I’ll get the next drinks,” said Sorens standing up grinning like a loony.

“It’s my turn,” said Harry realizing they had completely bypassed him.

Sorens and the others laughed in amusement, “You won’t get served, but you are welcome to try.” replied the Potions Master, jerking his head for the teen to follow him. Both of them made their way to the bar, unaware of the black eyes following them possessively.

“Four shots of fire whiskey, five beers.” said Sorens, turning to face Harry, “You like him don’t you?”

“Who?” asked Harry, but he had a good idea of who Sorens was referring to.

“Severus,” said Sorens smirking in amusement.

Harry looked back at the man in question, unknowingly showing his feelings all over his face. He more than liked Severus, he’d liked him for a while when they first met. Slowly overtime, he’d become fond of him, and it blossomed into something deeper. Perhaps it was because Harry wasn’t used to loving people, that he easy got attached to others. Just look at Eileen, he loved her more than he’d ever loved his own mother. Oh Merlin, he loved Severus, and apparently everyone could see it too.

Sorens watched Harry closely, and realized the feelings went a little deeper. It wasn’t unheard of to form attachments, after all you could spend up to three or four years with your Potions Master. There had been a few scandals over the years, but nothing they couldn’t deal with. He could see nothing had happened between them, there was an air of wistfulness about Harry. As if he had his dearest dream within his grasp but yet had not taken it with both hands. His eyes slid over to Severus, watching him, he was eyeing them from the corner of his eyes. Together they would be brilliant at brewing potions, just look at Eileen’s potion and all it had accomplished. He loved brewing it, the challenge it posed was just breathtaking. He could only imagine how it felt under duress to get it completed.

“Yes,” admitted Harry quietly turning back to the pub, the urge to drink all four shots of whiskey was overwhelming.

“Don’t wait to too long,” said Sorens giving Harry his genuine advice, unaware of their little pact.
“Here you are, that’s three Galleons,” said the bartender, placing the alcohol on a tray for them to take over.
"Here, get a drink for yourself," said Harry passing over the three Galleons and a few Sickles. Although truth be told the guy didn’t look like he needed another one. "Thank you," replied the wizard moving off to serve someone else along the bar.

Sorens grabbed the drinks and they made their way through the crowd, and put them on their table, reclaiming their seats. A bell clanged loudly, indicating it was last drinks served, they would be closing soon. The others gave Sorens a curious look; he still had that smug smirk on his face.

“What did you tell him?” asked Severus leaning over to Harry and whispering into his ear.

“I didn’t tell him anything, he guessed.” whispered Harry inhaling Severus scent, Merlin he wanted him so badly. Maybe he had drunk too much; it’s a good job they’d be leaving soon.

Severus eyed Harry but ultimately just shrugged it off; he couldn’t care less what people thought anymore. It was probably just the alcohol talking, but he didn’t right now.

“To Potions,” said Jacob raising his shot the others all quickly did the same, only Harry had a beer. Clinking the glasses together they took a drink. Once the shots were done, the others opened their beers and leaned back into their seats. Severus slid one hand under the table, and grabbed onto Harry’s, sliding his fingers up and down in a soothing manner. He did so without showing any emotion whatsoever, but Harry ended up choking on his beer before quickly regaining his composure.

“Have you decided what you want to do yet Harry?” asked Damon curiously. Whether Harry liked it or not, he’d been talk of the Potions community for the past two years. It was a source of pride that someone so young chose to pursue the subtle science of potions brewing. It could only do good things; maybe open the doors to others wishing to brew. After all if someone so young could do it, surely they could too? They would find out if their hypothesis was correct, in the next few years whether the request for a Potions Master shot up or not.

“I always wanted to brew independently.” admitted Harry.

“Really?” asked Sorens surprised. “Normally when we first start we get a job, brew regularly and well for the lack of better words get ourselves noticed. Get money coming in and perhaps try and create a potion in our spare time.” In fact, it’s what everyone at this table had done. Although Severus’ was more to do with survival than wishing to teach anyone potions. “You forget he doesn’t need to prove himself,” smirked Severus, his black eyes gleaming with pride. “He has already done so.”

Harry flushed bright red, slouching down further in his seat he hated when the attention was on him.

“True,” said Sorens amused, nobody asked what Potions he’d brew next, and it was just something you didn’t ask each other. For a variety of different reasons, one they could take the idea and perfect it before you, it wouldn’t be the first time it happened betrayal was rife in every community of magic.

One notable person Gilderoy Lockhart, he’d befriended Fredrick Ross last year and proceeded to get his story from him. Lockhart made the mistake of trying to Obliviate him, all that happened was Lockhart being bound and taken to the Ministry. Once there the extent of his crimes had been uncovered, all the books he’d written, adventures he supposedly went on were other peoples. He had been sentenced to Azkaban for life, and the injured parties had been compensated. Afterwards
all the books were destroyed and his name blackened.
“So when are you guys going home?” asked Harry hastily changing the subject. They all lived in America, their accents gave them away from the first time Harry met them. From what Harry could gather, it was little wonder they chose to remain there other than the fact it was their home town. They had much better/more potion ingredients, and with sun nearly all year around the ingredients that needed heat to flourish. In fact Damon had his entire garden cornered off and he grew everything. Tended to it himself too and had more wards up protecting the garden than he had on his house.

“We head home tomorrow,” said Jacob amused, he didn’t want to remain away from his wife and the mother of his child too long. Potions was an important part of his life, but not more important than his child. He’d never thought he’d see the day where he had a kid. Then he met Penelope, she didn’t understand past a school education of potions, but she tried and he loved her for that. Then eight months ago she’d set up a special dinner and told him the news, she’d been so worried since they’d never discussed having a family. Now he would have someone to pass his potions knowledge onto, to see perform magic, to see take their first step, it’s when he’d known he was ready for the journey into fatherhood.

“How is Penny?” asked Harry, he hadn’t got to talk to her properly, thanks to the attack on the Ministry but hopefully he’d get to one day.

“Ready to drop any day now,” said Jacob. Other than Severus and of course Harry now, he was the only one who hadn’t had a child yet. Sorens already had two children, both grown up, one a Potions Mistress, and the other a defence Master.

“I’d carry all the potions you can,” grinned Damon. He had certainly needed it, for five broken bones in his hand after his wife was through with him.

Jacob just shook his head in wry amusement, finishing off his drink. “I think the entire hospital heard my wife when she was in labour with my son, even through the silencing spells.” said Sorens in remembrance. “Of course she said she wouldn’t let me near her again but that didn’t last long.”

Jacob felt his stomach clench in worry, they were doing it on purpose, and he knew that but couldn’t brush off their words. He’d put off thinking about the labour but they were just bringing his anxieties back. Even in the magical world they couldn’t make it painless, its just one of the unpleasant joys that came with motherhood. He had a charmed pendant on, that would let him know his wife was in labour should it happen before he got back. So he knew he didn’t have to worry about missing it.

“We best head out,” said Severus standing up, they and two other groups were all that was left, everyone was gone already. The tables were cleaning themselves and chairs flopping on top of them afterwards. As much fun as he’d had, he was rather exhausted he’d been up nearing twenty four hours. He had also missed out on the chance to speak to Slughorn but there would be other times.

“I guess you’re right,” said Damon, staring around as he too got up, the rest followed.

“Are you leaving early this year again?” asked Sorens as they left the pub, at least they didn’t have to walk back to the hotel since they were already in it this time around.

“Don’t I always?” replied Severus dryly, he certainly didn’t outwear his welcome anywhere.
“I’ll write to you,” said Jacob. No doubt with a few pictures of his child, he didn’t know what they were having. Penelope had decided to wait, she wanted to be surprised. Severus wasn’t the most sociable person but Jacob wasn’t about to leave him out whether he sneered at the sentimentality or not. Knowing Severus’ he’d probably just look at it drolly then roll his eyes.

“Have fun,” said Sorens patting Severus back.

“He’s sixteen,” said Severus sniping at his friend, worse because he had to remind himself all the time.

“Not for long,” teased Sorens. “It’s about time you settled down old boy, we were beginning to think you’d taken a vow of celibacy.”

“Ha-ha-ha,” said Severus dryly.

“He’s quite a catch,” admired Sorens.

Severus glared in warning, friend or no friend he didn’t like others staring at Harry.

“Oh boy, you are in deep.” said Sorens unruffled by the glare. “I’ll write to you.” he said when they caught up with the others. He’d let Severus and Harry tell the guys if and when they began dating. He certainly looked forward to their faces, since they seemed pretty oblivious to anything between them.

“Take care, both of you.” said Jacob; they were going back to an island filled with nothing but war.

“If it gets too much, you are always welcome to stay with us, even your mum I mean it guys.” said Damon seriously, but he knew Severus wouldn’t do it.

“Thank you,” said Harry, their worry was extremely touching.

“No problem,” said Damon patting Harry on the back.

“Night,” said Sorens fishing out his key for his room, and the others all murmured goodnight as the elevator began dropping them off at their floor. Since Severus and Harry were at the top, they were the last to get off. Remaining quiet so they didn’t wake Eileen up, they crept into the room, passed the sleeping woman and into the bedroom, flipping the light on as they did.

“Oh no,” said Severus cursing quietly.

Harry just grinned in devilment, not even blinking at the glare he received from Severus. Harry moved around and took a few unnecessary frilly pillows from the bed and put them on the chair. Kicking off his shoes, he removed his cloak before cursing quietly. He quickly made his way through to the bathroom to relieve himself sighing in relief; he hadn’t realized how desperate he’d been. Re-buttoning his trousers he went through to the mini-bar and grabbed two bottles of water, he needed to hydrate desperately.

“Do you want some water?” asked Harry yawning tiredly.

“I wouldn’t mind,” replied Severus already in the bed and covered.

“Sparkling.” said Harry offhandedly as he flung the plastic bottle at him and sat on the bed. Taking a deep drink, enjoying the refreshing taste of lemon and lime. He liked the flavour water he decided, he’d definitely be taking some home with him. Removing his jeans leaving his boxers and t-shirt on he slid into bed relishing in the warm emanating from the warming charm that had been placed on it by the hotel. “Night.” murmured Harry, turning his light off. He’d show Severus he
could be grown up, and wait until he was ready. Even if it was killing him to be so close and not let his hands just...wander.

“Goodnight,” replied Severus, sounding slightly bemused.

Harry woke up the next morning, only to find Severus was already up and dressed. If his wet hair was anything to go by, he’d just finished taking a shower. Wincing at the pain in his forehead, Merlin the hangovers were the worst thing ever. Sitting up feeling slightly sick, he wasn’t surprised to see a hangover remedy on his nightstand. A small smile played across his face, Severus thought of everything. Uncorking the potion he drank it in one gulp, before washing the taste away with the water. Which by the way was still cold, thanks to the cooling charms placed on the bottle.

“You know, you don’t have anything I haven’t seen before.” said Harry feeling a little put out he wasn’t getting a little treat for being good. Honestly it was like Severus did it on purpose, he so badly wanted a physical relationship with him.

“Go shower, we are due down for breakfast in twenty minutes.” said Severus, he had made reservations in one of the restaurants inside the hotel. He was hungry, or at least now he was, before the potion he wouldn’t have eaten all day.

“Alright,” muttered Harry, removing himself from the warmth of the bed, removing his t-shirt and walked through to the Ensuite showing Severus what he was missing. He was a teenager at the end of the day, not an adult he couldn’t be grown up all the time. In record time he showered, did the toilet and of course brushed his teeth. Grabbing his boxers from the floor he went back through to the room and pulled clothes out of his bag. Since they were going home, he made sure it was warm clothes he put on. He would miss the warm weather, he even had the beginning of a tan and he’d only been outside half a day.

“Where’s Eileen?” asked Harry when he went through to the sitting area. Clipping his cloak around his neck, his hair already dried.

“She’s already gone down,” said Severus, “She also wants to look at a few things she saw and decided she wanted.”

“Oh,” said Harry nodding his head, “Are we leaving straight after?”

“Yes so remember everything.” said Severus as he shrunk his own things using the Accio spell to see if he’d forgotten anything. A few empty vials flew into view and he placed them in his pocket. “And the money for all the potions is on the table, don’t forget that.”

“They were all sold?” asked Harry from the bedroom, as he hastily packed everything into the holdall. Remembering the stuff in the bathroom, he grabbed his toiletry bag and made sure everything was in it. Shrinking it, he put it in the bag since he was messy and full.

“Yes,” replied Severus. As if there had been any doubt, Harry's potions were brilliant, and would probably take a while for the demand to calm.

Copying Severus he Accio’ed for anything else he could have forgotten, only the money bag floated towards him. Slipping it into the inside of his cloak pocket. Hoisting his holdall, he put it over his shoulder and exited the bedroom. He headed for the mini-bar and grabbed ten bottles of the water he liked and put them in the bag. Only then did he shrink it, and place it safely beside his bag of money. As they were leaving he also grabbed a handful of grapes and an apple. Closing and locking the door he caught up with Severus as the elevator door pinged.
“Did you enjoy the hotel?” asked Severus once the doors closed.

“I think it’s brilliant!” said Harry.

“Good,” said Severus, perhaps he had chosen an appropriate birthday gift after all. It was open ended so they could leave whenever they liked, especially if Harry had no desire to leave right away after his birthday.

The elevator doors opened and Harry followed Severus to the restaurant, since there were many he didn’t know which he’d chosen. Getting lost once was enough for him, thank you very much. The smell of coffee was strong in the air, causing both of them to inhale sharply.

“I’ll be back in a minute, I’m going to talk to Professor Slughorn,” said Severus spotting his old Head of house.

“Alright,” said Harry but Severus was already half way towards the teacher. Sniggering in amusement, he shook his head; he looked around but didn’t see Eileen anywhere. He did notice Terrance sitting on his own looking miserable, poor guy; it must have been awful having Cooper as a Potions Master. He went over to the table and made two coffees, leaving one black and placing some milk and sugar on the tray and making plating himself some food.

“Mind if I sit here?” asked Harry, knowing very well that Severus wouldn’t be eating any breakfast.

Terrance looked up surprised to see Harry standing there; he’d seen them last night having fun and felt envious of how close they all were. “Sure,” said Terrance.

“Here,” said Harry handing over a coffee “Looks like you could use it.”

“Thanks,” said Terrance smiling weakly. Not bothering to put sugar or milk into his coffee, the stronger the better in his opinion.

“Congratulations by the way,” said Harry honestly.

“You too,” said Terrance. He’d worked hard to get his Mastery, despite Cooper making it unbearable. His parents had known Cooper, so they’d paid him to take him on. He half suspected they’d known what he’d be like, and hoped he’d give in and do something else. His parents weren’t happy that he’d chosen Potions to be his chosen field. Everyone in the family was expected to follow the family tradition and become healers.

“I have to ask, did you read upon the brain for when you made those two potions?” asked Harry curiously.

“Well, took me a year.” said Terrance tiredly; drinking the coffee Harry brought him.

“So you know a lot about the mind? The pathways and matter?” asked Harry.

“Yes, I felt like a complete idiot at first.” replied Terrance. Thankfully most information had come from his brother and sister, who knew a lot about the subject matter. Still hadn't made it easy, but they'd taken it slow. His parents though wouldn't help him, just suggested he take on an apprenticeship at St. Mungo's (American branch).

“I know, I still feel that way,” said Harry laughing in amusement.

Terrance just grinned in response to Harry’s statement. “You’ll get there, I can recommend a few
books if you like?” enquired Terrance.

“I’d like that,” said Harry smiling in gratitude.

“Harry! Lets go.” said Severus, “Portkey activates in five minutes!”

“Write to me?” asked Harry standing up, banishing the remains of his breakfast.

“Sure,” said Terrance surprised.

“Great! Cya!” said Harry quickly manoeuvring through the magical people sitting on their chairs having breakfast. He quickly met up with Severus and grinned at Eileen who once again had her hands full of things.

“Come on then,” said Eileen beaming at them. It was so much fun being able to buy whatever she wanted. It’s not something she’d been able to do since she was a child. Since the age of seventeen, she’d had to scrape to get by, even with the shop. Now though with it sold she had more money than she would ever spend. She loved every second of getting away from the UK. She’d bought something for both her son and a boy she loved like one.

Holding onto the Portkey the hotel and its surrounding disappeared.

“Master Severus! Mistress Eileen! Master Harry! Welcome back,” said Dobby beaming at them as their Portkey materialized in the foyer of Prince Manor.

“Thank you Dobby,” said Eileen politely.

“You are welcome,” replied Dobby before going back to cleaning the fire, which he succeeded in doing with a few clicks of his finger then promptly lit it. The fire crackled merrily masking Dobby’s departure as they sat down. Grateful to be back home once again, despite the war.

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Harry immersed himself in his potion, it’s the first time he’d brewed anything since returning from the trip. Between trying to map out Voldemort’s life, reading books on the mind, brain and its pathways, as well as the nerves in the body all in aid to try and help Neville’s parents. He just wanted away from books and research, he felt as though his mind was literally about to explode. What if he’d taken on too much? What if he couldn’t do this? Not only would it disappoint himself but Neville as well. Nev was counting on him to make his parents better, so they could come back to him. He wasn’t even this scared about the war, or defeating Voldemort.

His friends were precious to him, they meant everything, more than all the money in the world, more than even Potions. They were all he had in the world, other than Eileen and Severus of course, none more special than Luna who also felt insconsolably guilty. She’d seen it, as it was happening yet was trying to convince herself she could have stopped it. She couldn’t have any more than he could have; they’d been trapped in the Ministry of Magic. No he had to do this, if it’s the last thing he did, he’d do it damn it.

Using the small stopper he sucked some of the ingredient out, and dropped two plops into the potion. If he’d been paying the proper amount of attention, he’d have realized it wasn’t the correct ingredient. As it was Harry gasped in shock, clutching the stopper causing the ingredient to go all over his hand. Noticing that the potion was turning violent red, then before Harry could think let alone react, a large resounding boom penetrated the air; as Harry went flying into the wall with two simultaneous cracks his body fell almost lifeless. His arm sitting at an odd angle his hand at the side of his head. Agony coursed through Harry causing him to scream and writhe in the corner of the room, Merlin he’d never felt anything like it before in his life. Even the Cruciatus curse was
preferable to this.

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“Are the books any good?” asked Eileen her lips twitching, sipping her hot chocolate, which she was in the rare mood for today.

“Nothing as of yet,” admitted Severus, even he couldn’t be bothered looking at another one. The words were just blurring together, he was determined to see it through. If one of them could help them, then they would do it. He’d set up a meeting with Slughorn the day he’d seen him, under the pretext of taking to Harry of course. He would be coming in a week’s time, the first free date he had teaching students. His precious Slug club came first of course, much to his consternation the man had not changed.

“I hope you find something,” said Eileen.

“I do too,” said Severus, their lives may well depend on it.

Just then Eileen and Severus froze in shock when they felt the manor shake on its foundations. Severus leapt from the chair, his book slipping from his grasp forgotten. Then he heard it, a soul wrenching agonising scream of despair, any colour Severus had left him completely. He’d never heard anything like it before in his life, oh Merlin, please let Harry be alive. He couldn’t speak for the life of him, as he ran faster than he had ever before. He had to get to Harry, screaming was better than silence right now. Even if it made his stomach protest heavily.

“Harry!” cried Eileen not as composed as her son, tears streaming down her face as she tried to hurry along as well. Not surprising her son was well ahead of her, none of the house had been caved in, and that was something at least.

Severus wrenched open the lab door only to cough as smoke billowed out at an alarming rate...then an ominous silence descended upon the manor as if a dark cloud had moved in on it.
Chapter 62

Invisible

Chapter 62

Investigation

Severus froze for a nanosecond, with what felt like the entire world freezing in that second with him before his brain kicked in. Flicking out his wand quicker than lightning, he dissipated the smoke, and lit the room, getting his first look at Harry and his stomach rebelled dangerously. Within seconds, he was over at Harry, scanning him, not even attempting to move or touch him lest he make it worse. His breathing hitched, when he read it, then he suddenly reeled back in shock.

A deafening and unholy shriek pierced the air, as smoke began to coming out of Harry’s head. At the same time Severus’ mark burned painfully, but he paid no heed to it. He was used to the pain that came from wearing the mark; he’d been ignoring the summons since the evil wizard had returned.

“What on earth?!” shrieked Eileen covering her ears.

It soon became apparent it wasn’t just smoke, as it began to take shape, a face, one that Severus knew all too well. Severus’ eyes twitched as he stared at it, the shrieking didn’t seem to penetrate his shock. It soon began to taper off, until as quickly as it began it stopped again. Severus and Eileen stared at Harry unable to believe their eyes, whereas Eileen was baffled and confused… Severus had a few ideas of what it was, but didn’t understand HOW it happened.

“Is he okay?” whispered Eileen leaning against the door shaken beyond words.

“Dobby!” yelled Severus uncaring how he sounded at the moment.

Eileen moved into the lab, wild eyed, and too worried to even cry at this point, jumping at Severus’ loud voice. What had happened? Was that what they had heard earlier? No, it had been Harry, she knew his voice.

“Don’t move, the potions caused second degree burns,” snarled Severus his heart beating through the roof, as terror consumed him.

“Yes sir?” asked Dobby appearing, his little mouth dropped open as he stared around in shocked horror.

“Get a healer from St. Mungo’s, NOW!” demanded Severus, yelling the last word when Dobby didn’t move fast enough. Standing up he ran towards his potions cupboard, yanking it open his heart sank more than half their potions were laying in a puddle on the floor. No doubt what had caused the severe shaking, but it didn’t help Harry right now. Banishing everything, not wanting another accident to occur, more than thankful for his emergency potions supply. “Accio potions kit!”

Eileen stepped aside just in time, otherwise she would have been winded in the stomach by the flying box. She came further in, wanting to do something, anything to help. Making sure to give any potion remains a wide berth, breathing ragged, her hand automatically clasped across her mouth upon seeing Harry properly. He was ten times worse up close. His robes were melted onto his skin, but it seemed the spells on them had stopped a worse disaster from happening. Yet
another part of her wondered if it could have possibly been worse! The only thing stopping her from giving way to despair was the fact her son seemed so stark raving calm. For a moment, then she was spectacularly sick all over the dungeon floor.

“What on earth are you-- oh dear!” said Healer Walsh instinctively going into professional mode. Assessing the situation, ensuring it was safe for her to approach it. “Go to my office and retrieve my emergency bag, it’s under my desk. Make haste!” she demanded of Dobby, who immediately left to do what she wanted.

“Healer Walsh isn’t it?” enquired Severus hastily handing her the results of the scan, balling his hands into fists when he realized they were shaking. He’d been through a lot in his life, and knew panicking wasn’t the answer. Yet Severus felt like his entire life was spiralling out of control. Swallowing thickly, he scooped a dollop of burn paste and immediately spread it across Harry’s chest. Almost heaving at the sizzling sound that met his ears and the burning that met his nostrils.

Immediately upon seeing the results, Healer Walsh cursed inwardly before waving her wand in a long complicated motion. Never faltering in her chant, as magic warmed the room, for three minutes it continued, Severus had stopped putting the paste on watching what was happening in concern. Praying it would work, each second that sluggéd by, he began to fear they were too late. Then they heard it, the scraping of Harry’s spinal cord reattaching itself together, Harry jerked once more a moan of agony tearing out his throat.

“I did it,” she whispered, breathing ragged, it had taken a lot of out her to perform that spell. In fact it was the first time she’d performed it, or at least the first time since learning at university. The spell had to be cast within five minutes of the accident or the injuries were permanent. Not even Skele-Gro would have helped Harry’s spine, they had been smart to use a house elf, and nobody had done that before. “We can move him now.”

“Here is your bag, ma’am,” said Dobby re-appearing.

“Take it up to Harry’s room, along with this,” said Severus handing him his own potions box.

“Yes Master Severus,” said Dobby immediately popping away.

Healer Walsh conjured a stretcher and levitated Harry onto it, and backed out of the potions lab, Eileen began showing her the way.

Severus had never been more grateful that they only used the first floor, as they got Harry into his bedroom. They lay Harry down on his back and got to work. Healer Walsh immediately set about cutting the remains of Harry’s clothes away. She didn’t attempt to remove the clothes from the burns, knowing it would cause more damage. Unfortunately most of his chest was covered in burns; with Severus’ help they had Harry’s clothes off leaving only his underwear.

“We must keep him as warm as possible,” said Healer Walsh, “Do you have any Clingfilm?” it wasn’t something she had available in her emergency kit.

“I will get it, ma’am.” said Dobby disappearing.

“Here I think you should take this,” said Healer Walsh handing over a calming draught, guiding Eileen to a seat sitting the woman down. It was testament to how bad she felt that she didn’t put up a fuss about having her see to Harry first. Not that she spent a lot of time; once the potion was consumed she once again began searching her bag. Lifting out a large jar of burn paste. She wasn’t sure she had enough, but she’d bet Severus Snape had plenty on hand, she was albeit surprised he was allowing her to use her potions. Oh, he had brewed it, of course, how could she have forgotten?
“The Clingfilm ma’am,” said Dobby, appearing and placing it on the bed, the other house elves were in a right state. They all liked Master Harry as much as he did, and they were worried about him. They didn’t make an appearance though, since it wasn’t their place to do so. Only two elves had continued their work, and it was Rose and Daisy who were cooking today.

“Thank you,” said Healer Walsh; grabbing it with one hand, placing it in front of her, she sterilized her hands before grabbing the paste. She stretched it and wrapped it around the large burn on Harry’s thigh before wrapping it in Clingfilm to keep it in place and stop anything from getting on the paste.

“Don’t burst the blisters!” said Healer Walsh hastily, “The paste doesn’t have anything to prevent infection.”

“I know,” said Severus dryly, as he continued to press the paste into the abused blistered skin, making sure not to put too much pressure onto it. Between the both of them, the burns were covered and dressed with Clingfilm. All bar one, the large one down the side of his face and neck. Once that was done, she cast a spell to make anything in the wounds disappear, mostly the remains of the clothes. Another scan was performed to see how Harry was doing.

“He’s lost a lot of fluid, but this isn’t surprising with the severity of his burns,” said Healer Walsh, “I’d suggest giving him a level ten pain reliever and Skele-Gro his arm is broken in three different places.”

Severus nodded in understanding, his lips twitched when Dobby immediately appeared with a pitcher full of water. The clinking of ice cubes made the only sound in the room. Severus picked up the glass on the tray and immediately filled it. Taking a deep breath, he cast the enervate on Harry, waking him up swallowing thickly at the moan of despair leaving Harry’s lips. If he could he’d take the pain for Harry, or make it go away, but he couldn’t, all he could do was make him as comfortable as possible.

Severus sat on the bed, lifting Harry’s neck and head, making sure not to move him more than necessarily. If he did he would only be hurting Harry further, it was the last thing he wanted. Pressing the glass to his lips, urging him to drink. Unfortunately Harry wasn’t having any of it; he just kept choking it back out, causing it to flow down his chin, neck and chest. Unable to bear forcing him he put the glass back on the stand and poured only a few drops of the potion into his mouth. Harry let out a guttered moan, only then did Severus give him the rest which he was able to swallow without difficulty. Then he gave him the Skele-Gro, and some water to wash the horrid taste away. He was barely conscious but he managed to succeed.

“Keep him as warm as possible,” said Healer Walsh, not wanting him to go into shock.

“I will,” said Severus, tired and stressed to the max. “How much do I owe you?”

“No cost,” said Healer Walsh immediately, not after all the help they’d given the hospital a few months back. If not for them the casualty list would have been even greater. Truth be told they had received many donations following that day, with extra money to build a new wing from the Ministry as well. “I will come and see him in two days time, send Dobby again should you wish. If you need me for anything before then, this is my office and home Floo addresses, do not hesitate to get in touch.” she added, pulling out a card with the addresses on them handing it to the surprised wizard.

“Thank you,” said Severus.

“Try and get some rest.” said Healer Walsh, “He’s going to be cranky enough for both of you.” she
added wryly. Patients who were in pain were guaranteed to be unpleasant, but who could really blame them? She certainly couldn’t. Although some of the abuse she took was uncalled for. She was the one trying to get them better after all, shaking of her thoughts focusing back on the situation at hand.

“Actually he’s quiet when he’s ill,” said Severus, probably due to his upbringing and being treated as if he was a piece of gum his parents trod on.

“I see,” said Healer Walsh feeling rather awkward. “Do you have enough level ten pain reliever?”

“I believe so,” said Severus.

“Very well, take care of yourself,” said the Healer, placing everything back in her bag before standing up with a quiet “Bye.” then she Apparated away, leaving Eileen and Severus to deal with what had just happened.

“Severus, what came out of Harry?” asked Eileen her black eyes demanding an answer.

“Not right now mum,” said Severus tiredly, “Can you stay with him?”

“Yes,” said Eileen sighing in exasperation.

“Thank you,” said Severus, grabbing his potions box and leaving the room, heading down the stairs.

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Severus entered the potions lab, staring around at the devastation; he was honestly surprised Harry was still alive. The workstation Harry had been using had a large hole in it; the back of the room was black and charred. Every single cauldron was destroyed; pieces of them lay strewn absolutely everywhere. As were the vials, stirrers and potions he had been working on lay in a puddle off goo. It was a good job he’d sent Lupin the Wolfsbane potion, otherwise that too would have been ruined. Even the ceiling had damage to it; it looked like a demolition sight, or more accurately a bomb site. Merlin what had happened? Shaking his head sadly, unfortunately these kinds of accidents admittedly did happen. Whether you were an expert or a novice, as he always told his students, one extra drop of an ingredient or wrong one could annihilate the entire potions classroom and the people in it. Something Neville Longbottom hadn’t taken to heart, or Nick Potter come to that.

Making his way over to the station Harry had been working at. Placing the box on the table where it hadn’t been damaged which was difficult to do. Perching it on the edge, he opened it and removed a few items he’d need. They didn’t know the affects the potion may have on Harry, for all they knew it could be poisoning him. So it was vital to keep some of the exploded mess. Using a small turkey baster he placed some of the ruined mess into a vial. Sealing it closed with a cork and a spell, it was one less thing to worry about, and an entire vial would be enough to test. Putting a sticky label on it, he wrote what it was with a self inking quill. Putting them away, he began investigating the workbench more thoroughly.

He inspected what was left of the potion vials trying to determine what Potion Harry had been trying to brew. Placing them on the table as he went along, some only had dregs in them but enough for Severus to identify it. Once they were all placed on the table, he began to think on what Potion he’d been making. He couldn’t think of any, either he was experimenting or the other vials were so destroyed he wouldn’t find out. Pinching the bridge of his nose, he noticed another vial at the other side of the floor of the counter he’d used. Arching an eyebrow, musing that perhaps it
was the last vial he’d been working with, picking it up, assuming he knew what it was, he realized what Harry had been brewing. It was fairly standard, how the hell had Harry ended up causing such an explosion? Sniffing it, both eyebrows rose in shock. This wasn’t what he had assumed; unless he was very much mistaken it was unicorn blood. It wasn’t black which meant a unicorn had willingly given it. Unicorn blood turned black if it was taken against its will, rendering it ‘cursed’ so to speak.

How could he have mistaken the ingredients? Although it was a little hypocritical since he too had mistaken them. With delicacy he removed the glass from the unicorn blood, and placed the remains into a clean whole vial and corking it. That wasn’t an ingredient you put out, not unless it was contaminated, and miraculously it wasn’t. He had an urge to go and speak to Harry, ask him where he’d gotten the unicorn blood. Unfortunately Harry wasn’t in any shape to talk to him, never mind answer any questions.

Leaning against the table, he closed his eyes; he’d come so close to losing Harry tonight. The feelings running through him scared him to death. It was nothing like he’d ever felt before, not even close when he heard about the attack on the Potters fearing Lily had died. The feelings he had for her son, made a mockery of any feelings he’d ever had for Lily back in the day. It would take days if not a week to get the lab fixed, and new worktables put in. None of this really mattered, healing Harry was more important.

When he was worried or upset he liked brewing, it took his mind off things. Unfortunately it wasn’t something he could do today. This was the only lab he had, his mind wandered back to Harry, giving up, he abandoned the lab. He wanted to make sure Harry was alright, perhaps even get some sleep. He wasn’t quite sure why, but he was exhausted not just emotionally but mentally as well. Placing the unicorn blood in his potions box, he stood on a piece of glass, looking down he frowned. Bending over, he noticed a piece of the dragon hide potions bag he’d gotten for Harry just after he’d become his apprentice. He added it to the list he was mentally calculating in his mind.

Closing the door to the stinking lab, he made his way to the bedroom, not surprised to see his mother was still there. She was at least calm; thanks to the potion Healer Welsh had given her earlier. His mum didn’t do well under pressure, worse still if it was someone she cared about. To think just a day ago they had been enjoying themselves in Egypt. Would this still have happened if they’d remained in Egypt? Staying for Harry’s birthday would have been a good plan. Forcing those thoughts from his mind, ‘if” and ‘but’s changed absolutely nothing. He should know he’d spent his childhood and teenage years thinking those ifs and buts until he was blue in the face. He’d forced himself to quit it, and he had, this was the first time he’d thought along these lines in a very long time.

“Find anything?” asked Eileen, clutching Harry’s hand close.

“He put the wrong ingredient in,” said Severus moving a chair to Harry’s other side and sitting down. His mother had put the duvet over him, keeping him warm like the healer suggested.

“Thank Merlin he was wearing his protective robes,” said Eileen, just staring at him, watching his chest rise and fall. As long as he was alive they could get through anything, she would ensure it.

“Indeed,” said Severus. The potion would have eaten through both layers of his skin, perhaps even the muscle if he hadn't. His mother’s statement couldn't have been truer; the point was he had been wearing it so that's all that mattered.

“Can Rose get anything for Master Severus and Mistress Eileen?” asked Rose, appearing in the room, her attention was mostly on Harry rather than them.
“Go get some sleep mum, its after ten.” said Severus. “Don’t worry about Harry, he’ll be fine.” reassuring himself more than his mother in all honesty.

“It’s okay, I’ll stay. A coffee please, Rose.” replied Eileen.

Rose disappeared to do what Mistress Eileen had asked of her.

“Mum, go to sleep.” said Severus. “I won’t leave Harry alone, I’m sleeping here as well.” trying to tell her without actually coming out and saying it. He wanted to be alone with Harry.

“Very well, but I want answers tomorrow.” said Eileen pointedly, she wasn’t going to give up on that. She’d let them keep whatever they were up to a secret, that was fine, but he knew what had happened to Harry. Otherwise he wouldn’t be sitting there, he’d be in the library trying to find out what had caused the spectre to appear and shriek at them. She wanted answers; she certainly didn’t want to see it happening again if it was going to.

Severus didn’t reply, merely watched his mother leave, then turning his attention back to Harry. Brushing his hair from his face, touching his forehead he was warm, but not overly so, he also looked peaceful. Turning his hand over, finding them wet and sticky, curious, bringing his hand to his nose he sniffed it. Unicorn blood, he hastily removed a handkerchief and removed it from Harry's forehead and his own hand.

Putting it on the nightstand, he removed his cloak and trousers before sliding in next to the unconscious wizard. Shaking his head wryly, realizing more often than not he was sleeping beside Harry when he was hurt. He made sure none of their body parts touched, Harry was hurt enough without him adding to it. He made a vow that when Harry got better he’d never turn away from his advances again. Life was too short, and he finally realized this after the shock of the day. Stroking Harry’s hair he continued to soothe the sleeping wizard. His other hand under the pillow, along with his wand, tightly within its grip. What a way to spend his birthday tomorrow, stuck in bed in pain was Severus' last thought, before sleep finally claimed him too.

Harry felt like he was swimming in lava, drowning in it unable to reach the surface. He hurt so much, tears rolled like rivers down his face. What had happened? Where was he? He thought as chills wracked his weakened frame, his teeth were chattering together, yet he felt so warm, so hot. He needed cold, his arms felt like lead but he successfully removed his duvet but regretted it almost immediately as the shivering intensified.

Harry lifted his head from the pillow and moaned in agony as the room spun around him, he felt extremely disorientated. Breathing ragged, he closed his eyes, groaning, what was wrong with him? He’d never felt so sick before in his life. In this case literally, nausea was rolling all over him alarmingly. Harry could do nothing as he lost the contents of his stomach, so dizzy and disorientated he barely knew where he was never mind what he was doing. Heart beating through the roof, he began choking on his sick as his eyes bulged alarmingly. He couldn't breath, couldn't swallow the sick and the world soon took on a grey tinge.

Severus jerked awake, hearing choking coming from beside him, staring around wildly before the events of yesterday slammed into him. Turning to face Harry, he used a spell and quickly banished the sick, thankful for the fact he had a habit of sleeping with his wand under his pillow. There was certainly nowhere else for him to have it, and if he’d had to look for it, it would have wasted very precious time. Gripping Harry’s underarm he hoisted him up, patting him on the back, but Harry just flopped side ways against him. Unable to sit up, only then did Severus feel just how abnormally warm Harry was against him.

“Bloody hell,” murmured Severus, using his wand he took Harry’s temperature, his eyes widened
upon seeing the results. Laying him down again, not even bothering to dress he hastily made his way to the Floo network.

“Walsh residence, 23 Forester Avenue,” shouted Severus, his head stuck in the Floo, waiting with bated breath for someone, anyone to come into view.
“Can I help you?” enquired a wizard coming into view; he looked around Healer Walsh’s age, perhaps her boyfriend or husband? He had never thought to enquire, and since they didn’t wear jewellery when working it was difficult to tell.

“I need Healer Walsh, it’s an emergency.” said Severus his voice conveying the dire nature of his request.

“One moment,” said the wizard, Apparating away.

A few seconds later Healer Walsh came into view, fully dressed with her emergency bag. “I do not know the Floo the address, perhaps you can send Dobby over? It will save time.” she didn’t question the emergency since she knew if anyone a Potions Master would be less likely to panic for nothing. A few seconds later the Floo was empty, this time she wasn’t surprised by Dobby’s arrival or being taken to where they stayed this time.

Dobby grabbed her robe and popped them straight into Harry’s bedroom.

“Okay what’s wrong?” asked Healer Walsh striding over to Harry immediately.

“Fever, chills, and a few moments ago he was sick,” said Severus uncaring that the healer was seeing him in such a state of undress. Or that it was evident he had slept in the bed as well, nothing seemed significant right now.

“It is his birthday today isn’t it?” asked the healer.

“Yes,” said Severus in agreement.

“It could be his magic coming in,” said Healer Walsh, doing a scan to be on the safe side, and safe it was indeed. “He’s sepsis. He needs a course of antibiotics immediately.” she didn’t need to explain what would happen if Harry didn’t get the treatment. Sepsis circulated the blood, stopping oxygen getting to the organs, and it would inevitably shut them down and kill Harry in the process. “I do not have antibiotics,” admitted Severus, even before the exploded had destroyed most of their potions to smithereens. The potion only took three hours to make, so if it came to it, he’d just go to the potions store and get everything.

Healer Walsh dug around in her bag, retrieving a prescription pad, she began writing it out. “May I use Dobby?” she asked looking up, signing the paper with a flourish.

 “Of course, Dobby!” called Severus.

“Yes sir?” asked the little elf appearing at the door, he hadn’t even left.

“Please give this to Medi-Witch Tantum, wait for her to retrieve them from the pharmacy and bring them straight here.” said Healer Walsh handing over the prescription.

“Dobby will do that right away,” said Dobby taking the paper and disappearing once more. “What can I do for him?” asked Severus at a loss, he was a Potions Master not a healer.

“We have to set him up on a drip, he will be in no condition to drink anything and its vital he gets fluids.” said Healer Walsh. “Do not bundle him up, or make him too warm. Someone with medical
training has to remain here; otherwise he will have to be admitted into St. Mungo’s. Sepsis is a very serious medical condition and it can take a turn for the worst within seconds.”

“II see,” replied Severus, “I’d rather not have Harry in St. Mungo’s; it would just draw a lot of unwanted attention.”

“I gathered as much,” acknowledged Healer Walsh. She would stay until the worst was over anyway, she hadn’t had a case of Sepsis for three years, after the cutting curse wound got infected and the idiot didn’t seek medical attention. It had been a close call, any longer and he would have died.

“Can I give him a pain reliever?” asked Severus, wiping away the sweat gathering alarmingly on Harry’s head. The cloth was wet with cool water, but not freezing since it wouldn't be good for Harry's body with the constant shift in temperature.

“Yes,” said Healer Walsh immediately, he was certainly going to need it. Plus it would help lower his temperature so that was also a good thing. Using her wand she got the time and began writing once more, it was the healer in her; she felt the need to record everything down. She placed it in a clipboard so it was easier to write everything down.

Severus carded his hand through Harry's hair, his breath catching when he saw nothing but blankness and confusion in them. It was as though Harry didn't recognize him, but no, that wasn’t possible. The healer had scanned him, there was obviously no brain damage, but still the look was like a knife to the heart. His mind and heart whirled with fierce panic. "Are you sure the knock to his head didn't cause damage?" asked Severus pausing in his petting, his eyes moving away from those confused green ones. Merlin his heart was pounding louder than a drum did she not hear it?

"Why do you ask?" enquired Walsh confused. "Do you think he's suffered memory loss?"

Severus looked at Harry's eyes again, "That's why I'm asking you." he said thickly.

"There is nothing on the scan, no brushing whatsoever, he was lucky, his arm seemed to have protected his head from the worst damage." said Walsh, well apart from the burn on the left side of his face and neck.

"Very well," said Severus praying she was right, Merlin he wanted Harry to acknowledge him, so he knew he still had his Harry.

“Did Harry have anything last night other than the level ten pain reliever?” asked the Healer distracting Severus completely.

“No, nothing,” said Severus, flinging the used cork in the bin, putting the vial on the nightstand. The corks couldn’t be re-used, the vials if sterilized and cleaned properly they could. After a few seconds Harry relaxed and dozed off again, his moaning tapering off. The fever and chills continued, Severus had to refrain from putting more covers on Harry, remember the healer's words. “Here you are ma’am,” said Dobby returning with a tray of twenty potions.

The healer immediately took the tray, which looked about to topple any given moment. Conjuring a table, she placed it on a stable surface. Uncorking it, she immediately gave Harry the first dose of his antibiotics. Writing the time down on the chart she had just made.

“Can Dobby do anything to help?” asked the house elf hopefully.

“If it’s not too much trouble can you make a coffee?” asked the Healer hesitantly, she was used to dealing with Dobby in a work capacity, not a personal one, she didn’t like to think she was
overstepping her bounds.

“Have you eaten?” asked Severus remembering his manners belatedly.

“No,” she replied, she hadn’t eaten since yesterday afternoon.

“Dobby can you get breakfast for myself and Healer Walsh,” asked Severus.

Dobby left to do anything he could to help.

“Please call me Andy,” said Andrea.

“Very well,” said Severus nodding his head curtly.

"Someone is in the Floo sir, shall I send them away?" asked Rose popping into the room.
Chapter 63

Invisible

Chapter 63

Not-So-Happy Birthday

Severus sighed as he left the room, he’d told the elf just to go back to its tasks, and he’d deal with whoever was in the Floo Network. It wasn’t going to be the last time today either, since Harry’s friends always made sure to visit him on his birthday. Last year he’d had a party, this year though things had been too hectic to plan one which was a shame, since it was his seventeenth birthday. It was a big day, well to most wizards, but Harry was already emancipated so he already had his magic to use as he liked. It wouldn’t have mattered even if something was planned, thought Severus tiredly. Walking into the sitting room, as soon as he saw who it was he saw who it was his lip unconsciously curled, Black was the last person he wanted to deal with.

“I know you don’t want to see me, Snape.” said Sirius, “After the shit I put you through I don’t blame you. I’m only here to wish my godson a happy birthday and give him his present. Should I come back later?” obviously Harry was still asleep, he couldn’t blame him it was his birthday after all. Even his own parents let him sleep in on that day.

“He won’t be available,” said Severus bluntly, slightly bemused at the fact Black had almost apologized to him for all the stunts he pulled while they attended Hogwarts.

“Look, just tell me when I can speak to him at least?” sighed Sirius exasperated. He’d put up with anyone for Harry, because he was desperate enough to be in his life. Sometimes though Snape made it extremely difficult, but he couldn’t blame him, he had been a shitty godfather. He wouldn’t be surprised if the Potions Master was just trying to protect Harry. He seemed very protective of him, hell Snape even put up with his presence that said a lot.

“He’s had an accident,” admitted Severus deciding just to tell Black the truth.

“Accident?” asked Sirius, his eyes filling with worry, “What happened? Is he going to be okay? Can I come over? Please I’ll stay out of your way.” it looked as though he wouldn’t be going to work today, whether the man let him through or not. He’d certainly be Flooing now and again to be updated on his progress. His mind tried to think of anything that happened. It couldn’t be Voldemort, or it would have been in the paper surely?

Severus was surprised by the use of ‘please’ never in all his years had Black said please to him. He knew Harry was beginning to spend more time with the Animagus but did that mean he wanted him around? He certainly didn’t but this wasn’t about him, no it was about Harry. Sirius wasn’t going to be the only one wanting to come over when they heard the news. “Fine, but one word Black and you are out.” said Severus seriously.

“Thank you,” said Sirius sighing in gratitude, the fire returned to normal, as Severus opened up his Floo network. He always kept it closed, not wanting to risk anyone coming in through his Floo. It wasn’t the Dark Lord’s normal way, but he was a Slytherin, and his mind went through each and every way it was possible to be ambushed. The only people able to use it, when it was closed were, Harry, Eileen and himself who’s magic was imbued in the manor.

The Floo flared to life spitting out Sirius Black, who calmly stepped out, banishing the ash on his
robes and the floor at his feet. The present for Harry still clutched in his hand. “What happened?” asked Sirius concerned, his eyes shadowed with worry and fear for Harry’s safety.

“Potions accident,” replied Severus taken aback at the strength of worry Black was displaying. Why did it take Harry leaving the family and becoming someone amazing for them to realize he existed? Admittedly neither Black nor Lupin had been around. From what Dumbledore told him they were often away on Order business since they didn’t have children. Everyone had known the Dark Lord wasn’t completely dead, including Lily and James, who had decided to waste away the years when children actually absorbed information. If it had been his child, they would have known everything by his age. Severus’ breath hitched when he realized what he’d just thought, never once in all his years had he thought about having children. Harry was changing him, they hadn’t been together yet and he was changing him. “Follow me.” he added as Black opened his mouth, truth be told he didn’t want to deal with him.

“No way,” said Sirius paling drastically, now as pale as he liked to bully Severus for being. A shudder broke through Sirius’ body, the last potions accident he’d had to investigate was the Lovegood one, years ago just after returning from the states. The mother had died; the little girl had seen it happen and was inconsolable. They all had been it didn’t help the fact she was younger than his own godsons at the time. He knew Luna was friends with Harry now and not so young anymore.

“It can happen to anyone, Black.” said Severus defensively.

Sirius didn’t reply his mind overcome in the horror remembering one of the worst cases of his career as an Auror. He prayed to Merlin that Harry was alright, he shored himself up for what he was going to see. Swallowing thickly, his heart beating like an erratic drum as he continued following Severus up the stairs and into a bedroom.

Sirius let out a whimper when he caught sight of Harry, sounding more like Padfoot than human at the moment. He felt sick to his stomach, what had happened to cause this? If anyone deserved it the least, it was Harry. He would have taken the pain and injuries for him, if he could, unfortunately he couldn’t. He had a drip attached to his arm, getting fluids into him, something you didn’t see often in the magical world. Remus though had told him its how every patient in the Muggle world got fixed. “How is he?” asked Sirius, talking to the healer beside Harry. Sirius averted his eyes unable to continue staring at the damage done to his godson. He’d never worried about Harry being hurt with Potions, he’d always seemed so…brilliant at them. He’d created potions for Merlin’s sake.

Andy looked up at the newcomer, recognizing him having treated him just a few months ago. He was one of the many wounded in what they called the battle of the Ministry. He’d been one of the few in better condition and able to leave quite quickly. She stared at Severus enquiringly, was she allowed to update him on Harry’s condition? He nodded grimly back, so she told him what was happening. He was an Auror, so she told him as she would tell any Auror of a patient’s illness. “He’s in bad shape right now; he has sepsis and is undergoing a course of Antibiotic’s.”

“How’s his arm?” asked Severus, Andy had removed the bone from his arm, since the break hadn’t set properly when she used the spell in the dungeons. Which didn’t concern them, the main thing was the fact his spine had been repaired properly and was setting back to normal. He’d probably find himself riddled with pain from time to time, but considering the alternative it was preferred. The break had been pretty high up, so it may have had him paralysed completely, not just from the waist down.

“It’s as good as new,” said Andy, the Skele-Gro had done its job as it always did. For most part
they ended up having to use it, when the breaks didn’t heal as well as they hoped. Just like last
night, when she removed the bones that hadn’t healed properly and given him the potion.
Thankfully Harry had been pretty much out of it the entire time and didn’t feel it. Although the
other pain would have made his arm feel like child’s play.

The healer removed the Clingfilm with delicate care, not wanting to hurt Harry further. Not now he
was finally resting peacefully, sleep was the best thing for him right now. Once it was off, she
removed the paste, ignoring the gagging coming from beside her. It wasn’t a pretty sight, but you’d
think an Auror would have more composure. She knew it was different when they knew the
person, so refrained from saying anything. “I’m going to put a salve that will help fight the
infection; unfortunately it means we cannot put more burn paste on for at least half an hour. Until
it’s seeped into his skin, and begun its job.” Andy said quietly, as she placed the used paste in the
bin; it was no good to anyone now.

Severus nodded in understanding, as he also removed the paste from Harry’s chest. The blisters
were already half the size they were yesterday. Taking a deep breath he took some of the salve
from the jar and began putting it on the wound keeping his hands steady. Once he’d finished he
cast a sterilizing charm on his hands again, before getting to work on another burn. He could smell
the Aloe Vera properties in the salve, and a dozen other different smells on top of it. They worked
simultaneously and finished in record time, leaving it to soak into the wound.

Severus covered as much of Harry as he was able without getting his bedding covered in potion.
Keeping him as warm as he could, as the healer had ordered. In half an hour at least the burn paste
and Clingfilm would be back on and he’d be able to put the rest of the covers on him. Severus gave
a startled gasp when Harry grabbed a hold of him, holding his wrist in a bruising grip.

“How?” asked Severus calmly, staring down at him, his heart soaring in hope that Harry really
hadn’t suffered any memory loss/damage. Harry’s mouth opened and closed, as if he was trying to
communicate with them. “Don’t try and talk, just stay calm, sleep, you’ll feel better soon I
promise.” soothing the seventeen year old, his other hand stroking the side of his face that wasn’t
burnt. It was a good job he was around this side; the other had the drip in his hand. He shuddered
at the thought of the needle breaking off, he was ill enough as it was.

Harry grunted in frustration, making pain lance through his throat. Staring straight at Severus, his
green eyes tried to tell him what he needed to. Read my mind! Thought Harry desperately, gasping
in pain, he could feel that he wouldn’t remain conscious for long. A sigh left his lips as the pain
reliever worked again, trying not to move, he begged with his eyes, praying Severus would
understand.

“I won’t read your mind Harry, you are in a bad enough state as it is.” said Severus firmly, he
wasn’t going to back down. Reading someone’s mind took a lot out of them, so no, he wasn’t about
to do it. He was extremely relieved that Harry seemed to know who he was. His heart felt lighter
just knowing Harry was mentally fine.

“P-u-lease,” murmured Harry his face spasming as pain tore through him.

“Stubborn blood brat,” growled Severus half-heartedly.

“You aren’t going to do it are you!?” snapped Sirius.

“Unless you are forgetting Mr. Black, Mr. Peverell is off-age, he is perfectly able to make his own
decisions.” said Healer Walsh angrily. She’d heard what the bloody family had done to their son;
Black had no right to play the concerned wizard now! Not here when someone had taken him in
and nurtured his talent, showing off a wizard who she’d have been proud to call her own son.
“He isn’t even in his right mind!” hissed Sirius.

“One word, Black.” said Severus gritting his teeth harshly, the urge to strike out at the wizard was overwhelming. He just couldn’t help himself, he had to dig himself to China every situation he got himself into. Normally Severus was a man of his word, but not today, he was more concerned about Harry. Although if the idiot kept it up, there would be nothing to stop his anger from exploding and expelling Black from his home.

“Sorry,” said Sirius stepping back, eyeing Severus warily, but he wasn’t even looking at him. Okay, Snape really was worried about Harry. It was the only explanation for why he was still here. Even he knew Severus meant what he said, the fact he wasn’t removed from the manor was telling. He bit his tongue, realizing he was going to have to be quiet or Snape would snap eventually. He wasn’t the most patient man in the world.

Severus stared at Harry, wavering at the desperation Harry was conveying. What was so important that he felt the need for Severus to read his mind? Unless he was barking up the wrong tree, but he doubted it. Closing his eyes, unable to deny Harry even this, opening them again he slid into Harry’s mind, refusing to dig too far. It didn’t take him long to find what Harry wanted him to, considering Harry was practically throwing the memory at him. By thinking it over and over again, Severus fell to his knees as he experienced the pain Harry did as well.

“Mr. Snape!” shouted the healer, moving around stopping the wizard from falling to the floor. Making sure he kept eye contact with Harry so he could withdraw without cutting the connection too abruptly. She strained to keep him upright, but as a healer she’d dealt with worse.

“My apologies.” said Severus using his left hand which was now out of Harry’s grasp to hoist himself back up.

“Are you okay?” Andy asked, scanning him to make sure the healer in her coming out.

“A little disorientated but I’ll be fine,” said Severus.

“What did you see?” asked Sirius worriedly.

“Let him rest for a second, it takes a few minutes to process the memory, especially if pain accompanied it.” said Andy, sitting Severus down on a seat she moved over to him.

“You may call me Severus,” requested Severus, as he closed his eyes and watched the memory until he made sense of it.

“Very well,” said Andy surprised.

“Presents for Master Severus,” said Dobby popping in with a big bundle of cards and presents.

“What the hell…” murmured Severus surprised, shaking his head. He was now able to make some sense of the memory; Harry had somehow seen a glimpse of the Dark Lord’s plans as the Horcrux was removed. He had Shacklebolt, not to torture him but he was under the imperious curse, from what he could piece together the Dark Lord wanted the Auror to attack Hogsmeade. Cursing inwardly, how was he supposed to tell anyone this information without exposing Harry? Rubbing at his forehead, deep in thought as he tried to come up with a way. Perhaps he could tell Albus he had been down at Knockturn Alley, and happened to overhear about it. He obviously couldn’t tell the others in the room either, Merlin things were getting extremely complicated.

“He wanted to show me what happened,” said Severus lying bare faced.
“That’s it?” asked Sirius frowning in confusion, staring at Severus trying to detect if he was holding something back.

“He just became a Potions Master, he feels extremely embarrassed,” explained Severus tiredly. Which was true, he felt extremely horrified at screwing up.

“Oh Harry,” said Sirius quietly, standing closer to the bed, but he was sleeping so anything he’d say would be for naught. Avoiding looking at his injuries, which was hard to do, his eyes just seemed drawn to them. Without thought he put his present and card next to the ones Dobby had put on the table.

“He’s coherent?” stated Andy surprised. That shouldn’t be possible; he’d only had one dose of the antibiotics.

“Slightly, most of what I got was past feelings,” said Severus.

“That makes more sense,” said Andy.

“Indeed,” said Severus, he’d wait for his mother to wake up before speaking to Dumbledore. He wasn’t leaving Harry on his own with people he didn’t know very well. He trusted the healer somewhat, but Black he didn’t trust at all.

“May I use your Floo? I need to call the Ministry and let them know I’m not coming in.” said Sirius respectfully.

“You’re staying?” asked Severus, his feelings written across his face.

“If I can,” said Sirius stiffening half way as he stared at Snape, wondering if he was going to be kicked out after all.

“For now,” said Severus.

“Thank you,” said Sirius straightening up, relived that Snape was taking pity on him.

“I think the salve has had enough time now,” said Andy standing up, retrieving the jar of burn paste.

“I’ll do it now,” said Sirius hastily making his way out of the room.

“And that’s an Auror,” said Andy shaking her head in irritation.

Severus smirked liking Andy more now that she didn’t approve of Black; she obviously had a good head on her shoulders. Sterilising their hands, they began put the paste on and wrap them all in Clingfilm, all bar the one on his face, which obviously couldn’t be covered with it.

Prince Manor - Harry's Room - Eileen, Sirius, Severus Healer Walsh and Harry

“Severus what is going on?” asked Eileen alarmed as she entered the room, her left eye twitching when he observed Black in the corner. Feeling better when he sank further into the seat, at least she could make him feel ill at ease if nothing else. Healer Walsh was back, nothing good could be coming from that. She had left last night saying she’d see him in a few days. Now unless she’d been sleeping for a few days something was wrong.

“He’s going to fine, we caught it in time.” said Severus trying to calm his mother down. Although judging by the look on her face he hadn’t succeeded. He’d never been good at helping people, or calming them down, he’d rather just shove a potion down their throat.
“Caught what in time?” asked Eileen terrified. A thousand injuries passed through her mind, each ten times worse than the last. Not even her son saying he was going to be fine eased her at all, what had happened during the night?

“The Sepsis,” replied Severus quietly, praying his mum wouldn’t overreact.

“Sepsis?” asked Eileen blankly, “Is that similar to septicaemia?”

“It’s the same thing, Sepsis is commonly referred to Septicaemia or blood poisoning,” said the healer quickly.

Eileen paled significantly, blood poisoning was very bad, and closing her eyes she forced herself to calm down. The Antibiotic’s should help him; if it didn’t there was a healer here for him. He really should be in St. Mungo’s its where he’d get the best help. Unfortunately Harry wouldn’t want to be there, he hated any attention being on him whatsoever. So keeping this quiet was vital, especially with the Dark Lord Voldemort wanting to kill him. Ironically enough because he was ‘the boy who lived’ as she knew very well he was, but because he’d bested him and humiliated him in front of his followers. Voldemort would indeed attack St. Mungo’s to get to Harry, she wasn’t stupid. She may not have been around during the last war, but she heard enough from her son to give her nightmares. Or rather concerns, the only nightmares she’d had in her life was about her husband and of course the attack at the Ministry. Up until then she’d been able to avoid anything to do with the war.

“The antibiotic’s seems to be working,” Andy reassured Eileen smiling at her, it wasn’t a significant change but the chills and fever had reduced two percent.

“How long will it take for him to recover healer Walsh?” asked Eileen sitting on the bed her legs too weak to support her.

“Call me Andy please,” said the healer smiling, “It depends on a variety of different things.”

“Such as?” asked Sirius, wasn’t it as simple as giving him the antibiotics and getting better? What kinds of things could the healer be talking about?

Andy paused staring at Sirius, how the hell had this idiot become an Auror? The condensation in his voice was grating on her nerves. “Do you even know how bad Sepsis is Mr. Black?”

Sirius gulped, fidgeting at the look on her face, she made him feel terribly insignificant. Like a bug she had trod on in Diagon Alley. “No?” he said after a few seconds of silence. Figuring it was best to tell the truth, he didn’t have a clue.

“I gathered as much, Sepsis is blood poisoning, it poisons the blood which travels around your body and internal organs. Which in turns poisons everything, if given enough time, it starves them of oxygen and inevitably kills you.” she replied grimly.

“Can you answer my question PLEASE!” demanded Eileen looking even more worried now.

“I’m sorry,” said Andy regretfully, “The length of time to recover from Sepsis typically depends on the underlying infection and the severity of the symptoms. The more severe the symptoms the longer it takes to recover. Since we caught the infection at its beginning stage, it should only take Harry six to ten days to recover outwardly.”

“Outwardly?” asked Severus joining in his concern obvious.

“The most common shall we say after affects of Sepsis is organ dysfunction, such as kidney failure. Then there is memory loss, and the inability to remember things the way you could before
it happened. As always after something like this acute fatigue, the body has been through severe trauma. Harry will need a lot of rest, and then begin to regain strength and rebuild your bodies reserves. Healthy eating and plenty physical exercise will help overcome that.” said Andy.

“Are you telling me he might not be able to brew potions again?” asked Sirius horrified.

“I wish I could say that he will be fine, but unfortunately I cannot.” said Andy, “But all you can do is hope for the best.” she wouldn’t lie to them to make them feel better, it was wrong to offer false hope.

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Lily Potter - Azkaban Prison

The women were lead back to their cells an hour ago, having showered and replaced their dirty striped clothes. Lily was nursing a split lip, and a black bruise forming on her eye. Counting down the days until she got out of this hell hole wasn’t enough. Her spirit was greatly diminished being here, she felt like a piece of dog’s dirt. She wasn’t used to it, at Hogwarts she’d been the best, loved by the teachers and trailed after by James Potter to the fury of the pureblood women. Then the acclamation began marrying a pureblood, then triple fold when her Nick defeated Voldemort. She felt so beautiful and powerful, and where did it land her? Here in Azkaban prison. Needless to say she felt world weary and tired she hadn’t slept right since she’d been Portkey’d to the Ministry on charges for trying to use the Cruciatius curse. The food they’d passed through the bars an hour ago was still there, she felt sick to her stomach.

“Patricia Wormwood, step forward.” said Rachel, the guard hand her wand in hand, as she led the woman out of her cell. She was dressed in the clothes her sister had brought for her, she was being released today. Sandy hugged the woman tightly; they’d shared a cell for the past year, so they had become close.

“I’ll come and see you, I promise.” said Patty releasing her, “Don’t worry, it will be your time soon.” Sandy only had a month left herself.

“Give my best to your family.” said Sandy watching the door open then close with a bang after Patricia exited it.

“Bye,” she said waving sadly at the others she was leaving behind. Yet she was so excited to be off the island and getting back to her family. She’d learned a valuable lesson; she certainly wasn’t going to perform magic on Muggles again. It wasn’t worth being taken away from her family again.

Lily watched her leave, her green eyes glaring at the woman’s back, oh how she wished that was her. They’d all had visitors on Wednesday this week, all bar her; nobody had come to see her yet. She began to fear James was dead, what was happening to her kids? God she wanted to know what was happening. She was determined to get the newspaper first this time, so they couldn't rip it to shreds before she could read it.

“Are we getting a newspaper today?” asked Sandy hopeful.

“I’ll have it for you in half an hour,” said Rachel.

“When do I get my wand back?” asked Patty quietly, shivering against the coldness and Dementors.

“You can retrieve it at the Minister of magic, which is where the Auror’s will be taking you to give you the release forms.” said Rachel; predictable really, that’s what they always asked as soon as
they were lead out. Not that she could blame them, to be without a wand was to be defenceless. With the war worsening each day, it was utter madness to be without a wand for a second. Usually the Auror’s didn’t escort anyone back, but with the place under Fidelus Charm, it had to be done. “Can I get the paper?” asked Lily crawling to the bars, as the guard returned. They were all female on this floor, as were the prisoners.

“Sure,” said Rachel, passing the newspapers to the prisoner in the cell next to her. Staring at her impassively Rachel moved away back to the sitting area where she could play exploding snap with the other guards. Their duties were done for the day, now it was just making sure none of them got into fights. Which happened quite often unfortunately, but with so many cells it was simple to separate them. In actuality they preferred to share cells, it made everything easier. Being alone could drive even the strongest to madness; it’s partly why the secure prisoners ended up insane of course the Dementors didn’t help matters.

“What do they say?” asked Sandy moving closer to Amy who had been given the newspaper.

“Hold on,” said Amy, opening the paper and reading everything she could get her eyes on. She was relieved beyond belief that there didn’t seem to be any attacks. Merlin four years she’d been in here, to this very day, she realized looking at the date. It wasn’t fair that Potter got half the sentence when she’d done something worse than her. Closing her eyes, breathing through her nostrils wanting to scream at the injustice. A year, one single bloody year was all she got for casting an Unforgivable. The son deserved better, but at least he was making a life for himself. Once she read seven papers (the entire week’s news) she passed them over to Sandy with difficulty but the girl grabbed it just as desperate as him.

“What has happened?” choked Lily, her green eyes wide and fearful, withholding a scream of exasperation when her question was met with silence. Grabbing her hair she rocked herself back and forth, trying to comfort herself. Half an hour later, Lily got the shock of her life when one of the girls spoke to her. “Here.” she said handing her one of the newspapers, Lily’s wide eyed stared at the woman to find her face impassive. She sat there for a few seconds, wondering if it was a joke. It wouldn’t surprise her, it wasn’t the first time they’d yanked it back the very last second and ripped it up. Then apologizing as if they hadn’t meant to do it. Her heart thumping like a drum, she quickly snatched the newspaper from her hand not seeing the sadistic smirk gracing Amy’s lips.

Flattening the paper out she felt a sinking feeling in her stomach, realizing why they’d given it over. Emblazoned on the front of the paper was ‘YOUNGEST POTIONS MASTER IN THE WORLD’ disappearing and new words appearing ‘HARRY PEVERELL AT CONFERENCE’ below were a collection of pictures, one with Harry and Sirius Black, another with a boy named Terrance and another with Severus and Harry standing together. Along with an old picture of Harry, taking a potion, during what could only be the Tri-wizard tournament. The one at the bottom was a picture of Harry and Nick barely a few weeks old clutching at each others hands.

A broken sob left Lily, as tears flowed down her face, closing her eyes and it was as if the Dementors had closed in on her. Memory after memory assaulted her, with Harry, and the lack of them over the years. For the first time in sixteen years she realized Harry was just as innocent as Nick and had not deserved the neglect they’d foisted upon him. Yes Nick had been important, but not more than all her children. They’d given Roxy the same amount of attention as Nick, there was no excuse for what they did to Harry. Finally her husband’s words reverberated around her mind.

‘Harry isn’t at fault; it’s our actions that caused this. If we had loved him as we should, he wouldn’t have done all this.’ He was right, they’d raised Roxy and Nick properly with affection and love, and they hadn’t done what Harry did. Oh what had she done? Getting up on shaky knees
she lay down on her small camp like bed and curled up, the newspaper still clutched in her hand as she cried silently, not wanting to be mocked further. Perhaps she deserved everything that was happening. She wanted her husband so badly; to tell her everything was going to be okay.

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Prince Manor - Harry's Bedroom - Dobby & Everyone Else

“Master Severus, we think you should look at this,” said Dobby handing over a newspaper.

Severus stared at Dobby in blank curiosity, accepting the newspaper, the Daily Prophet, when he saw the headline he cursed angrily. This was exactly what he had hoped to avoid, crunching the paper up in his hands, he stared at everyone in the room with suspicion.

"What's wrong?" asked Eileen and Sirius immediately, while Andy looked on confused.

They all blinked and stared warily when his head emerged from the paper, his glare was ferocious.

“Did you tell anyone about Harry?” he asked furiously.

“I didn’t even tell my husband,” said Andy shaking her head immediately, it wasn’t her fault.

“I didn’t tell anyone,” said Sirius earnestly, holding his hands up in surrender hoping Snape would believe him, it was the truth.

“Oh no, it seems I have to have a serious word with Medi-witch Tantum.” said Andy looking stricken, “I apologize Mr. Snape; I did not expect this to happen.”

Severus rubbed at his forehead, cursing once more unable to blame her, Harry needed the Antibiotics after all. He wouldn’t even get a chance to tell his friends, they’d find out the second they read the newspaper. He wouldn’t be surprised if everyone began Floo within the next hour depending on when they got up. Severus was tempted to just use the tickets for the holiday to the Caribbean now, and get away with Harry. Unfortunately he couldn’t do it, he got it for Harry’s birthday, he deserved to be aware and enjoy the holiday. Perhaps once he recovered a little he could organize for them to go, rest was what he needed, on holiday that’s what he would get.
Chapter 64

Invisible

Chapter 64

Reactions and Consequences

Remus had just taken a seat in the kitchen of Grimmauld Place, relaxing in relief; he’d had an exhausting night. Between teaching Nick, since Sirius couldn’t make it, until three AM then going to Hogwarts to speak with Dumbledore, who apparently ‘wanted to speak to him’ afterwards. Dumbledore wasn’t allowed near Nick alone, something James had made abundantly clear. Albus wanted him to come with him on a mission, which was unusual in itself, after all usually he was only tasked with speaking to werewolf’s and other dark creatures or actually fighting when it came to battles with the Death Eaters. He was being extremely secretive, Albus hadn’t told him where they were going or why. Dumbledore had even asked him to refrain from discussing it with anyone, as it was a ‘task of utmost importance’. In other words Albus didn’t want him discussing it with his partner. Speaking of Partners he wasn’t in bed, nor was he in the house, it was too early to be in the Ministry unless he’d been called in on an emergency. That wouldn’t surprise him; the war was turning very nasty, he was just glad Voldemort couldn’t get his hands on the Death Eaters who were imprisoned. Nobody knew who the secret keeper of Azkaban was; it was a good thing, given what had happened to Alice and Frank Longbottom.

Yawing tiredly, Remus picked up the newspaper and magazines on the table. He set aside The Practical Potioneer and The Quibbler, Sirius was the one who usually read those. Although Remus liked sifting through The Practical Potioneer when he had a lot of free time on his hands. In fact there were articles from the magazine on the wall, Harry was a Potions Master after all and that magazine was about information on Potions as the name indicated. Removing the plastic cover from the paper, noticing it was the Evening Prophet, yesterdays probably, unrolling it his amber eyes widened immediately at the headlines. Swallowing thickly, he began hastily reading it wanting all the information he could possibly get.

Wait, he had the Prince Floo address, Sirius had told him it in case of an emergency. This did constitute as an emergency in his book. Standing up abandoning the newspaper he grabbed some Floo powder he flung it in and yelled the address praying Harry was okay. Unfortunately he was bounced back; they weren’t accepting people through the fireplace. Cursing quietly, wincing in pain, he knelt down and shouted the same thing this time only his head was enveloped in the green flames.

“Can I help you?” asked the house elf.

“May I speak to Severus Snape please?” asked Remus. It never hurt to be polite, not that he treated house elf’s wrongly he was a ‘creature’ as well according to the magical world. So he was always polite knowing how much it hurt to be treated differently. Admittedly there was a big difference between house elf’s and a werewolf but that was beside the point.

“Can I ask what it is regarding?” asked Rose, her big tennis eyes regarding him solemnly.

“It’s about Harry, my name is Remus Lupin.” added Remus.

“Please hold,” said Rose, popping away, leaving Remus staring around an empty room, or rather empty of people, the room itself was tastefully done. It’s too bad Sirius stayed in Grimmauld place,
there was only so much you can do to that house. It was still cloaked in a darkness that would never be removed. Sirius didn’t like it, but with the war they’d stayed somewhere they could actually sleep without someone attacking. If anything the Black’s had been adamant about the protection of their properties.

“Master Severus, a wizard called Remus Lupin is in the Floo, he wants to talk about Master Harry.” said Rose appearing in the room. She’d been given the task of speaking to everyone that Floo’ed to the manor. Severus was going about getting legal advice from lawyers and speaking to St. Mungo’s after what happened. He was on a warpath that not even Eileen could calm him down from. Andy had just watched him half amused and half sorry for the Medi-witch, but she had brought this on herself.

“I’ll go to him, I didn’t tell him I wouldn’t be back,” said Sirius standing up not even slightly sheepish. His blue eyes were half mast as he continued to fight off sleep. He’d had ten coffees in the past twelve hours, so between needing the toilet and the coffee he was well awake. It didn’t stop him from stumbling over his own feet, yawning again he made his way down the stairs, the polished smooth banister was completely clean. Sirius really liked it, his own banister was just old and decrepit, and why hadn’t his family just built a main manor? Oh yes, because there had been too many of them. Now it was basically just him, and he had no need for a huge manor. If he and Remus survived the war he promised himself to buy a nice place, one where he could have nice staircases and touch everything without fearing it had a dark curse on it!

“Sirius? What are you doing here? The newspaper was unread!” said Remus blurted out in his surprise.

“I came yesterday to give Harry his present, I was told then.” said Sirius sitting down so he was level with Remus.

“What happened? Is he okay? The newspaper says…” asked Remus panicked.

“He has septicaemia, but the Antibiotic’s are working, he’s got a little colour on him today.” said Sirius. “He’s not out of the woods yet, but the Healer says he is healing nicely.” although he had a feeling the woman did not like him, then again he had been asking stupid questions. What could he say? He hadn’t had any sleep in two days, and before that he’d only been getting five hours of sleep between working and teaching. He’d never thought he’d see the day where he taught anyone, Sirius had never seen himself as a teacher.

“Merlin, how did he even get septicaemia?” asked Remus, it was such a silly thing to do, hurt oneself and not make sure it was taken care of properly.

“He had a potions accident,” revealed Sirius, “Harry ended up with second degree burns all over his body.”

“Was he healed in time?” asked Remus worried.

“Yes to both,” said Sirius, exhaustion radiating through him.

“Sirius...you need some sleep, please come home for a while.” begged Remus. Sirius looked as though he was about to collapse any given second.

“You are kidding right?” asked Sirius his head jerking back up suddenly awake again. “I’ve let Harry down enough, the least I can do is be here for him now.”

“You’re completely exhausted! You aren’t any good to Harry like this!” protested Remus.
“Everyone else in the room has stayed awake,” said Sirius bluntly.

Eileen was the exception of the group; she had some sleep the night it happened, probably due to the calming draught the healer had administered. But since coming to the manor, absolutely nobody had slept; they’d kept a constant vigil on Harry, worried to death about him. It made Sirius’ heart clench knowing how much they cared and how long they’d been there for him. It also made him feel like an outside, they knew so much about Harry that he didn’t.

“Everyone else?” asked Remus his tone now curious.

“Yes, his friends, Cedric with his girlfriend Cho, there’s Viktor Krum and his fiancé, Fleur and her partner and of course Luna and Neville.” said Sirius. “I can’t leave Harry need’s to know I’m there for him when he wakes up.” although a sneaky thought caught up with him - ‘If Harry recognized him’ the words the healer had uttered terrified him to the bone. What if Harry couldn’t remember the progress they’d made? He would lose Harry all over again, he’d take it as long as Harry could brew again and didn’t have problems concentrating and could remember everything else. His Potions Mastery had been the most important thing to Harry, as well as his education. He’d sat there and listened to how conflicted Harry was about everything, and how it was too much.

“That’s nice,” said Remus his smile bittersweet. “I’m surprised he’s letting you stay.” he couldn’t help but add.

“I am too,” said Sirius nodding, thankfully for most part he’d been quiet, with the exception when Severus had entered Harry’s mind. “It’s not been easy though, Snape’s mum isn’t exactly happy about it.”

“You almost cost Eileen her only son,” Remus reminded him without a hint of apology. He couldn’t say kill because in fact it would have been him doing the killing. Or worse still turning Severus into a werewolf, not something he’d wish on his worst enemy.

“I know,” scowled Sirius. He had been a teenager for Merlin’s sake, why the hell couldn’t everyone forget about it? He certainly wanted to, but was unable to do such a thing, with everyone bringing it up every other week. He had to admit he was ashamed of his actions, but he doubted he’d ever be able to say it out loud.

“Keep me updated, please.” said Remus, “Will I keep teaching Nick while you are occupied?”

“Would you? That’s great! Thank you Remy,” said Sirius gratefully, he didn’t want to have to choose between them, although if he had to at this point it would be Harry who wins. James could just take time off work to teach him if it came to it, Harry was hurt and needed everyone around him. Although he wasn’t sure how much he was wanted, but he didn’t let it deter him. “Does James know yet?”

“We trained Nick and everyone went to bed almost right away, he probably won’t know until he reads the paper or goes to work.” said Remus.

“Has he gained any measure of control from Fiendfyre yet?” asked Sirius, the grass in Potter manor was gone replaced with ash and blackness.

“Actually yes,” said Remus nodding. “He even put it out before it caused any undue damage.”

“Good.” said Sirius.

“Sirius, Dumbledore wants me to go on a mission with him; he was extremely edgy about it. He didn’t want me to tell anyone so don’t tell anyone I told you.” said Remus. “Tomorrow evening just
in case you can’t get in touch, so do not worry.”

“Really? Just the two of you?” asked Sirius surprised, Dumbledore sent them on missions but never went any himself, and he usually worked behind the scenes. He stood out too much everywhere he went so he preferred to send everyone else to do things for him. The fact he didn’t want Remus telling anyone was confusion and it made him a little apprehensive.

“Yes,” admitted Remus his own concern evident in his voice.

“Let me know when you get back, the minute you get back Remy.” said Sirius sternly.

“Of course,” said Remus in agreement.

“Good.” said Sirius; just then a knock at the door interrupted them. “Come in.” added Sirius awkwardly, this wasn’t his house after all.

“Hi, are you finished? I need to use the Floo,” asked Andy, she was to report to St. Mungo’s. Andy had a good idea what it was about. They didn’t have move off their arses when complaints came from their brewers, people with money and connections to make the hospital suffer. Then again it might have something to do with Harry’s name being mentioned, she wouldn’t know.

“Err, yes we are, I’ll Floo you later,” said Sirius.

“Okay,” said Remus before his head disappeared from the Floo network.

“Thank you,” said Andy scooping up a handful of Floo powder and shouted in her destination, she too disappeared in a flash of green flames.

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St. Mungo’s Hospital For Magical Maladies And Injuries - Healer Walsh, Medi- Witch Tantum And Healer Bonham

Andy knocked on the door; waiting patiently for the head of St. Mungo’s to answer her door. She didn’t know why but she felt worried, it was like being sent to the Headmaster’s office. People sent here usually ended up sacked, demoted, promoted or suspended. She had taken her two weeks paid holiday as well, in order to help Harry, once he was well she was going to take her husband on a holiday. After all the time she was sending away it was the least she could do, that’s if he could get time of his work too. He worked as an Unspeakable at the Ministry of magic, he never said much about his work, but she understood that. She didn’t talk about her work either, so other than how was your day, work didn’t come up as a topic often.

“Come in,” shouted Marian Bonham, not many recognized the name for what it was. Marian Bonham was a direct descendant from Mungo Bonham not only had he founded the hospital he had worked hard to become a healer afterwards. It had been a tradition afterwards to be healers, but the recent few generations had disregarded that, until she had become a healer. Her mother was proud of her; she had scarified a lot to be sitting where she was right now. She would never regret it though; she had settled down old but had two children and a man who loved her.

“You wished to see me Healer Bonham?” asked Andy walking in and standing next to the desk.

“I do,” she said, “Take a seat.” she added as she shuffled paperwork on her desk.

“Now I have had a serious complaint filed, I am to understand you are part of it care to explain?” asked Marian staring at her enquiringly. Noticing the witch wasn’t in her line green healer robes,
which meant she wasn’t working today. She should be according to the roster but that didn’t matter. Someone had abused the sanctity of professionalism, respect and privacy of the hospital and informed the press.

“Not part of it, but involved yes,” explained Andy, “I was called away on a serious emergency; Mr. Peverell was injured badly in a Potions accident.”

“How is he?” asked Marian concerned in a way only a healer could be.

“His recovery is going slowly, I arrived in time to save his spine, the first time I’ve used since I was a student.” said Andy proudly.

Marian nodded understanding her enthusiasm and pride, so she didn’t take it the wrong way.

“Unfortunately I was called back at home a few hours later; the second degree burns had become infected. He was suffering from Sepsis, and I had no choice but to use Dobby the house elf to gather antibiotics for him. Potions Master Severus Snape didn’t have any made in the house, something he will probably rectify in the future. I made the mistake of asking for Medi-witch Tantum’s help. The next thing we knew, there was an evening addition of the prophet about what had happened to Mr. Peverell.”

“How far do you think this complaint could go?” asked Marian, she didn’t really want to loose Medi-witches or healers, so before she did something she wanted to know Andy’s view on things. Both of them were very influential, they could roadblock everything if they wanted to. Potions Masters stuck up for one another, it wouldn’t be the first time, and Severus no doubt would remove himself from St. Mungo’s employment. They would be lucky to get anyone else if he was angry enough to ensure it.

“My personal opinion is that he will leave no stone unturned. You know how it is with Potions Masters and their first apprentices, there’s always a special bond between them.” said Andy, if she was right judging by how Severus acted around Harry they were more than just Potions Master and apprentices/new Masters. She wasn’t about to tell anyone either, not even her boss.

“Indeed, it is the same with Healers,” said Marian smiling fondly as she remembered her own apprentice days under a renowned healer. They still kept in touch, even though she was not working at St. Mungo’s anymore. “How sure are you that it was her? Could it have been anyone else?”

“I wish I could say yes, but no.” said Andy. “Severus, Eileen and I were the only people who knew, house elf’s don’t betray their families. Outside of us only she knew and if needed I will swear an oath I spoke to nobody about it.”

“I see,” said Marian it seemed as if the case was pretty much settled. “What is your opinion? On what should be done?” wanting to make sure she wasn’t being overly harsh with the Medi-witch.

“My opinion?” asked Andy wide eyed. “…Well…I…That is to say…I don’t, can’t say this is someone’s career we are talking about.”

“Indeed it is, but you are her supervisor, is there any redeeming? Is she outstanding at her job?” asked Marian, as she filled in some paperwork before giving the healer her full attention.

“She’s adequate, but she’s always the one to give most overtime when it’s required,” admitted Andy, which was difficult to come by.

“She still broke the oath all healers and Medi-witches are required to take.” said Marian.
“She did,” said Andy.

“Then I am afraid we really have no choice,” said Marian sighing sadly, at the end of the day good Medi-witch or not they couldn’t let it go unpunished. She had picked the wrong person to tangle with; Peverell and Snape were too powerful to let it go.

A hesitant knock sounded the door.

“Shall I leave?” asked Andy standing up.

“No, please stay.” said Marian, “COME IN!”

“Healer Bonham you wished to speak to me?” asked Medi-witch Tantum entering the room, her blue eyes wide with worry. She had on her white robes, the emblem of a bone and wand crossing each other. Medi-Witches wore white robes while the healers wore lime green ones. In other words Medi-Witches fixed minor problems while healers fixed the worse ones.

“I do indeed, please have a seat.” said Marian grimly.

Looking sicker every step she took, Tantum edged into the only available seat looking between her supervisor and her boss. She had been very surprised to get a letter from the head of St. Mungo’s and terrified, it had taken her two calming draughts and going to the toilet five times to get up here. It was never good news getting called up; at least that’s what her co-workers made abundantly clear.

“I shall get straight to the point,” said Marian when the silence continued to stretch, feeling a slither of pity at the fear on the witches face. “Did you or not you not threaten the integrity of St. Mungo’s by revealing private information about Mr. Peverell?”

Tantum made herself as small as possible on the chair, her thoughts whirling with the ramifications. Did she admit it or did she lie and then get found out? It would be worse that way; they had to have some reasonable doubt if she was up here. Which wasn’t good, she’d known deep down whenever she got the letter that she was in trouble. “Yes, it was me. I am so sorry; my father is in debt up to his eyeballs, they are close to being evicted from the manor to pay for it, which has been in the family for five generations! I didn’t mean for any of this to happen. Or for the hospital to be in trouble. I really am sorry.” she said in a rush to explain herself, the money they’d given her for the story had paid it off, but at what cost? Her career? She’d planned on taking a course on healing now that she could pay for it. She hadn’t wanted to remain a Medi-Witch the rest of her life, now she may not have either opportunity.

“If you want I can talk to Severus and Harry, see what they say about this,” suggested Andy after ten minutes of silence. It was obvious they weren’t sure how to proceed now they knew everything.

“You can,” agreed Marian, “Until a decision has been reached, on whether you are fired or not, you will be suspended without pay starting now.”

“Yes ma’am.” said Tantum cringing, her life was now in the hands of Snape and Peverell, it wasn’t looking good at all. She wouldn’t even blame them if they wanted her job for what she did. She just didn’t think it would come back to bite her, if she had waited longer maybe, but she’d had a chance to pay of her fathers debts and took it. She was wrong and she acknowledged that, perhaps someone would take pity on her.

“Very well, you may leave.” said Marian, nodding at both of them curtly as they stood up and
exited her office. Removing her glasses, she rubbed her eyes tiredly, she didn’t like ending anyone’s career, and it was the hardest part of her job. Unfortunately with power came great responsibility, and that responsibility was solely focused on the hospital and its reputation.

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Hogwarts School Of Witchcraft & Wizardry - Headmaster’s Office - Minerva and Dumbledore

“Did you read the Evening Prophet Headmaster?” asked Minerva as she entered the Headmaster’s office.

“I can’t say I did,” said Albus staring at his Deputy headmistress surprised. “Has something happened?” he’d been catching up on some sleep he was behind on all the scholarship applications, which was important not only to the school but the students selected for it. Not everyone could afford the thousands of pounds it cost to send their child to Hogwarts. Mostly Muggle borns, since most half bloods and pureblood parents started putting money away the second their child was born, or those extremely rich pureblood’s just paid for the seven years.

“Harry’s had a Potions accident, he has sepsis,” said Minerva sadly, placing her copy on the desk, she had already sent off flowers and money in a card. She didn’t know him well enough to buy him something, she’d thought about making it vouchers for the apothecary but felt it was best not to.

“Is he going to be okay?” asked Dumbledore a frown marring his features; it would devastate Severus if anything happened to him. After all the Potions Master had chosen Harry over him, for something that hadn’t been really intentional. He couldn’t afford to spend time with Harry; it was Nick who had been important. He had to ensure the boy could defeat the Dark Lord Voldemort. He was nonetheless worried for the boy, and extremely proud of his accomplishments. Just like he was of any student who went on to do something with their life. The fact he had so young made him admire Harry greatly, its how he had hoped Nick would be like. The irony was abounds, Harry received more positive media and acknowledges than Nick ever did. They didn’t know how Nick had survived the curse, they never would but Harry had worked hard for his fame.

“It doesn’t say, I’ve written to Severus to enquire how he is, Filius has as well I believe.” said Minerva. “I am unsure if he will be better to return when the term starts again. Sepsis is nasty business.” she had known someone in her childhood who had died from it; she had been five years old at the time. And Penicillin had only been around for ten years, and wasn’t widely used by everyone in the medical profession. Not even the magical world had antibiotics at that point, but they did when the first witch had died from it. It had first been discovered by Alexander Fleming, a Scottish scientist who had won a Nobel Prize for his work. Thankfully if it had been caught quickly, the potions should work, that’s if the particular strain of bacteria wasn’t immune to the potion.

“I do hope he recovers,” said Albus, “I should also send a card, but I do not think it will be well received.” he added sadly.

“Oh, Albus, stop being melodramatic, Severus still cares,” said Minerva shaking her head.

“I wish he did.” said Albus, he wanted so badly to be able to tell him about his latest discovery, see if perhaps there was a way Severus could see going forward. He had finally found out what the diary was it had horrified him to the bone. Instead he was going to have to take Remus along with him, hoping against hope to keep what they were looking for from him. None was better than Remus and Severus at detecting magic; even he was mediocre compared to them. Remus was great no doubt due to his creature side, Severus was just unique. He was glad to have him on his side, or rather side of light. He created his own potions, his own spells, was fast with a spell, created his
own counter spells, was it any wonder he would have been proud to call Severus a son?

“Just talk to him Albus,” said Minerva, “None of us know how long we have got. Don’t let there be any regrets, with war its even more uncertain.” her voice solemn as she spoke the heartfelt truth.

Albus looked up at her, a sad sympathetic smile on his face, he knew of Minerva’s past, not many people did. Minerva had been an extremely private woman, and remained so to this day. Severus knew of course, both of them had bonded over not having someone in their life and wanting it badly. “You are right of course, Minerva.” said Albus quietly, he had a large target on his back so out of them all, he would be the most likely to die in the war. He wanted Severus to know how proud he was of him, and to do that required more than contact for Order meetings.

“Has James discussed Lily at all?” asked Minerva, she would soon be released from Azkaban. Lily would have had her sympathy if it wasn’t for the fact she’d tried to curse her own son. “I do hope you aren’t going to allow her to stay here?”

“James hasn’t said anything, no. I cannot offer her a safe heaven here, the Ministry would be furious. She tried to cast the Cruciatus curse on a sixteen year old boy. She will not be able to take a job that centres around children again, a fact that will no doubt be made extremely clear to her when she is freed.” said Dumbledore solemnly.

“Of course,” said Minerva nodding her head, she hadn’t thought about that. “I wonder if he will be letting her stay at Potter manor or if she will have to find somewhere herself.”

“He stood by his wife Minerva, no doubt she will be going back to Potter manor, although Nick might not be impressed.” said Dumbledore thoughtfully, pouring himself and Minerva a cup of coffee from the tray that materialized on his desk. Passing one over he relaxed further into his seat, he would have to get right back to catching up as soon as Minerva left.

“Poor boy,” said Minerva sadly, no doubt all this was difficult for him. “How is Roxy?”

“Come to think of it, I haven’t seen her,” mused Albus, frowning in concern, perhaps he should ask after her. He didn’t want to repeat what he did with Harry and have another Potter furious with him. Well Harry was no longer a Potter but it was beside the point. It was too late with Harry but not with Roxy, maybe he could even suggest her sitting in on the lessons with Nick. It couldn’t hurt either way.

“Perhaps she’s spending the summer with friends?” suggested Minerva unaware of Albus’ thoughts.

“She could be,” said Dumbledore nodding.

“I best get off Albus, I must get the letters signed and posted, and ensure all the correct books are on the school list.” said Minerva sighing in exasperation. Summer she had learned long ago, wasn’t for teachers, it was sometimes just as busy as the school year was. Although the first week was without a doubt the worst, all the summer homework she assigned had to be marked, and that was worse than getting the new student letters out.

“I know how you feel,” said Albus smiling in sympathy, gesturing towards his tray.

“I shall see you at lunch,” added Minerva walking towards the door and leaving.

“Will Harry be alright Fawkes?” asked Albus.

Fawkes thrilled spreading his wings and singing a few notes, soothing Albus’ worried soul.
“I hope you are right,” said Albus his eyes twinkling as he observed his beautiful familiar.

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Prince Manor - Harry’s Room - Everyone!

“Is that a rash?” asked Eileen in concern as she gazed at the redness worried. It was in the inside, in a cervix of his upper and lower arm.

“Let me see,” said Andy immediately, taking over and lifting his arm up. Gazing at it she signed in exasperation, this was turning out to be anything but a straightforward case. “It is a rash.” she confirmed, “It’s a side affect from the Penicillin in the potion. It affects one percent of anyone taking it, its one of the more mild affects one can get.”

“Does he have to stop taking it?” asked Viktor worried from where he sat next to his fiancé Lukas; they’d planned on asking Harry to be best man when they visited during his birthday. It hadn’t gone according to plan, he had known something was wrong when he saw Severus’ face, and the Potions Master had confirmed it. Viktor and Lukas had dropped everything to be here.

“No, but if it gets worse it might be best,” said Andy.

“What happens if he has to stop?” asked Fleur her accent thickest in the room. She curled into her boyfriend trying to get some form of comfort as she waited on the Healer replying.

“The only other option would be to use the Muggle antibiotic and method,” she admitted.

“Muggle medicine? Does that take longer?” asked Neville. He didn’t know much about the Muggle world, but from what he learned the Muggle borns seemed to love their potions. Luna had burst into tears when she first saw Harry, so he tried not to wake her up from where she sat slumped against him asleep. This would just set her off again, she felt so guilty for something that wasn’t her fault.

“It does,” admitted Andy.

“Do you have access to Muggle medicine?” asked Cho, she may not be as close to Harry as the others, but she had gotten to know him and really liked him.

“Of course they do, they treat squibs with Muggle medicine since it’s easier on their bodies.” said Severus bluntly, answering before the Healer had a chance to respond to the silly question. Given that it was a student it wasn’t answered with scorn and mocking. Of course it didn’t stop Squibs from taking Potions, but without active magic they didn’t get the full use of the potion.

“Oh,” said Cho her cheeks turning pink.

“No worries sweetie,” said Andy smiling at her in sympathy. Knowing Severus, as she was becoming all too familiar, she knew if he had wanted to, he could have been much worse.

Just then a burst of light erupted in the room, causing everyone including Eileen to remove their wand with speed that would have caused onlookers get whiplash. Or wonder what the hell had happened to cause it, as it was they relaxed quite quickly when they realized it was only Fawkes the Headmaster’s phoenix. An animal everyone in the room was all too familiar with.

“Hello Fawkes,” said Severus, stroking the bird’s magnificent plumage. Then he removed the letter from the Phoenix's leg, and placing the letter in his pocket having no intentions of reading it here and now.
Fawkes flapped his wings, keeping a steady pace, before lowing itself down to a space on the bed. Thrilling loudly, calming everyone down, soothing their worries leaving them feeling peaceful. Fawkes then stared at Harry, his small eyes roaming over the injuries. It was almost as if Fawkes was judging Harry, in reality it was in awe of Harry’s power. Lowering his head, he cried just above the wound. His pearly white tears, falling and continuing to absorb into Harry’s skin. Ignoring the hush and loud shouts that followed it.

Then Harry’s green eyes flew opened alert and aware.
Chapter 65

Invisible

Chapter 65

Healing

James hastily put on his Auror robes, not wanting to be late for work, which he would be if he didn’t get his backside into gear. He was exhausted, between the constant attacks, teaching his son, trying to spend time with Roxy during the day and his nightmare filled dreams. Since he’d come to the realization he was wrong, his dreams had been filled with all the things he’d done to his son. Then the nightmares of his wife trying to curse their son, he could still even after nearing a year, not believe what she’d done. He’d stood by her for the sake of his kids, and the woman he loved who hopefully was still in there somewhere. Lily had changed, she’d not been able to cope with stress at all, trying to keep money, buy a property. She’d had a very sheltered life, between her parents giving her everything she wanted and James being able to provide for her until a few years ago…it was hardly a surprise she couldn’t deal with it. Running down the stairs he sat and hastily choked down his breakfast. The house elf’s kept an eye on Nick and Roxy while he worked, keeping them out of trouble, also made their breakfast, lunch and dinner later since their schedule was a little unorthodox at the moment.

Grabbing the newspapers, he read yesterday mornings Daily Prophet, unsurprised to see the attacks in the paper anymore. Thankfully between the Auror’s and Unspeakables they had foiled two of them, Voldemort was becoming more active. This meant more people were dying each day. Thankfully this time he didn’t have Dementors on his side. Since they couldn’t leave the island. Between the new wards put up in Azkaban as well as the Fidelus Charm it was as secure as anywhere could be.

He gave it a cursory read, before moving onto the next paper, surprised to see a special addition, it didn’t happen often. He immediately regretted eating that sausage as it immediately got stuck in his trachea, coughing and hacking, smacking at his chest trying to dislodge the piece of food. Hacking violently, tears entering his eyes until finally the blockage was regurgitated and he was able to breathe again. Taking in big gulps of air, rubbing at his throat, Merlin that had hurt. James then drank his entire goblet of Pumpkin juice, avoiding the coffee, his throat hurt too much. Shoving his food away, he splashed the paper across the desk and began reading it feeling useless. Why he was always the last to know? This was his son whether he had disinherited himself or not, damn it he should have been informed. Biting his lip, his eyes went back and forth taking in all the information that was available to him. The problem was - there wasn’t enough to go on. How was Harry? Was he recovering? Was he at St. Mungo’s? Throwing the paper aside he opened this mornings addition of the Daily Prophet and began reading that, unfortunately there was nothing whatsoever about Harry in it.

Standing up, the next second James Apparated to the emergency section of St. Mungo’s, since this was the only place you could Apparate into now. The security around St. Mungo’s had been doubled, thanks to Neville Longbottom’s loud debate on the subject. It wasn’t just wards either, there was five security guards surrounding the area.

“Good morning Auror Potter, how can I help you this morning?” asked the secretary gazing at the man curiously.

“Can you tell me if my son is here?” asked James ignoring her greeting, too worried to care for
necessities.

“There is no record of Nick Potter here,” she said, looking at her list of patients they had at the moment.

“No, Harry Po…Peverell,” said James grimacing in pain, he couldn’t get used to that.

“I’m afraid not,” she said once again after consulting the list.

“He’s being treated at home then?” asked James, “He was hurt badly…it was in the paper.”

“I’m sorry I cannot say,” she said regretfully, even if she had known it was against protocol to divulge information about patients, especially ones who had no familiar relationship with them. James Potter might insist Harry was his son, but he wasn’t he’d emancipated himself from the family denouncing James and Lily as his parents.

“Thank you,” said James half-heartedly. He knew better than to try and argue, it would just lead to him being thrown out of St. Mungo’s and still without the information he wanted. He was at a loss, there was no other way to make sure Harry was alright. Harry had completed his mastery; the likelihood of him being with Snape still was low. So where was he? The only consolation was the fact he wasn’t alone, someone obviously knew if it had reached the newspaper.

Apparating again, this time to Hogsmeade to buy a get well card and some chocolates. With a bit of luck Harry might write to him to let him know how he was feeling. James snorted at the thought as he entered the shop; luck hadn’t been on his side in years. Mostly, it was his own fault he had to admit, but life goes on.

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“I’d like you all to leave now,” said Andy, as soon as she saw Harry wakening up. “GO.” she added sternly, in complete healer mode as they protested. Everyone reluctantly packed out of the room, or rather nearly everyone, Severus refused to move. Andy wasn’t really in a position to demand him to leave, since this was his house.

“Lumos,” whispered Andy, a small light emerging from the end of her wand. “Harry follow the light if you can, no don’t get up yet. I need to make sure you are alright, good…” using the ‘Nox’ spell to get rid of the light she placed her wand on the table.

“Raise your left arm up, that’s good, now squeeze my hand.” she asked placing hers in his, smiling when Harry did as asked, he seemed aware and able to function properly.

“What happened?” murmured Harry tiredly.

“You’ve had an accident, but you will be fine now.” said Andy, picking up her wand again; she cast a diagnostic charm over Harry’s still form. Parchment furled out, and Andy began reading the results. The infection was completely gone, the burns healed, which meant there was no need for the burn paste anymore. “What is the last thing you remember?”

Harry frowned, trying to think what was the last thing he remembered? He had been reading about Horcruxes and ways to destroy them. He’d read so much the words were just blurring, so he’d decided to take a few hours rest and brew a potion. Things were blank after that, hazy, but he did remember trying to get Severus to read his mind, why he had no idea, it had a feeling it was important but he just couldn’t think of anything. Maybe it would come back to him? “Reading, before going down to the Potions lab, after that its kind of hazy.” admitted Harry.

“You cannot remember the accident, it happens a lot, but it might come back, it just depends.” said
Andy, watching as Severus moved to the other side of the room to be closer to Harry.

“Now I’ll just take the paste off, and let you get some rest, don’t move too much, just because the infection is gone you aren’t recovered.” said Andy.

“Infection?” murmured Harry, How long had he been out? An infection could take up to a week to get better.

“You ended up with blood poisoning, but Fawkes healed you.” explained Severus taking a hold of Harry’s hand, as he’d done for the past few days.

“Oh, thank you Fawkes.” said Harry staring at the red and gold coloured phoenix that was still there.

Fawkes thrilled out a little song putting everyone more at ease.

Andy began to remove the Clingfilm and paste from his face and neck, despite knowing she was awed at the sight of the unblemished flesh. Phoenixes were truly wonderful creatures, they didn’t often give their tears, and Harry must have been very deserving for Fawkes to do it. There was some residue of the paste that would need wiped away, but Harry could do that himself.

“Can’t Severus do it?” protested Harry, grabbing onto the bedding, not wanting the woman to see him in any state of undress.

Andy’s lips twitched, it was a very teenage thing to say, they got so embarrassed by the most hilarious things. Harry most certainly didn’t have anything she hadn’t seen before, but she was used to this, with the teenagers that passed through St. Mungo’s, in fact most men were like that not just teenagers. So self conscious, it’s why they had male healers deal with Wizards in those cases, and female healers to deal with witches. "Well seen as you are apparently recovered, it seems I am no longer needed. I will come back in a few days to ensure everything is going well, okay?” she said firmly.

“Thanks,” said Harry relieved, the knowledge that she had seen him already was nearly too much to endure. He was so self conscious of the scars he had on his chest, courtesy of the bloody Death Eaters. Even after two nearly three years they still looked brand new. Since they were cursed scars, Harry knew they would always remain that way.

“Take care of yourself,” said Andy packing everything up; including the potions that will no longer be needed, they could be used for someone else since they hadn’t been opened.

“I’ll see you out,” said Severus standing up, giving Harry a reassuring look before he guided the healer from the room. Closing the door behind him, before turning to her and asking, “What does he need?”

“Soft hearty food, such as soups and soft bread, nutrition potions, strengthening potions and if he needs them pain relievers. Don’t overdo it, give him only when he needs them his internal organs need to recover filling him with potions wont help.” said Andy firmly.

“Very well, thank you for all your help.” said Severus sincerely.

“Absolutely no problem, I’ll come back in two days time at 11 am,” said Andy, it was the day she was on duty, which meant she visited sick patients in the hospital and those that had been released and recovering at home. “And get some sleep Severus, you need it.” which was exactly what she was going to do. Snuggle into her husband for a few hours then get back into her normal routine tomorrow. Walking down the stairs and into the living room, smiling at the people gathered to let them know he was fine. Scooping up a handful of Floo powder, she shouted in the destination of her home and disappeared. She’d spoken to Severus earlier about the Tantum, unfortunately he
wasn’t willing to compromise or budge, and it looked as if she’d be fired. Not that she could blame them, she would have been furious if it was her.
“Can we see Harry now?” asked Cedric his eyes shadowed with worry.

“Let Severus and Harry have a moment,” said Luna smiling sweetly.

Cedric shared a look with his girlfriend before looking at the other couples, was it just him or did she sound like she was implying something? They knew Harry was gay and had absolutely no problem with it. He wasn’t the only one in their group who was, and they had dated briefly before Victor had to leave, but they had remained friends, much to the relief of the tight nit group. Shaking his head Cedric realised Harry would tell them when he was ready.

“I’m just glad Harry is better,” said Viktor.

“I know,” said Cho smiling over at the Quidditch player.

“How bad is the war?” asked Viktor speaking to Eileen, he hated war, Grindelwald had killed his grandfather during his reign.

“It’s getting worse,” admitted Eileen sadly, plus there was something Severus and Harry knew that they weren’t telling her.

“It’s not as bad as it was before,” said Sirius, “But its getting there, distrust it breeding everywhere, it doesn’t help us capture the Death Eaters. Getting a lot of anonymous letters claiming someone to be a Death Eater, it’s ridiculous but we have a duty to investigate each one.”

“Yes but have you caught one because of the letters?” asked Luna.

“Yes, a few.” admitted Sirius.

“Then in my opinion it’s worth it.” said Luna adamantly.

“Yes, true, catching one could save many lives!” said Cho.

“Good point,” replied Sirius, he hadn’t thought about it that way before. These people were so mature, long before their time anyway. He was surprised they were talking to him; it was the first time since they’d all came.

“It is odd that a phoenix healed him is it not? Not that I am saying I’m not grateful, its just most bonded phoenixes only defend or heal their bonded.” said Lukas contemplatively.

“It is true for most part, but Phoenixes are known for giving up tears or even tail feathers as it may be. You cannot tell them what to do, even when bonded; they have a mind of their own. It is ironic that Harry got Fawkes tail feather when he went for his first wand. Now he’s received tears from him, if I didn’t know any better I’d think Harry is Fawkes future bonded.” said Eileen. She had a feeling the phoenix knew Harry was the real boy who lived, how important he was.

“Harry is certainly powerful enough for Fawkes,” said Viktor, he was well aware of the power Harry held, he’d felt it and it was breathtaking.

“He is that, do you know he did accidental magic when he was two days old?” said Sirius a pain filled smile on his face. He regretted being away for so long; if he hadn’t been he might have seen what James and Lily were doing. He could have given Harry the affect he needed and wanted…
even adopted him as his own heir. James and Lily probably wouldn’t have noticed him gone.

“What did he do?” asked Lukas in awed curiosity.

“Made a teddy smack into my nose, he was getting me back for poking at his nose,” said Sirius wryly, poking wasn’t the right word; he wasn’t hurting him, just tapping it really. Making funny noises and faces at the same time, then bam the blue teddy he bought for him was whirling at his face.

Everyone laughed in amusement, it was always funny hearing about incidents of accidental magic witches or wizards had during childhood. It made them think back to tales they’d heard from their parents regarding it. Even after all the years they seemed most proud of the first incident than the others that followed.

“When did you start leaving?” asked Eileen curiously, souring Sirius’ mood immediately.

“Actually it wasn’t until after He was defeated.” said Sirius, there was no need to ask who the He was.
"So you have pictures of him as a child?” said Eileen.
"Of course,” said Sirius confused.
"Harry doesn't have any,” replied Eileen, giving the man a clue, whether he picked up on it or not - well that wasn't her problem.

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“How are you really feeling?” enquired Severus, reclaiming his seat, placing his hand in Harry’s again. Rubbing his hand in a soothing motion staring at his beautiful green eyes. His relief was evident in his black eyes, Harry was going to be fine, he hadn’t suffered memory loss, the rest he could deal with, no, they could deal with together.

“Just a little confused, so thirsty,” murmured Harry licking his dry lips he was so tired but he wanted answers.

“Of course,” said Severus, filling up a glass of water before guiding Harry’s head up a little so he could drink it without choking him. “Easy Harry, its not going anywhere.” he added, stopping Harry from inevitably choking himself trying to drink the contents of the glass as quickly as humanly possible. Once the glass was empty, he replaced it on the tray and gently lowered Harry’s head to the pillow again.

“So tired,” murmured Harry.

“Just let me remove the burn paste then you can sleep,” said Severus, removing the covers causing Harry to shiver at the cold. In no time at all, Severus had removed the majority of the paste, finding beneath it perfectly knitted skin. He knew he was going to have to tell Harry about the Horcrux. Not something he was looking forward to at all, how did you tell the one you loved that he’d had a piece of the Dark wizard’s soul in him?

“You okay?” asked Harry watching Severus closely, he seemed…conflicted.

“I am now.” said Severus honestly, removing the last piece of paste from Harry’s chest. Gazing at the completely unblemished skin surprised. The phoenix tears had removed the cursed scars, an added bonus it seemed. “Fawkes healed you; it seems he also healed the scars on your chest.” Harry gasped; “Really?” he asked trying to stare down at his own chest, wide awake now.

“Indeed,” said Severus wryly, “Would you like some pyjamas on? No doubt you have six very
excited friends wanting to see how you really are.” he would only let them remain for ten minutes, Harry was exhausted, he needed sleep. They all did actually; he was still walking thanks to the coffee and pepper up potions he’d been taking.

“I feel sticky and dirty, can I go take a shower?” asked Harry, but he had a funny feeling Severus wasn’t going to let him out of this bed. He didn’t even know if he had the strength to do it himself either, but he wanted to try. He did feel awful, and a soothing shower or bath sounded fantastic.

“I’ll help you have a bath, take it or leave it.” said Severus; at least in a bath he would be sitting down, not straining his body in trying to stay upright.

“Okay,” agreed Harry giving Severus a sweet smile, even after all these years it was still surprising when someone wanted to take care of him. Severus immediately went through to his bathroom, and soon afterwards he heard the water running. Severus emerged grabbed a few towels, face cloths and nightwear before wandering back through, getting everything ready so he didn’t have to go back and forth afterwards.

“Dobby?” called Severus as he helped Harry to his feet; carrying most of his weight, but letting Harry feel as though he wasn’t being babied. Harry was fiercely independent, no doubt he would remain that way, and he’d been looking after himself since he could walk after all.

“Yes sir, how can Dobby help Master Severus and Harry?” asked the house elf, his green eyes glowing when he noticed Harry was up and aware. The house elves were going to be so happy! He could barely wait to tell them the good news. They had all been worried about him, he was nice to them, and that earned him their eternal gratitude and awe.

“Put fresh sheets on the bed, turn the mattress over and give the room an airing. Cast a warming charm on the bed so it’s nice and comfy when Harry gets back please.” said Severus.

“Dobby will do that right away,” said Dobby.

“Oh, and have Rose make something for everyone, Harry will have some hearty soup and fresh soft bread.” said Severus as an afterthought. “Tell them he’s having a shower and getting comfortable, he will see them soon.”

“Yes sir!” said Dobby disappearing to tell Rose.

“Come, let’s get you in the bath before it overflows.” said Severus wryly. The smell of lemon and lime hit Harry as they entered the bathroom, two of the most refreshing smells in the world. Severus banished Harry’s underwear before helping the weak boy into the bath. Harry sighed in relief, closing his eyes as the boiling water lapped at his aching body. Severus knelt on the floor, on the towel so his knees didn’t get sore from the tiles. Picking up one of the bath scrubbers squirting some shower gel onto it, he began to meticulously scrub Harry’s chest, taking the discoloration caused by the paste away.

“Can I tell my friends about us?” asked Harry.

Severus paused in his actions for a few seconds before resuming, “If that is what you want, then yes.” replied Severus, he had no qualms about it. Harry was emancipated, seventeen years old, and after this recent scare, he wasn’t going to complain about anything as long as he had Harry in his life.

“Really?” enquired Harry sounding surprised.

“Really.” stated Severus, leaning Harry forward, before he begun scrubbing at his shoulders and
back. His legs received the same treatment as Harry lay back enjoying the water. After a few minutes of sitting there, just relishing in the fact Harry was fine, he picked up the face cloth and wiped his face and neck.

“Thank you, Severus, I feel so much better.” murmured Harry quietly, his eyes closed leaning back against Severus’ arm.

“Good,” said Severus, his ears picking up the sound of the elves getting the bed ready.

“How long was I out?” asked Harry remembering what he’d wanted to ask the healer.

“Two days,” said Severus, although to him it felt like weeks if he was honest with himself. “Infections don’t heal that quickly,” said Harry surprise flickering over his green eyes.

“Fawkes healed it,” said Severus wryly, shaking his head, perhaps Harry was still suffering, how many times had he told him Fawkes healed him?

“Oh,” said Harry that was the second time Fawkes had helped him, well it was just with the basilisk last time, and he really should try and read more information about them. He was really curious, why him? His stomach churned slightly, what if Fawkes knew what he was? Who he really was? If that were true…why hadn’t he told Dumbledore? Either the bird didn’t know or did and hadn’t informed Dumbledore. Which for a bonded familiar and wizard was extremely odd, they usually had no secrets from one another.

“Ready to get out?” asked Severus, he was beginning to lose the feeling in his arm.

“Okay,” said Harry, gripping the handles at the side of the bath, hoisting himself up as Severus helped the towel wrapped around him. Keeping him close, he decided to cast a drying spell on him, it was much quicker, and then he put Harry’s nightwear on him. Bending over he yanked out the plug and let the water drain from the bath. Nodding in satisfaction he left the bathroom, smiling at the elves in appreciation, they had left half the cover off the bed so he didn’t have to move it himself.

Harry moaned in gratitude when his body was placed on the soft mattress, his bones felt so old, his back ached, how the hell was it possible? It was so warm he could just fall asleep right here and now, but he wanted to see his friends, it had been ages since they’d gotten together. He’d been looking forward to his birthday for that reason alone, too bad it had come and gone now.

“Would you like a muscle relaxant?” asked Severus brushing Harry’s hair back, as he tucked him in.

Harry nodded vigorously, that sounded brilliant.

“Here, drink,” said Severus after removing the vial from his kit. Afterwards he gave him another drink of water to wash down the taste.

“Another card, flowers and chocolates for Master Harry,” said Dobby popping in; he had inspected them to make sure there was nothing wrong with them.

“Put the flowers in the living room with the others Dobby,” said Severus, accepting the card and chocolates and placing them on the large of the precarious bundle which was looking ready to topple any given moment.

“Dobby will do that,” said the house elf popping out again.

“Flowers? People know?” asked Harry alarmed, his cheeks heating up at the thought of everyone...
knowing he’d screwed up. Although he didn’t know what had happened, he’d been doing everything right, what had caused it to explode or whatever had happened. There were only a few things that could happen to a potion though so it didn’t take a genius to figure it out.

“Yes,” scowled Severus angrily. He couldn’t believe the sob story the woman had given upon being found out. No, he wasn’t about to let her off with it to do it again. He understood money problems, he’d had them his entire childhood, it didn’t mean he had gone and sold information to the papers. Some people just had no honour in their body; he wouldn’t stop until she was fired from her job. She shouldn’t be near confidential information. “A Medi-Witch at St. Mungo’s told the newspaper, they are all worried about you, it happens to the best of us Harry do not worry.” even the Potions Masters at the society of Potions were worried, especially Damon who had written twice.

“I just don’t understand what happened,” admitted Harry tiredly, his eyes half mast. He didn’t know how much longer he could continue to fight off sleep. The bed was so warm and comfy, the potion had relaxed him…it was little wonder he was almost asleep.

“You used the Unicorn blood instead of Essence of dittany.” said Severus. “When did you get unicorn blood?”

A snore was his answer, Harry had succumbed to sleep.

Severus snorted in amusement; it seemed he would have to wait for his answer then. Standing up he made his way out of the room, closing the door behind him quietly. Making his way to the living room where the others were all waiting on information. Opening the door, he was greeted with people eager for information.

“Can we see him now?”

“How is he?”

“Does he remember everything?”

“Is he feeling better?

“Is Harry up to talking to us?”

“Are you okay?”

“How’s my godson?”

“Harry is fine, the infection is completely eradicated. His memory is intact, he does not remember the accident however, but Andy has assured me that it was normal. He may remember it some time down the line, but its something we will deal with when it comes.” replied Severus soothingly.

“What do you mean we?” asked Sirius not sure if he actually wanted an answer to that question.

“Unfortunately after having a bath, he fell asleep, he will probably be out of it for a few hours.” said Severus; the muscle relaxant with a pain reliever in it would ensure that. “I suggest you all go home, get some rest, and come back tomorrow where I am sure Harry will be aware enough to speak to you.”

“Viktor, you and Lukas can stay at my Manor if you like?” suggested Cedric, knowing long distance Flooing was horrific. It was horrible going through it in short distances, never mind long distance, which he had to admit he hadn’t tried but Viktor had commented on it disdainfully often
enough. He knew the boys didn't want to leave without seeing him first, or speaking to him, they did have something important to ask him after all.

“If we aren’t imposing,” said Lukas smiling his thanks.

“Of course not,” said Cedric immediately, his father still stayed in the manor with his mother but they wouldn’t mind. His parents spoiled him, but also raised him with a level head; sometimes he did take advantage of their loving nature but not very often and not for much. He turned to ask Fleur and her partner Gary when Viktor distracted him.

“Thank you,” said Viktor.

“We are staying at Longbottom manor, daddy is as well, not that he’s very happy about it…but he would do anything for me. Fleur, Gary, you are welcome to join us if you like.” said Luna smugly. To keep her father safe she’d walk over fire or hot coal to see it be true. She knew their house wasn’t safe, but Longbottom manor was nearly impenetrable. It had kept Alice and Frank safe from attacks…unfortunately it couldn’t protect them on their job. “Shall we meet up tomorrow after lunch? At say one o’clock?”

“Perfect,” said Cho, nodding her head.

“Tell Harry we’ll see him soon okay?” said Cedric.

“I will,” said Severus solemnly.

“Thank you,” said Cedric, before they all began to say goodbye to Eileen and Severus, thanking them for their hospitality, being purebloods or Wizarding raised they were well versed in good manners.

“What did you mean earlier, about you and Harry getting through it?” asked Sirius his blue eyes staring at Severus.

“You can ask him yourself when you speak to him tomorrow,” said Severus tiredly, pinching the bridge of his nose.

“I guess I should go,” said Sirius awkwardly, knowing he was being asked to leave. It was unlike Snape to beat around the bush, he really must be going soft or too shattered to start anything.

“Goodbye,” said Severus staring at the Animagus blankly.

“Bye,” said Sirius following the others in grabbing a handful of Floo powder and exiting the manor. Remus would be going with Dumbledore tomorrow, so at least they would have tonight together. He was curious what Dumbledore wanted, he’d been thinking about it on and off for the past day or so.

“Go on, get some sleep, its going to be busy tomorrow, again.” said Severus, but he couldn’t deny Harry the comfort of his friends so he would endure them all in his manor.

“You promised to answer my questions,” said Eileen, still wanting them despite how tired she was. Not just about what they had been working on, but what the hell had happened to Harry that night. She hadn’t stopped thinking about it, whatever it was, it couldn’t be good.

“And I will, I promise, but I think Harry has a right to hear it from me first,” said Severus.

"Very well,” said Eileen shaking her head, she'd get it from them one way or another, no matter how long they stalled.
Invisible

Chapter 66

Daunting News

Severus woke abruptly from his sleep, his door he realized being knocked had been what woken him up. Remembering Prince Manor was safe, nobody could get him here, and he released the death grip he had on his wand. There were some things Severus couldn’t get out the habit off; sleeping with his wand under his pillow was one of them. He’d done it every night at Hogwarts, despite everyone saying it was the safest place in the world - Severus didn’t believe it. Harry was still too ill to be up and about, so he assumed it had to be his mother. Making sure he was covered completely by his duvet yawning as he did so.

“Come in,” said Severus, he was sitting up staring at the door; his room was as it always was in complete darkness. After so long in the dungeons both at school and as a teacher, he couldn’t sleep with any sort of light in his room.

As Eileen opened his door, light from the hall spilled in, causing Severus to groan, he was still exhausted. He wasn’t sure how long he’d been asleep, curious now, he flicked his wand and the date as well as the time appeared in red letters above his wand. He was surprised to see it was so late, especially considering he felt as though he had just gone to sleep.

“Is Harry alright?” asked Severus, moving out of the bed concern the most prominent emotion on his face.

“I checked on him he’s fine,” said Eileen quickly, reassuring her son. “He’s still sleeping soundly, I didn’t want to disturb him so I didn’t linger.”

Severus let out a sigh of relief, glad to hear that Harry was still alright, he didn’t know why he still worried. Yet he did, he was terrified something else would happen to him. It was illogical of course, but when emotions came into it, they weren’t logical. Out of everyone he knew that, unfortunately no human could help their emotions, couldn’t suppress them at least not completely.

“Was there something you wanted, mum?” asked Severus, realising there must be a reason for her coming here. She never comes into his room; well, not since he was eleven years old at any rate. He prayed she wasn’t in here to get answers from him; he was always in a foul mood before his third black coffee of the morning. Without normal sleep, he was even grouchier; thankfully he’d been too worried to snap at anyone. Now that Harry was healing, he would be back to normal in no time. He didn’t want to snap at his mother regardless.

“I was thinking, Harry is still weak and sore isn’t he?” asked Eileen, thoughtfully, stepping further into the room. Her coffee cupped between her hands, keeping them warm as she took a small drink. Sitting down on the chair, despite the fact her son’s clothes were on it.

“Yes, it will take a few days’ maybe weeks to get him back to normal, even at that he will still weaken easily.” said Severus grabbing his black bath robe, the smell of coffee was making him desperate for one of his own. Putting it on he got out of bed completely, watching his mother curiously wondering why she was asking things she already knew.

Down the stairs Severus called on Dobby, demanding a pot of coffee in the living room. Sitting
down on the chair beside the lit fire, warming himself back up again. Once Dobby had brought him his requested items, Severus grabbed a cup and poured in some coffee. For once putting in some milk so it cooled down quicker, and he would be able to drink it sooner.

“That couldn’t be all you wanted to ask,” stated Severus sitting back, drinking his brew already feeling much better with caffeine in his hand and mouth. Observing his mother, troubled by her odd behaviour.

“It isn’t, I’m just contemplating why you didn’t give Harry Eileen’s potion, it would make sure he gets better fast without permanent damage,” said Eileen.

Severus sat forward, closing his eyes incredulity wrapping around him, why hadn’t he thought of that? Sure it wouldn’t have helped the infection, since it didn’t help the blood rather the bones and organs. It however, would help him now, instead of weeks he’d been better in a few days. Truth be told, since giving it to his mother he’d kept forgetting about it. Apart from when he had to brew it, then he’d dwell on it, unfortunately he hadn’t been brewing it lately. No, instead he’d been brewing just about everything else for St. Mungo’s. Oddly enough he hadn’t received any demands from the hospital lately. They must have gotten on top of their demands, which was a relief.

Severus loved potions, don’t get him wrong, but the demand had kept him busy for days at a time. That’s with his mother and Harry helping him, he wasn’t used to it. At Hogwarts he had all summer to brew the supply demand the school would need all year. Rarely would he have time to work on experimental potions, although he’d done a lot of that in the past few years since leaving. Dumbledore hadn’t been happy to lose him; he’d tried everything to get him to reconsider. Unfortunately he had been very serious, and Albus had in the end conceded, he always enquired about how his potions were going though and did in the end wish him well.

“I did not even think of that,” sighed Severus, shaking his head grimly.

“I’m not surprised, you’ve exhausted yourself, Severus,” said Eileen. She was sure her son would have eventually thought of it. She felt bad for wakening Severus up, but she couldn’t just administer the potion to Harry herself. She didn’t know enough about the potions to know whether it was safe or not.

Severus didn’t answer, merely continued to drink his coffee. He didn’t have to hope that the potion hadn’t been destroyed during the explosion. Since he had two potion kits, one an emergency and the other he took with him everywhere. He had placed one in each of them, although it wasn’t really considered an emergency potion. He had in his potion kit’s the following potions, blood replenishers, pain relieves level 1-10, numbing agents, a variety of salves, and a potion to aid in skin re-knitting as well as a large bottle of dittany which did the same thing but ten times faster. He also had nutrition potions and the like but hardly worth mentioning since they weren't really considered emergency.

“We will have guests again after lunch,” said Eileen the manor had been so full lately; it was like a blast from the past. Her parents had grand parties in the ball room down the hall, every weekend, fit for what they seen as their status. It wasn’t so bad once she went to Hogwarts, since she didn’t need to put up with it. Other than the summer holidays of course, which was the worst. Her parents had tried to set her up with hundreds of different men, all of them at least ten years older than her. Behind her parents back they’d all mocked her lack of magic, and the things she was interested in. either that or they had smarmed up to her, in hopes of elevating their own status bringing themselves into the Prince family line. She’d had enough, by the time she was seventeen, and fled the wizarding world altogether. It hadn’t been her smartest move, but she would never, ever regret her son, she had many other regrets but Severus wasn’t one of them. She was just glad she’d outlived Tobias and was able to make it up to her son, or at least patch up their relationship.
“I know,” said Severus smiling half-heartedly, finishing his first cup and starting his second right away. He was reluctant to wake Harry up, even to give him Eileen’s potion. Not because he didn’t want Harry getting better, but because he really didn’t want to tell him about the Horcrux. He wasn’t sure how it would affect Harry; he’d taken blow after blow growing up with his blasted neglectful ignorant parents. Put up with being ignored at school, putting himself through his Mastery and remaining at Hogwarts to prove himself…hiding his true nature, and the fact it had been him who defeated Dark Lord out of fear, this…may just prove too much for him. At least he didn’t need to suffer the knowledge that it was inside him anymore, that was admittedly the only good thing to come out of this.

They remained sitting, enjoying the quietness as they allowed themselves to wake up properly. Unfortunately Severus couldn’t put it off forever, it was going on nine o’clock and Harry would wake soon. In fact it was weird him sleeping so late, he was normally up at the crack of dawn. Sighing in resignation, he placed his empty cup on the tray and stood up.

“May I come, Severus?” asked Eileen, hoping her son would say yes, the waiting and mystery that had been going on was making her anxious and afraid.

“Very well,” said Severus his exasperation obvious, as he continued up the stairs, stopping off in his own bedroom for a few seconds. Retrieving the potion, which was on top of his chest of drawers, where he always placed it when he didn’t have it in his pocket. Severus didn’t linger, closing his bedroom door he entered Harry’s room, he was as Eileen said still sleeping.

Moving over to the other side of the room, sitting down noticing that the other chairs that had been present the past few days weren’t all over the room. They were stacked up in the corner of the room; the Elves had been busy the past few days. He felt extremely bad; they hadn’t had a chance to rest either. He would have to give them a few days off; it’s the least they deserved after their hard work. What touched him the most was the fact they’d been worried about Harry too. It was little wonder, Harry treated them like equals, and he’d tried to give Dobby a percentage of Eileen’s potion! Unfortunately Dobby hadn’t been interested. In the end Harry had just bought him material, fabrics, some of the most outrageous designs he’d seen, buttons and even shoes.

“Harry? Wake up, Harry…that’s it, good morning, how are you feeling?” enquired Severus, watching Harry closely. If the grimace on his face was anything to go by, he knew he still wasn’t one hundred percent covered.

“Sore,” said Harry wincing, as he sat up, he ached in places he didn’t know existed.

“Here, drink this potion,” said Severus handing it over, not bothering to tell him what it was. Harry was a Potions Master now, and knew most potions by their colour; ergo he knew what it was without him stating the obvious.

“Do I really need to take that potion?” asked Harry surprised, as he held it in his hand.

“No, you can get better on your own, it will take from a few weeks to a few months.” said Severus, telling Harry the truth.

Harry screwed up his face, he hated being confined to bed, and even sick he just took potions and continued on. Or rather he tried to, unfortunately the time he’d gotten the flu Eileen and Severus had practically forced him to remain in his room and get better. Shrugging his shoulders, he opened the cork with his teeth and spat it out. Drinking the potion down, grimacing at the taste, it was bloody awful and he’d had his share of potions he knew what he was talking about. There, that would mean he could get better quick, and get back to his normal routine, hopefully before Hogwarts started back up.

“Where did you get your hands on Unicorn blood?” asked Severus, finally getting to ask the
question on his mind. His fingers absently, picked up the cork and the potion, placing it back on
the table. The cork wouldn’t be used again, but the potion vial will be, it just need cleaned
thoroughly and sterilized.
Harry frowned, “I got it during my first year at Hogwarts. The detention you gave me, I had to go
to Hagrid with Draco Malfoy, Nick Potter and I think Ronald Weasley was there too…I froze in
pain when the shadow of the Dark Lord appeared. It was going for Nick though not me, but
Firenze; the Centaur came to the rescue scaring the shadow off.”

“You gave him detention, Severus?” asked Eileen surprised. “Why?” it was odd to think he had
been teaching Harry for a year at Hogwarts before he quit.

“I had my suspicions about him, a few things weren’t adding up, and I was also sure he was hiding
something…including my sixth year potion book.” said Severus wryly, “I had asked questions that
only someone with that book would know. I knew it wasn’t Nick Potter, it was just the matter of
finding out whom it was, Granger, Weasley or Harry. Unfortunately I didn’t get a chance to
question him, Dumbledore wanted to talk to me that evening and I passed his detention onto
Hagrid.”

“Firenze spoke to Nick about someone slaying unicorns, and how evil it was to slay them…and
whoever drank the blood of a unicorn would have a half life, a cursed life.” said Harry quietly,
remembering his first year with pain. “I figured it out…Nick though remained oblivious about it…
at least until he figured it out on his own.”

Eileen and Severus nodded in understanding, wanting him to continue.

“I found the unicorn when I tried to make my way back, I used a spell to heal it, but it didn’t work
very well. So I poured a potion I brewed onto its wound and it sealed closed.” said Harry.

“That is a sixth year potion,” said Severus, unsurprised, Harry was brilliant at potions there was
little doubt about it.

“I know,” said Harry nodding in agreement. “I had brewed it following the directions in your book.
I was just glad I had it with me otherwise the unicorn might have died. The unicorn let me pet at it,
for a while before she cut her leg a little bit with her hooves and let me take some of her blood. I
luckily had a vial with me, and took some of it, before healing her again. I had just put it in my
pocket when Hagrid made his appearance. I told him about the unicorn but she got up and trotted
away before Hagrid could get remotely close. After that detention was over. I hated that year,
Dumbledore’s constant disappointed look and you’re searching one.”

“I do not like mysteries,” said Severus, not apologizing. “Does that mean you had anything to do
with what happened during first year debacle?” he wouldn’t be surprised, it seemed Harry’s
contributions, other than the chamber fiasco was constantly overlooked. Harry had told them about
his defeat of Voldemort and his flying being credited to Nick and how hurt he was a few years ago.

“I stunned and locked Quirrell in an unused part of Hogwarts,” admitted Harry, “I knew Nick was
trying to get whatever was down there, thanks to Dumbledore’s manipulations.

“I had informed Dumbledore, I suspected there was more to him than met the eye.” said Severus
scowling darkly, it was part of his reason for leaving.

“What happened to him?” asked Eileen.
“A House Elf informed us of a grim discovery, we found Quirrell in an unused classroom with the back of his skin blown clean of head. We found residuals of Dark Magic; Albus was able to deduce that he had more than likely been possessed by the Dark Lord. Who evidently fled from Hogwarts…since we didn’t see or hear anything remotely frightening,” said Severus. “No doubt when Harry stunned him the Dark Lord grew furious and fled the wizard without caring about the consequences of what happened to him.”

Harry grimaced; he hadn't really thought about Quirrell since he'd stunned him and left him in that classroom. He tried to feel bad about that, but truth be told he couldn't find it in him to feel even remotely remorseful. He'd do anything he had to, just to make sure the Dark Lord didn't win.

“There is something else I must divulge,” said Severus, moving his chair closer to Harry.

“What’s wrong with me?” asked Harry alarmed his green eyes wide and fearful.

“There is nothing wrong with you,” said Severus firmly.

Eileen pursed her lips, wondering what was going on, she was beginning to panic herself now. Severus had never been a man who beat around the bush. He told you the truth and without allowing it to affect him. He hadn’t even hesitated this long when telling her about Harry’s death when it was assumed he had died thanks to his odious brother.

“When the potion exploded, you were flung back against the room,” said Severus quietly, feeling extremely tense. “You had unicorn blood on your hand, and somehow it got into your scar…”

Harry touched his forehead, wondering what the hell was going on, bewilderment evident on every line of his face. The scar felt smoother, as if it had finally healed, he wondered if it was still there, if people could still see it. Most of the time he forgot it was there, since he had long hair, and nobody was interested in seeing it. “Did it heal?”

Severus pursed his lips, “When we got down to the lab, I began scanning you to see how bad the damage was. Then a loud screech rented the air, as a spectre began to remove itself from your body…not just any spectre…it was the Dark Lord’s face.” replied Severus cautiously, his heart pounding at the look on Harry’s face.

Harry felt his heart stop as Severus finally finished talking, horror at which he’d never felt before enveloped him. Not even facing the Dark Lord had been this scary, this terrifying. He had been a Horcrux?! A bloody fucking Horcrux? Dear Merlin, he couldn’t even think, he felt literally stunned. He’d had that evil wizard in his body for sixteen years; a great big shudder broke out on his body.

“What does it mean?” asked Eileen concerned Harry looked as if he was about to have a heart attack. They obviously understood what it was, but she was clueless.

“Harry received books from Sirius Black, ones that had been in the Black family for generations. I think most of them were potions books weren’t they?” enquired Severus, staring at Harry, trying to break him out of his stupor.

“Yes,” admitted Harry automatically, had they really gone from telling him he was a Horcrux to talking about Potion books? Actually he’d prefer that, take his mind off it, he did not want to think on what he’d just learned. It was better this way, unfortunately he just kept thinking about it, no matter what the conversation was.

“In one of them, there were the remains of some sort of missive where the ink had bled through the
parchment they were using and into the book. We were able to read most of it and decipher what it meant…or rather Harry did at first then I found out about it.” said Severus in explanation. Leaving out how he had reacted to the news, no doubt this was how Harry was feeling at the moment.

"What did it say?” asked Eileen and what did this have to do with the spectre coming out off Harry?

“To the Dark Lord, I know I will be dead long before you read this, but I want you to know it was I who discovered your secret. I have stolen the real Horcrux and intend to destroy it as soon as I can. I face death in the hopes that when you meet your match you’ll be mortal once more. Sighed R.A.B.” said Severus.

“R.A.B?” said Eileen thoughtfully.

“Regulus. A. Black,” said Harry quietly. The book said nothing about human Horcruxes, what if it was still there? What if they wrong and it wasn’t removed? No it had to be, otherwise the scans the healer did would have brought it to notice surely? His breathing became extremely erratic as he tried to stop himself from giving way to panic.

“Just one more question…what is a Horcrux?” asked Eileen cautiously, breathing deeply bracing herself for something extremely evil or bad.

“Harry, calm down, calm down,” said Severus, his hands on each side of Harry’s face, trying to soothe the distraught teenager. “Easy, come on, breathe, that’s it, calm.”

Eileen gulped wringing her hands perhaps her son was right - maybe she shouldn’t know. Ignorance was bliss as they always said.

“Here, drink, slowly.” said Severus handing him some orange juice helping him drink, since his hands were shaking slightly.

“What if it’s not gone?” whispered Harry terrified.

“Harry, trust me, its gone I promise you.” said Severus firmly. “Its gone.” he repeated soothingly running his thumb against his cheek. The other hand placed the goblet on the table where Harry’s still untouched breakfast lay.

Swallowing thickly, Harry nodded his head calming down, trusting Severus completely.

“Alright, do you want a calming draught?” asked Severus.

Harry nodded, he still felt panicky despite Severus’ reassurances.

Severus flicked his wand, summoning the potion to him without speaking. Plucking it out of thin air, when it whistled through the air. Opening the cork, he passed it over to Harry and he drank it quickly. Once he was done Severus handed over his breakfast, it was porridge, filling and soft, exactly what the healer ordered. He’d given Harry a mixture of calming draught and stomach soother, this way he should be able to eat it without feeling sick.

“Try and eat it Harry, you need to keep up your strength, if the potion does its work you’ll be able to enjoy a proper dinner tonight.” said Severus, rubbing his back.

Harry stared at the porridge his stomach and breathing settled he really didn’t want to eat with this new knowledge. Yet he knew to get better he had to eat, he wanted to get well again so he could start hunting down the rest of the Horcruxes - especially the one Regulus had stolen. He wouldn't be able to destroy the Dark Lord until they were found or risk him coming back again and again.
“Would you prefer us to leave you to it?” asked Severus, no doubt Horcruxes was the last thing Harry wanted to talk or hear about right now. He’d handled it with much more grace than he’d expected, and he was proud of Harry for that. For most part he’d remained composed, the panic hadn’t gotten too intense.

“It’s okay, tell her,” said Harry shaking his head, he’d known they’d have to tell Eileen at some point. It was too big to keep secret, especially while they tried to figure out more about them. “Wait…unicorn blood…that’s how we destroy them?”

Severus’ lips twitched, “It certainly did for one of them. My guess is that the darkness couldn’t stand the wholesomeness of the blood.” the silver lining and it hadn’t taken Harry long at all to realise it. They were too evil to withstand the pureness of the willingly given unicorn blood.

“Does that mean it will get rid of your Dark Mark?” asked Harry after swallowing the strawberry and porridge. He knew how much Severus hated the mark, he didn’t even want him seeing it despite the fact he knew it was there. He always wore long shirts to keep it away, the only time he would have had that chance was when they’d showered together- but he’d been too out of it to remember much to his consternation.

Severus turned to look at Harry, surprise written across his face the thought hadn’t even crossed his mind. “I must admit the though hadn’t even crossed my mind.” replied Severus, voicing his thoughts.

“I guess it doesn’t matter now,” sighed Harry sadly, “If my potion exploded…everything is destroyed isn’t it?”

“Actually I was able to salvage half the vial,” said Severus, and for that he was eternally grateful, the thought of it removing his mark…was more than he’d ever hoped for. He’d tried for years to remove it, despite the fact he knew the Dark Lord would be back. He refused to get his hopes up, he would give it a try, but until he either worked or didn’t he was not going to think on it.

“Thank Merlin,” said Harry relieved beyond belief. There was no chance he’d get another vial of Unicorn blood, it was a once in a lifetime occurrence, he knew how blessed he was to have received some in the first place. Unicorn horn is fine, it was usually taken from dead ones, as well as their hair, but willingly given unicorn blood was something extremely hard to come by. Harry had been tempted to sell it, put it towards his Mastery after he left school…thankfully he hadn’t been forced to make that decision.

Eileen listened to the conversation, she prayed the unicorn blood could help remove the mark, she knew how much her son loathed bearing the vile wizards brand. Yet what was the Horcrux? It was obviously something very evil if it couldn’t survive unicorn blood on it. It also had something to do with the Dark Lord as well, judging on the conversation she was listening to. Rubbing her temples, feeling a migraine coming on, what the hell was she going to do?

“Horcruxes is a term for an object, any object hosting a piece of someone’s soul, it requires a ritual…but the bottom line is it requires murder to accomplish the ability to split the soul.” said Severus, he did not tell her what the ritual required exactly, even he hadn’t read the entire thing. It had made him feel sickened to his core; a few lines in he’d closed the book.

Eileen gazed at Severus barely able to comprehend what he was saying.

“Right now, the Dark Lord is for the lack of better terms…immortal, and until we find and destroy them all…he will just keep returning to wreak terror on the magical world.” said Severus hollowly.
“More than one?” croaked Eileen struck dumb by the information. Her stomach was twisting uncomfortably; she was surprised her coffee hadn’t made a reappearance. She understood now why Harry had been in such a state, she was finding it hard never mind a seventeen year old. Harry was definitely wise beyond his years, and she was in awe of him. No wonder they hadn’t wanted to reveal this information to her, she half wanted to go back in time before she heard and tell them she didn’t want to know.

“More than one,” confirmed Severus, more than they’d anticipated at any rate.

“You don’t know the exact number?” Eileen stated closing her tired eyes.

“We do not.” said Severus confirming her suspicions.

“Sev…I never got to ask…what did you talk to Slughorn about?” asked Harry, using his wand to place the tray on his work table. The food was eaten and Harry had actually enjoyed it despite the conversation. It had been a long time since he’d eaten something like that, usually they had full English breakfasts. In fact he contemplated asking the Elves to make it for him, even if it was just on certain days.

“We didn’t talk for long, he is coming here tomorrow,” said Severus his black eyes lightening up, he’d forgotten about the appointment he’d made with Slughorn. He was hoping to get more information out of him, Slughorn was a collector, hopefully he would give the information up with Harry there, if not he had other things to persuade him.

“Oh,” said Harry blinking in surprise.

“I never got to say Happy Birthday to you, Harry.” said Eileen, handing over her gift after raking through the large toppling pile.

“Oh,” said Harry, of course, he was seventeen! He’d missed his birthday…and his plans had been destroyed too. So much for trying to seduce Severus, and get the man to have his wicked ways with him. Leaning back against his pillows starting to feel sleepy. Opening the present, he found twelve large journals, all different colours and they had his name on it. Harry Peverell’s Potions Journal. They were larger than his usual ones, and by the smell of it real leather. “They are beautiful,” replied Harry his fingers touching them reverently. Underneath the journals was a set of ten ink bottles in a wooden oak box along the top. Removing one at a time, he found two black ones, purple, red, green, and blue, orange, lilac, yellow and of course brown. The oak box was large enough for all his journals, and it had a slide that moved up, so he could write on it. At the bottom was also a space for his quills presumably.

“Thank you, Eileen, this is wonderful,” said Harry smiling at her opening his arms and allowing her to hug him. Since he couldn’t move, Eileen had to come to him, which wasn’t a chore; she was much more active since she’d gotten better. Her gift couldn’t have been more timed; he’d used up all the books he had up to this point. The evidence was all over his work desk, he never threw anything out.

“No problem, sweetie.” said Eileen just happy that Harry was better.

“On that subject, here is mine,” said Severus handing over the envelope.

Harry curiously opened the envelope, his eyes widening, a fortnights holiday in the Caribbean! A sly smirk worked its way onto his face; he had no doubt as to why Severus wanted to whisk him away. Now he definitely wanted to get better, this was going to be brilliant. The first chance he’d have to just relax and spend proper time with Severus as his partner not as his apprentice.
Severus rolled his eyes, his breath catching as those devious green eyes latched onto his. A shiver passed over him, oh; he didn’t think they would be seeing much of anywhere if the teen had his way. Severus wouldn’t be in any position to argue, even if he wanted to. Even the prospect of rare potion ingredients paled in comparison to spending time with Harry alone.

“Your friends have all left their presents here as well, they are among the get well cards and presents people sent to you. All of them have been checked, even the chocolates to ensure they haven’t been tampered with.” said Severus grimly. He took their safety very seriously, it wouldn’t be the first time the Dark Lord had sent something through the post to get to someone difficult to find or someone he wanted dead. If anyone had any sense of self preservation they would check.

“The flowers have been put in the living room, but if you’d like some up here we can move them.” said Eileen adding to the conversation.

“That’s fine,” said Harry shaking his head, while it was nice people thought of him, he had no interest in flowers, especially not in his room.

“Alright, sweetie.” said Eileen agreeing with him.

Eileen handed him Viktor and Lukas’ present, opening it he gasped in astonishment. The finest blue battle robes he’d ever seen lay covered in green paper. The most vulnerable areas were covered in dragon hide, protecting the wearer from most spells getting to his ‘weak spots’.

“Oh my, they are beautiful!” said Eileen astonished. They must have cost a lot of money, but knowing Viktor as she did, she knew he had more than he could spend in his long lifetime. Not only was his father rich in his own right, Viktor was as well, having been playing Quidditch for years.

“They are,” said Severus in agreement. Harry had some loyal friends, although he knew Krum and Harry had been more than just friends. It was something he had to accept, it’s not as if there was anything he could do about it.

Opening the other additional box, he found a pair of blue dragon hide boots, obviously dyed since there weren’t blue dragons of course. Harry felt overwhelmed by their generosity, he couldn’t wait to see them, and he’d missed them more than anything else in the world. They were his size unsurprisingly, Viktor loved getting him clothes and stuff, mostly because he’d confessed about not having anything he liked. He’d just gotten the same as Nick, since they shopped with him and bought his along with Nicks at the same time.

“Would you like me to place it on your wardrobe?” enquired Severus.

“Yes, please.” said Harry handing it over, the shoes as well which went on the floor at the cupboard door.

“This is from Luna and Neville,” said Eileen, handing over yet another large package.

Harry ripped open the package, and unearthed the black case, and curiously opened it. Gasping in wonder, five daggers were uncovered, jewel encrusted with little pouches over them. Picking up the note, his eyes widened, they were ancient throwing daggers, imbued with basilisk venom over one thousand years old. He could barely believe it; this had to be the most ancient thing he’d ever seen…at least in these parts of the magical world. Picking one up, handling it delicately, after all one cut could kill him! They were imbued with basilisk venom, these were older than Hogwarts!

“I think you will find these useful in your quest, whatever it may be, and good luck.” said Harry,
reading the handwriting on the note. There was little doubt Luna had written this, she was the one always talking in riddles. She must know what they were up to, or got the sense that it was important.

“Did you tell her?” asked Severus confused.

“No,” said Harry shaking his head.

“Then how does she know?” asked Severus cautiously, then it hit him like a ton of bricks. “She’s a seer?”

“It gets stronger every year,” said Harry, “Only Neville and I know, and well now you both too. Sometimes she only gets feelings, of things that might be important.”

Severus shook his head in silent wonderment.

“This is from Fleur and Gary.” said Eileen handing yet another gift over.

Harry curiously opened it, it must be some jewellery, opening the box he let out a loud chortle of amusement. It was a pendant, a protection amulet against potion explosions, hexes, curses and jinxes. The design was intriguing, it was obvious she’d had it special made. A wand wrapped around a snake, dangling from the tail of the snake was a cauldron.

“Too bad your birthday wasn’t a few days before, you sure could have used it.” said Severus, finding amusement in the present as well.

Harry burst out laughing, until his stomach hurt, forcing him to stop otherwise suffer through the stitch in his side. “Oh, bloody hell,” he gasped out trying to regain control of his breathing. Although if he had gotten the pendant…he would still have the Horcrux inside of him. It sobered his mood when he realized that, not something he wanted to dwell on.

Severus just nodded grimly, no doubt having the very same thoughts as Harry.

"Would you like to open your cards?" asked Eileen.

"Yes please," said Harry watching wide eyed as Eileen moved the hoard onto his bed, his legs were covered completely by them all. Opening one, he found it from Parvati Patil; at least it wasn’t a complete stranger. It was a simple get well card, from both the twins actually. As it turned out, Harry realised that most were indeed from people from school wishing him well. He even received one from Albus Dumbledore of all people! Inside was a packet of strawberry Drops. Harry smile slightly at that, remembering his first conversation with the elderly wizard. Harry had asked for a strawberry tart, Dumbledore then told him about his delight of Lemon drops and Sherbet Lemons being his favourite...or anything lemon come to that. He wrote that Hogwarts would wait on him getting better, not to worry about school also congratulating him on his Mastery.

Harry shook his head as he read another one, this was from James, there was an entire letter written into the card. Begging him to get in touch when he could, to let him know how he was.

"Everything alright?" asked Severus, not wanting to invade Harry's privacy.

"It's James," said Harry, passing the card having no reservations about sharing it with Severus.

"Ah," said Severus, understanding Harry's exasperation.
"I got one from Dumbledore," said Harry, "Sometimes you think you understand him...then he does something to confound you...then makes you like him again! It's not fair, honestly."

Severus' lips twitched, "I know," replied Severus, its how he felt about Dumbledore all the time. His emotions went from top to bottom when it came to Albus as well. He knew Albus was just trying to do what was best, but the best way wasn't always the right way. In trying to win Nick Potters approval, for reasons he didn't understand, the prophecy wasn't good enough in his point of view, he had alienated nearly all of Hogwarts, the Ravens, the Hufflepuff’s and Slytherin which didn’t already have a good view of him. He had seen the looks on their faces that year, he had been shocked himself. Yet when he'd got control of himself, he’d seen the houses weren't happy with Dumbledore's announcement (other than Gryffindor) and shared the Slytherins view of how unfair it was.

Which reminded him of the letter Albus had sent him, placing the card from James Potter on the bed.

"What do you think I should do?" asked Harry evidently conflicted since he usually dealt with that part of his life alone.

"Do what your heart tells you," said Eileen.

"My heart tells me to rip it up out of spite," said Harry bluntly.

Eileen chuckled softly, "It's entirely up to you, Harry." said Eileen, she wouldn’t blame him if he did set fire to it or rip it up. James Potter had ignored Harry, brought him down until he had no self esteem and blamed him for anything that went wrong.

"Indeed it is," said Severus opening the letter from Albus and reading it. His eyes widened, steadily getting better as he read further down. Standing up abruptly, he said to both of them, "I am going out for half an hour, I'll be back as soon as possible - try not to worry."

"Where are you going?" Harry called out, concerned.

"I'm going to see Albus, I'll tell you about it when I get back, it's vital I go now." said Severus honestly before he disappeared, having Apparated from the manor.

Harry continued to stare at the spot, his stomach churning.

"Severus knows what he's doing, sweetie." said Eileen, trying to reassure them both. "He will be back and when he does, you'll have your answers."

"I hope so," said Harry, he was seventeen and just about to start a relationship with Sev - he didn't want anything to happen to him. Not now, not ever, it’s why he was so desperate to end this war.

"Why don't you get some sleep? Let the potion run its course?" suggested Eileen.

"I am tired; maybe I should just rest my eyes for a while. Wake me up when Severus gets back, please." said Harry, his eyes drooping.

"I will." promised Eileen, watching Harry finally succumb to the call of sleep that had been shouting on him for half an hour.
Chapter 67

Invisible

Chapter 67

Near Misses

Severus ran like he’d never run before towards Hogwarts. Praying he wasn’t too late, the stupid old fool. If he got his hands on him he would kill him, going after Horcruxes without knowing how to defeat them, it was at the height of idiocy. Although he hadn't said it was a Horcrux, but the way he spoke, Severus knew deep down it was one. Taking Lupin of all people with him, yes he was a Werewolf, but he didn’t know the Dark Art’s like him. Albus should know the Dark Lord wouldn’t leave them unprotected! He needed someone who was an expert in the Dark Arts. He wasn’t bragging but he was the best of the best, he’d steeped himself in them for years. When he’d lost Lily completely to Potter of all people it had sunk him further into them. She had been the one to make him renounce the dark and spy for Dumbledore despite the fact she never spoke to him after his stupid mistake. He’d tried, dear Merlin, he’d done everything to try and get Lily’s forgiveness but she hadn’t relented. She'd been his best friend since he was eight; he'd been fonder of her than anyone in his life. His parents he had loathed and wanted nothing to do with them with all the yelling and the abuse. Although he and his mother had made up, later in life, once Tobias was gone, and he loved her as he should now...Lily though had never forgiven him.

“Minerva!” shouted Severus running up the steps of the entrance hall, so glad to see at least one teacher.

“Severus, it’s good to see you…how are you? How is Harry?” asked Minerva in genuine concern.

“No time for pleasantries, where’s Dumbledore?” asked Severus.

“He just left,” said Minerva concerned by the dark look and worry shining through Severus’ eyes - Albus had obviously done something stupid to get the normally stoic man to show emotion.

“What’s wrong, Severus?”

“I’ll explain later,” said Severus turning around and running away again, having no intentions of telling her anything it had been merely a platitude. He should have gone to the Gaunt ruins in Little Hangleton first. Cursing silently, breathing erratically, he was out of shape, badly out of shape. Skidding to a halt, the stones flying everywhere and continued to do so despite the fact the wizard himself had already Apparated away.

Looking around he could see nothing, perhaps they hadn’t come here? The graveyard, where Harry had been hurt and tortured, it was a relief Harry didn’t have to come here. If he’d been well enough, there would have been no question of him demanding to come. He could see a little shack in the distance, if it could be called that. Honestly, the Shrieking Shack outside Hogsmeade was in better condition.

Taking a deep breath, he began to walk in that direction, determined to put a stop to Dumbledore’s insane plan. He wished he had a vial of Harry's potion, so he could have teleported inside the building. Peering in the glass missing windows, he saw the edge of a cloak before it disappeared. Listening intently, he heard nothing further hastily making his way around to the other side, nearly stumbling over the brambles, branches and over grown grass. He wasn’t in the appropriate footwear for this, it had been raining and it was slippery as well. Boots would have been the best
thing to wear, or hiking shoes. Did he stun Dumbledore and Lupin and take the Horcrux? Or did he let Dumbledore believe him oblivious?

Entering through the door, he relaxed when he heard them talking, they were here and obviously nothing had happened. Irritated at Dumbledore and concerned he flicked his wand out at the ready, not wanting cursed by either of them.

“Are you sure it’s safe?” asked Remus, his voice filled with concern. “Albus are you listening to me?”

All thoughts of stunning them and taking it left him like water going down a plug. Fury spread across Severus’ face at the sight before him; Albus looked enchanted, staring at the box as if it held the answer to all his problems. He’d never seen the old wizard lose focus in such a way before. What was he doing? Touching it without checking? And Lupin was just standing there like a spare end.

“EXPELLAMIUS!” causing the box in Dumbledore’s hand to be yanked from his grasp. Falling with a thump at Severus' feet.

“You stupid old fool!” snarled Severus.

“Severus?” asked Dumbledore looking dazed, when had Severus gotten here? Why was he here?

“Demented old man!” spat Severus, waving his hand over the box.

“What are you going on about?” asked Remus baffled. He didn’t like this, not only had Albus been very secretive about all this…but Snape bursting in cursing the Headmaster and calling him names? He’d never seen him lose his composure like that before, well not since they left Hogwarts. Snape always had a tight grip over his emotions, you knew he was pissed when his voice went very low or he spat at you like he was doing right now. Obviously Severus knew what was going on, and that annoyed him. He was an Order member as well, why couldn’t Albus have explained everything? He wasn't about to go blabbing, or was this about his lycanthrope? Was he still mistrusted because of it?

Albus returned to his normal self, the urge to use the stone for his own purposes had reseeded. He so badly wanted to speak to his mother and sister, apologize for letting them both down to egregiously. Unfortunately during his teenage years, he had been deluded, mostly because of what happened to his sister, Ariana. She’d been hurt by Muggles, and he’d wanted to make sure nobody else fell victim to what she’d been through. He refused to meet Severus’ eyes, ashamed of his own weaknesses; he always had to be strong, to do the right thing. Everyone looked up to him, it wasn't easy. It had started even before he had proved himself to be a fierce dueller while fighting Gellert.

“What were you thinking?!” snapped Severus, his head jerking to face Albus, who wouldn’t meet his eyes. “If you had opened this you would have died!”

“What?” rasped Remus his amber eyes large.

“What?” rasped Albus feebly lying.

“I would have checked,” said Albus feebly lying.

Severus snorted as he used his wand to open the box, never touching it. He didn’t dare touch the large chunky ring; he could feel the dark magic leeching from it in waves. He knew what it was, and he also knew how to counter it, remove it from the Horcrux. He wondered how Albus knew about it, how the hell had he found out about them? They had by sheer happenstance.

Magic filled the room as Severus muttered the counter curse, Remus and Albus stood there
watching him. It was easy to forget how powerful the wizard was, since he didn’t make a habit of showing his true power. Much like any Slytherin would in this case, if your name wasn’t Voldemort of course.

“Its done.” said Severus exhaling sharply, thank Merlin he had read the letter when he did. A few minutes later Albus would have been in serious trouble. He would have died in excruciating agony, unless he managed to get his help, even at that he would have merely been delaying the inevitable. Depending on how far the curse spread, he would have had nine to ten months left to live.

“What is it?” asked Remus coming forward, peering into the box; it seemed to be nothing of importance, just a really ugly ring. Fortunately he knew most magical items did look insignificant, and from Severus’ reaction it was bad.

“What were you thinking?” repeated Severus glaring at Albus furiously.

“I would have been fine, Severus.” said Albus trying to blow the entire ordeal off as no big deal.

“You aren’t invincible!” hissed Severus, his black eyes flashing.

“I’d like an answer.” stated Remus loudly, beginning to feel invisible.

“Get Black, meet us back at Prince Manor.” said Severus still glaring at Albus.

“I must get this back to Hogwarts.” said Albus immediately.

“You have no choice, you either come with us or we leave with it.” said Severus firmly.

“Severus,” warned Dumbledore irritated.

“I’m not your student, Albus, that look doesn't work anymore. The choice is yours come or go back to Hogwarts.” said Severus sliding the box into his cloak pocket; thankfully it was large enough to fit the large golden box. He kept his wand pointed at Albus, not wanting any surprises from the out of sorts Headmaster.

Remus looked between the two powerful wizards, neither looked close to relenting. Staring at where the box was in Snape’s pocket he made up his mind. Remus Apparated from the ruins of the Gaunt shack, to Grimmauld Place.

“Are you coming?” asked Severus grimly.

“Very well, it seems you leave me no choice.” said Albus extremely put out.

“Exactly,” said Severus impassively, before he Apparated to Prince Manor, he wasn’t about to let Dumbledore hunt for these things himself or pawn it off on a child. No doubt it would have been Nick Potter he’d have chosen as his alternative. That would leave the world in deep shit; the boy was a coward, the worst sort of coward. He’d leave the magical world to die before stepping up and being a man. Merlin he was so glad it was Harry, for all the right reasons, although he wished for Harry's sake it never got out. He was terrified of everyone knowing, and nothing he or his mum said changed that.

Severus opened the wards, letting Dumbledore through. Black and Lupin were probably going to use the Floo network. They didn’t know where the manor was, to Apparate there. They only knew the Floo address, so it was a logical conclusion, and Severus was a very logical man. He said nothing to the elder wizard as he stalked up the path towards his home.
Albus didn’t like the loss of control, but nonetheless followed Severus into his beautiful manor. The Prince’s had done a wonderful job. Of course everywhere paled in comparison to Hogwarts, but it wasn’t about the school.

“What is going on, Severus?” asked Eileen, standing in the living room, looking displeased. Not only was Albus Dumbledore there, but Remus Lupin and Sirius Black. The three men she hated above all others, in fact the urge to curse them all was very strong. Her magical core had strengthened since she’d taken Eileen’s Potion, she might not be extremely powerful but she could hex them to hell and back. One for nearly killing her son, another for sending him to the shack in the first place and the old fool for not doing anything about it then convincing her son to bloody spy.

“I’ll explain later,” sighed Severus looking exhausted all of a sudden.

“Very well,” said Eileen, but only because her son looked as though he had enough on his plate. “Harry wanted me to wake him as soon as you returned.”

“Don’t wake him, he needs his rest.” said Severus adamantly. “I’ll go and see him after I’m finished here.”

“Alright,” she conceded, moving out of the room, deciding she’d rather be in her own bedroom reading a book than here with these three men.

“It seems your mother isn’t very fond of me,” said Albus dryly, which wasn’t something he experienced often.

“No, she isn’t.” said Severus not lying.

“What’s going on?” asked Sirius, standing there lost, his red Auror robes standing out against the cream coloured living room. “How is Harry?” he added.

“He’s taken Eileen’s Potion, he will be up I estimate by tonight at some point.” said Severus.

“Oh,” said Sirius his mouth forming an O as he stood there seemingly dumbfounded.

“They have no need to know,” said Albus, it was obvious to him that Severus knew what it was.

“Know what?” demanded Remus. So Dumbledore was keeping something from them this was daunting to say the least.

“You will need them, Black at the very least.” said Severus dryly, sitting down, silently gesturing for them to do the same thing. There was no other way, there was a Horcrux in Grimmauld Place, and without access it wouldn’t be easy to find it.

“Why me?” asked Sirius baffled.

“Do you wish to explain, Albus?” asked Severus cautiously, just how the hell had he found out?

“What do you know of Harry’s adventure during his second year?” sighed Albus giving in; it was obvious Severus wasn’t going to give him the Horcrux. So he had to reveal what he knew, if it got out he didn’t know what he’d do. Voldemort would create more making not only his magic but mental instability even worse. It’s the last thing anyone needed; Voldemort was a danger to very one.

“Other than that he fought a Basilisk, nothing. He hasn’t spoken about it,” said Severus frowning in contemplation.
“Basilisk?” shrieked Sirius, gulping loudly, what had Harry been doing anywhere near a fucking basilisk? What had he left him to? Merlin, no wonder he wouldn’t forgive any of them.

Remus just gazed at Dumbledore barely able to believe it.

“Odd things began happening, first and foremost, roosters were being killed, students were being petrified and the chamber of secrets was opened again. The students didn’t know but the heir of Slytherin happened to be Voldemort. It was hard year for Harry if I remember correctly; all the students believed he did it because he could speak Parselmouth. He ended up in the hospital wing a few times but he didn’t say anything. Poppy was concerned enough to come to me with her worries but unless Harry admitted anything untoward my hands were tied.” said Albus.

“Things are very unclear, but what I do know is that Harry opened the chamber, went down and slayed the sixty foot basilisk. Saved Ginny Weasley and called upon my phoenix to help them. I never managed to get the full story out of him, and Fawkes was most unwilling to share the events he saw.” said Albus feeling a little petulant.

“I never knew,” said Sirius looking stunned.

“I wrote to Lily and James about it, I don’t understand why they didn’t tell you,” replied Albus frowning. Harry had been Sirius’ godson after all, surely they should have told him.

“They never wrote anything about Harry,” admitted Sirius sickly.

“Ever?” asked Albus taken aback, it seemed after all the information he had - he was still constantly surprised.

“Not since he was three or something.” said Sirius, he wasn’t sure what his exact age had been. He’d made a book for Harry, one with the letters his parents had sent him bragging about Harry’s little accomplishments when he was a baby. Then of course every single photo he could find of Harry, which was many until he was two years old. He had gone to Hogwarts and gotten pictures of Harry with his friends, mostly during the fourth year. Colin Creevy had been most accommodating, especially when he realized Sirius was giving him money.

“Two, they said that Harry had gone four weeks without a single accident.” said Remus, remembering the letter. The twins had begun learning how to use the toilet, Harry had learned first and Lily and James had been ecstatic. He didn’t know how or why they had changed towards their son…but it broke their heart that the family had fallen apart.

“Continue with your explanation, Albus.” stated Severus shifting awkwardly, he’d never been more forcefully reminded that Harry was much younger than him. It didn’t change his feelings towards Harry, but it did make him feel weird.

“Of course,” said Albus startled, realizing why he was here again. “I convinced Fawkes to take me down, to get the Basilisk. I found a diary and investigated it; I became increasingly concerned when I noticed the name on it. Tom Marvolo Riddle. I’d had my suspicions after talking to Miss. Weasley, but I wasn’t prepared for it. It took me a few years to figure out what exactly it was.”

“Tom?” asked Remus blankly.

“Tom Marvolo Riddle is the Dark Lord’s birth name.” said Severus his lips twitching. Dumbledore kept it secret for reasons he did not understand. If they knew he was a half blood, the purebloods wouldn’t be so willing to follow the deluded albeit powerful wizard.

“You took the basilisk? By rights that belonged to Harry, he defeated it.” said Sirius angry on
Harry’s behalf.

“Don’t worry, he got both money and a great deal of the basilisk,” said Severus sardonically. Honestly he didn’t understand why they cared now, they’d ignored Harry pretty much his entire life.

“What does the diary have to do with Voldemort?” asked Remus.

“He was the diary, at least the seventeen year old version of him.” said Albus quietly; he could barely believe he was sitting here telling them everything. Damn Severus to hell, how had he figured it out? It had taken him years! And apparently it only took Severus a few seconds to figure it out.

“Seventeen year old version? How many versions are there?” asked Remus terrified.

“I don’t know.” admitted Albus, “From the looks of him I’d say there are at least four of them.”

“Four of what?” asked Remus, surely there wasn’t four Voldemort’s out there somewhere.

“Horcruxes,” said Severus saying what Dumbledore wasn’t. “Containers hosting a piece of someone’s soul. At the age of seventeen the Dark Lord went out and performed a ritual and murdered someone to break a piece of his off and place it in the diary. He has made more than one, of that I can guarantee.”

“How can you know that? So far I’ve only figured out one, two if we include the diary.” said Albus disconcerted. Finding it difficult not to pout or whine at Severus as he had admittedly done once in the past much to his embarrassment.

“I wasn’t the first one to find out,” said Severus smartly.

“Don’t tell me Mr. Potter knows!” said Dumbledore genuinely concerned, it wasn’t information children should have. He had removed the book so other kids couldn’t get the same ideas as Voldemort. It was horrifying for him to read and acknowledge it without a seventeen year old boy being aware of it.

“I wasn’t referring to him, but another seventeen year old boy,” said Severus turning to face Sirius, watching as realization dawned on him like a freight train.

“No,” rasped Sirius, his brother had found out? Was that why he was killed?

“He scarified himself for a Horcrux, hoping that when the Dark Lord met his match he would be mortal once more.” said Severus grimly. “Unfortunately he did not realize that the Dark Lord had more than one…and there was no way for them to be destroyed.”

“You mean he wasn’t killed?” asked Sirius feeling extremely hurt and pained. All those years of thinking badly of his little brother and he’s done the right thing in the end.

“No,” replied Severus, “The Dark Lord wasn’t happy with his disappearance.”

“So we have a Horcrux out there somewhere?” said Remus.

“I suspect it’s in Grimmauld Place.” said Severus seriously.

“Why?” asked Sirius frowning.

“Because Regulus wrote a note, I found it in one of the Potion books you gave Harry. He knew
about them then, so the only thing I can figure is that he went out in search of it to destroy it.” said Severus.

“This is good news,” said Albus relieved beyond belief. “Mr. Potter cannot know.” he added.

“Am I expected to believe you had no intention of telling Nicolas Potter?” sneered Severus.

Albus paused, and Severus realized he was right.

“This is an adult’s work, Albus, not even the idiot boy should know about it. He talks first thinks later, anything for a piece of fame.” said Severus his lip curling, remembering reading the interview the idiot had given to Skeeters after the first or second task. Pot kettle black, thought Severus, Harry knew but not through a choice of his. If he’d seen it first he didn’t think he would have told Harry, it’s not information that should be distributed.

“I agree, neither of them should be told, I can’t believe you wanted to tell Nick! Maybe James is right, he shouldn’t be near you alone for a second.” said Remus grimly.

“It’s of no importance now,” sighed Albus, it seems as if all decisions he made were being called into question. He wasn’t used to it, but he couldn’t help but think…where they right? The prophecy said he was supposed to do it, find out the power the dark lord knew not? Remorse? Get the Dark Lord to feel bad for what he did and reunit the soul pieces? But no, to die he had to be mortal; the Horcruxes had to be destroyed. Perhaps they were tasked with destroying them so Nick could deal the ending blow.

“I was in Knockturn Alley for slug repellent for the green house when I overheard information on an upcoming attack.” said Severus.

“Talk about luck,” said Sirius impressed, “What did they say?”

“They have Shacklebolt under the Imperious curse; he is to lead an attack against Hogsmeade. I have no doubt its probably planned for the last week before Hogwarts starts up. There will be more parents and students there to make a statement.” said Severus.

“He is strong enough to fight it off,” said Albus.

“Not if they’ve tortured him,” said Severus bluntly.

Albus grimaced, he hated the talk of torture, always had. The conversation he’d had with Severus when Harry was fourteen still chilled him to the bone. A fourteen year old placed under such a horrific curse; the Dark Lord didn’t have a single moral left. The Horcruxes had completely destroyed his sanity, as well as his looks and what patience he’d had.

"I'll need to warn the Auror's," said Sirius.

"No, keep it quiet, but be quick about alerting them when they come." said Severus.

"That might result in the loss of several lives!" protested Sirius.

"Not if the Order is already there," said Remus.

"And they will be." said Albus reassuringly. It seemed as though he was no longer the leader. Part of him loathed it, yet another part of him was glad. He was an old man, trying to do what was best for the magical world. People knew this task of finding Horcruxes wasn’t solely focused on his own shoulders. Although part of him was admittedly terrified that the Dark Lord would find out.
There was nothing he could do about it now, since three other wizards did know about the Horcruxes.

"Alright then," conceded Sirius.

Just then the Floo flared to life, spitting out a couple at a time, Fleur and Gary, Viktor and Lukas, Neville and Luna as well as Cedric and Cho.

"Sorry if we have interrupted," said Viktor.

"It's fine," said Albus, smiling warmly at him recognizing the young man in front of him. "It is very nice to meet you again Mr. Krum."

"You too Headmaster Dumbledore," said Viktor respectfully. He was the one that brought his grandfathers killer to heel, defeating him in a duel and having him sent to prison for the rest of his life.

"Harry will be happy to see you, go on up, I'll be up momentarily." said Severus.

"Thank you," said Viktor speaking for the group with immediately left the living room trooping out eager to see Harry.

"We need to have a proper talk, Severus." said Albus seriously.

Severus arched an eyebrow; it had been two nearly three years since they'd spoken civilly. Unfortunately the war made people forget things like that in a bid to rid the world of the darkness causing havoc. So he nodded, not sure when he would have the time, but he would try.

"Good," said Albus, "I need your words that what has been spoken here will never leave your lips again."

"I don't think so, but I won't be telling anyone...don't worry," stated Sirius standing up. "I'm going to see Harry, so excuse me."

"I am heading up also, please see yourself out." said Severus standing up.

"May I stay?" asked Remus hopefully.

"If Harry agrees then yes," said Severus, he wasn't going to make Harry put up with them.

"Thank you," said Remus sighing in gratitude.

"Give Harry my well wishes," said Albus, "May I have it?"

"Do you know how to destroy them?" asked Severus bluntly.

"No," admitted Albus reluctantly.

"I do, do not worry Albus it will be done. I want him gone more than you do," said Severus.

"Very well," sighed Albus, hoping Severus didn't find out about how special the ring was. The power shouldn't be used, it was too tempting, and everyone that had used it ended up committing suicide. The Peverell wizard was proof of that, and others who had owned it down the line. Thankfully knowledge of what it was, had faded from existence. Evidently Tom had not figured out what it was, if he had...perhaps some time with his mother would have done him good. Sent him on a new path, but there was no point to wishing, what was done was done. With that he Floo'ed out,
already making plans to visit again soon. He wanted to discuss the Horcruxes in length with Severus, a young man he thought of as a son, who seemed to have made more progress than him.

“He looks so much better doesn’t he?” said Cho, sitting down on the seats the boy’s were placing around the bed again. She maybe hadn’t been as close to Harry as the others, having not been a member of the group during fourth year. Yet she was fond of him, and didn’t want to see anything happening to him. It would devastate everyone in the group, she could remember their reactions to the news he’d died at the end of the year. Two years had gone by nearly since then, and despite the fact they didn’t spend every day together, they were still very close.

“Yes,” agreed Neville taking the last seat once there was enough for all of them. The presents he noticed had been opened; he wondered what he thought of them. Luna had found them in his vaults, while he had been down there looking for a ring for Luna, not that she had known that of course. She had come with him, she’d asked and he couldn’t say no without arousing suspicion after all. With Viktor and Lukas engaged, he felt it was time to ask Luna as well. His grandmother was extremely happy, and insisted his parents would have been over the moon with his choice too.

“I wonder what they’ve given him to make his recovery so fast.” said Viktor curiously. “I don’t think even Fawkes could help that much.”

“You’d be surprised, they can heal most things instantly other than the organs.” said Severus entering the room. “As it stands, I have given him Eileen’s potion; he should be up and about this evening.”

“Looks like he will be doubly grateful he invented that potion,” grinned Cedric amused.

“Indeed,” said Severus taking a chair for himself and sitting down.

“Harry knows about them doesn’t he?” whispered Sirius to Severus as he took a seat next to him in order to talk to him without being overheard.

“What makes you think that?” asked Severus dryly, speaking low as well, but there was no need since the others were all chatting amongst themselves about what they were going to do, and their jobs.

“He came to me with the book…he wanted to know if it was in Regulus’ handwriting and about him, if any of my relatives had been Death Eaters.” said Sirius.

Severus sighed, “He was the one to figure it all out, and he was acting oddly, avoiding both me and my mother. It wasn’t like him at all; eventually I cornered him and spoke to him about it. I wished he didn’t know, but Harry is very resourceful, his help will be extremely beneficial for all concerned.” he replied reluctantly. “I’d rather you keep this information to yourself, otherwise Albus might in his misguided belief actually try and tell Nicolas Potter about them.”

Sirius nodded grimly in understanding, he wanted to be a part of Harry’s life. To do that he would have to keep quiet, otherwise Harry would see it as a betrayal of his trust. So he would keep silent, for Harry, his godson didn’t have many people he did love and felt could be loyal to him.

“Severus,” murmured Harry, as he slowly blinked the sleep from his eyes, his green eyes glowing with relief seeing him there unharmed.

Sirius stiffened in his seat, biting his tongue to stop himself saying anything. He understood all too
well what Snape was talking about yesterday, the ‘We’ was coming all too apparent. It wasn’t unusual that Master’s and apprentices became close, working together for years it was expected really. Of course some became lovers, best friends and confidants. If Harry was, it would call into question his Potions Mastery…why would he risk it? Closing his eyes, no, he couldn’t think like that. Snape was many things but he wouldn’t allow that to happen surely.

“Hey!” cried his friends in unison.

“Hi, guys.” said Harry grinning, happy to see them as he sat himself up without aches or pains.

“Here, sorry we didn’t get a chance to give it to you earlier, I had it special made.” said Cedric, handing over the present. “It’s from me and Cho of course, we went halfers on it.

“Thank you,” said Harry accepting the gift, opening it he was awed at the present.

“It has the ability to recall your wand as long as it’s in a ten mile radius. It’s anti summoning as well acts sort of like a shield, so you can’t be disarmed. You need to place it in it, for at least twenty four hours to let the magic imbue itself into the holster so it can work properly the wizard said.” replied Cedric.

“It also returns the wand to its holster if you press your magic into it, like a summoning charm.” said Cho adding the part Cedric left out. They’d bought an ordinary holster and had the man add enchantments to make it better.

“Wow, thank you guys, this means a lot! All of you I loved your gifts.” said Harry gratefully.

“Sev? Can you get me the bag I used when we went to Egypt?”

“How did the conference go? What Potions did you create?” asked Lukas curiously, he loved potions and had learned a lot about them as a healer he needed knowledge. He was still just learning but he loved it.

“One that allows you to change into all potential Animagus’, the other you throw on at your feet and it teleports you to wherever you want to go.” said Harry smirking in smug satisfaction.

“Fascinating,” said Lukas impressed.

“I’ve always wanted to be an Animagus, I’d go up the ranks quicker if I was, the better you are at concealment the quicker you move up the ladder.” explained Cedric. “Tonks flew up it, despite how clumsy she is.”

“The Potion doesn’t let you become an Animagus, it just allows you to change into more than one form.” said Harry.

“If you want…I can help you become on?” suggested Sirius.

“You’d do that?” asked Cedric surprised, Sirius didn’t usually give him the time of day, being such a young Auror nearly all of them ignored him.

“And any of you if you are interested,” said Sirius, hoping his godson wanted to become one; it’s another way to get close to him. “How about it Harry?”

“Why not? I have a lot more time on my hands now.” said Harry amused, he was finished with his Potions Mastery. Although he did have Horcruxes to hunt, but that wouldn’t be happening all day
every day.

“Great!” insisted Sirius beaming happily. “Here you go,” said Severus handing him the bag, which hadn’t been touched since Harry got home.

“Thanks, Severus.” said Harry opening the bag already digging into the contents.

“These are for you, Cho,” said Harry handing over the twenty different bangle set. All with different colours, and designs on them. Mostly Egyptian designs, hieroglyphics, camels, the pyramids and a myriad of other designs that were visited by tourists all year round in Egypt.

“Oh they are so cute! Thank you Harry!” said Cho nearly squealing.

“This is for you Fleur,” added Harry, handing over the choker.

“It is very beautiful, thank you,” said Fleur placing it around her neck with the help of Gary, the Horus eye dangled down her throat.

“These are for you Luna,” said Harry smiling, handing both items he’d gotten for her. The divination stone set and the vintage choker similar to Fleur’s but with an ankh instead of a Horus eye.

“WOW!” exclaimed Luna, delighted with her gifts, taking her time to look through the book on her new oracle set. “Thank you Harry!” she squealed moving to hug him quickly, jumping up and down. She wasn’t used to getting things from friends yet, she’d gone most of her life without friends so it was no surprise.

"You are welcome," said Harry, returning the hug and replied "Thank you for your gift. They will come in handy for sure."

"Glad you liked them!" beamed Luna, sitting back down investigating her gift once more.

“This is for you Cedric,” said Harry finally finding it among all the books squirreled away in the bag. Withdrawing the silver pendant with an Ankh dangling from it. “It has protection spells woven into it; it will protect you from most spells.”

“This is great, Harry, thanks!” said Cedric, “We really should be the one giving you more gifts!” he had just been hurt, yet they hadn’t been able to give him anything since it had happened on his birthday.

“No problem,” said Harry sheepishly. “Ah-hah!” he exclaimed finally finding the folded up chess board.

“Here, this is for you, Viktor.” said Harry sniggering.

Viktor took his gift, staring at the pieces before laughing, finally understanding why Harry was amused. “I like this,” confessed the Quidditch star.

“Good!” exclaimed Harry, once again digging into his bag. “These are for you Nev.”

“Are they for real?” asked Neville gazing at the seeds awed beyond belief.

“Yes, I bought them…why?” asked Harry frowning.

“These are extremely rare!” explained Neville wide eyed.
“Maybe here, but obviously not in Egypt - I didn’t pay a fortune for them.” said Harry shrugging his shoulder.

“These are so going into the green house!” exclaimed Neville loudly. “Thank you so much! I’ll be giving you some of the herbs when they are in bloom I promise!” he couldn’t wait to get home to start tending to them, he’d never seen them but read about them enviously. He could barely believe Harry had apparently gotten them so cheaply. There were around twenty different plants here too, it was fantastic and he realized he wanted to do something else for Harry - to thank him.

"This is for you Lukas, it’s a book on healing spells, obscure ones.” said Harry handing it over.

“You did not have to. However, thank you, I appreciate it.” said Lukas smiling warmly at the boy.

“No problem,” said Harry waving it off, “Last but no means least this is for you Gary. I know you are training to be a Wand maker, this book is about them.” handing over the book.

“Thanks, Harry.” said Gary touched by Harry’s gesture to make him one of the group.

“These are for you,” said Harry handing over the sweets, he hadn’t actually gotten anything for Sirius but he felt awkward and slightly bad at leaving him out. He handed over another packet to Remus with reluctance.

“You didn’t have to,” said Sirius accepting the treats a small smile on his face, touched that Harry though of him.

“How’s the job going?” asked Harry, speaking to Cedric.

“It’s good, getting a lot of experience…the new building is brilliant though, we have a big room now instead of separate stalls.” said Cedric. “Jack got hurt though, last month he resigned afterwards…I think he got really scared.”

“After going through all that training?” replied Harry, gaping in shocked disbelief.

“I know right?” said Cedric nodding in agreement; he couldn’t imagine quitting now after all he’d been through to get the job.

“What a shame,” said Harry shaking his head.

“It is,” said Sirius.

“I have a question I want to ask you, Harry.” said Viktor once the current conversation tampered off.

“What is it?” asked Harry turning to stare at his Ex.

“Lukas and I…we are engaged, the date is set for the wedding, four months…we were wondering if you would be the best man?” asked Viktor.

“I’d love to!” replied Harry nodding eagerly, pleased for both of them.

“Great,” said Viktor relaxing, he’d been worried Harry would be jealous, despite the fact they had parted ways happily enough. It seems as if his fears had been for nothing.

“I have something I wish to ask Luna, and I see no better time than being here with all our friends.” said Neville digging into his pocket.

Luna stared at him curiously, it seemed despite being a seer she couldn’t predict everything.
“Luna, without you I wouldn’t have gotten over what happened to my parents, you’ve been my rock through everything. I love you and would love it if you would like to spend the rest of our lives together. Will you marry me?” asked Neville kneeling on one leg, the box open and ring on display.

Everyone held their breath, waiting to see what she would say.

“YES! YES! YES! YES, I’ll marry you.” said Luna throwing herself at her surprised brand new fiancé, causing him to fall to the floor, Luna falling with him.

“Don’t choke him!” said Harry laughing as he watched them from his bed.

Neville managed to get back to his feet, and place the ring on his fiancée’s finger relived beyond belief that she had said yes. Everyone moved closer, congratulating the new couple, the girls squealing at the ring, and the boys (other than Harry) patting Neville’s back.

“I apologize but I must go,” said Severus standing up.

“Where are you going?” asked Harry in concern.

“Horace Slughorn is coming, I must be there to greet him.” said Severus, “I’ll be fine, do not worry yourself.”

“If you need me you will come up and get me, right?” asked Harry.

“I will.” said Severus, and he meant it. He wanted answers and Slughorn may be the only one who had them. "I wish you the best of luck in your engagement." he added to both Viktor and Neville.

"Thank you, Severus." said both of them appreciating his words.

"Why is Slughorn coming here?" Sirius asked Harry.

"To talk," said Harry wryly, as if the answer was obvious.

"So will you be my best man?" asked Neville sitting down on the bed.

"Are you sure?" asked Harry surprised. "What about Frankie?" he was his brother after all.

"I want it to be you." said Neville, Harry was the one he was closest to.

"I’d be honoured Nev," said Harry, grunting as he was brought into a hug.

"Thanks Harry!" said Neville honestly. "The presents were the best!"

"No problem," grinned Harry amused.

"Congratulations Mr. Longbottom," said Sirius officially.

"Thank you Mr. Black." said Neville nodding his thanks to the well wishes.

"You have my congratulations as well," said Remus smiling, genuinely happy for the young couple.

"Thank you Professor," said Neville blushing.

"Please, call me Remus, I am no longer your professor." said Remus kindly.
"Thank you Remus," repeated Neville, still sitting on the bed. "So how are you really feeling?" he asked turning his attention to Harry again.

"A lot better." said Harry, "I didn't realize how strong Eileen's Potion was." not even after seeing Alice and Frank getting a bit better with it.
Chapter 68

Chapter 68

Tense Conversations And Revelations

Horace Slughorn Apparated to Prince Manor, gazing at the magnificent manor before him. He’d never been here before, he’d heard rumours of its splendour and it was not exaggerated in any way. Now this was a place he would love to settle down in, he could only imagine what it was like inside. Stepping into the wards, feeling them accepting him and granting him entrance this once. He knew if he left and tried to get in again he’d be in serious trouble. The old manors had some of the best warding he’d ever seen; these ones were stronger than even those on Malfoy Manor. Not that he would be going there! He’d cut himself off from anyone associated with the Dark Lord Voldemort. He was terrified of being found, with what he knew…he was surprised the dark wizard hadn’t ordered him assassinated. It’s why he chose to go from place to place, never staying in one area longer than a few weeks at a time. Despite Albus’ manipulations his decision to come out of retirement was fully his own, Hogwarts was one of the safest places. Add to the fact that the evil wizard didn’t want to face Albus Dumbledore, since he had managed to successfully defeat Grindelwald sixty years ago or so. He had been getting too old, going from one area to the next just to keep the potential Death Eaters from his door.

Looking around the manor, observing the stables and the horses, Arabians and if he wasn’t mistaken that was hippogriff in the background. They were being showered by the house elf’s and evidently enjoying it by the sounds coming from them. The other side hosted what could only be green houses and the blacked out windows obviously potion ingredients that thrive in dark environments. He desperately wanted to nose around, Merlin the ingredients that must be in there! And the size of the green houses - one would have taken up the entire house he’d lived. Maybe he could convince Severus to let him nose around…he wouldn’t miss a few snippets of a few ingredients. Staring at the glass house longingly, before reluctantly beginning his trek towards the door.

The balcony was open in one of the upstairs (first floor) rooms, and he could hear voices coming from inside. Girls were squealing, perhaps a friend of Harry’s? He doubted very much Severus was friends with many girls, and Eileen Prince was far too old to be squealing like that. Shaking off his thoughts, he knocked on the door loudly, so he could be heard within it.

“Follow me, Professor Slughorn, sir.” said Dobby having clicked his fingers and magically opened the door. They were much too small to reach the handles and not strong enough to open the oak doors. The house, if it needed to be could become a fortress, at least long enough for everyone to get away from whoever was trying to break in.

“Thank you,” said Horace stepping in, gazing in awe at the magnificent chandelier, it was glittering in the sunlight. With how clean House Elfs kept the place, it really wasn’t a surprise; they were very handy creatures to have around.

“Can I take your cloak sir?” asked Dobby once they’d taken a few steps, standing beside the ‘cloak room’ area. At one point the Prince’s had made the cloak room into a storage room for Potion Ingredients, and had hooks placed on the wall. Since the Manor wasn’t used like it had been in the past, it was no problem. Back in the day, people had thrown the most magnificent balls and parties, the bigger the better your status was in the magical world. Now most people only threw big parties when a wizard or witch reached seventeen and reached ‘adult’ status.
Horace handed over his cream coloured cloak still looking around in interest.

“Follow me,” repeated Dobby showing Slughorn into the living room where Master Severus was. The meeting was obviously important since his Master didn’t usually use House Elves to make a statement. Not only that but they’d placed the finest china out with the best tea. The living room was the grandest room, and usually Severus used his office, so yes, he was up to something. Not that it was any of his business, but even House Elves got curious.

“Professor Slughorn is here, Master Snape.” said Dobby showing the wizard in before disappearing seeing that he wasn’t needed any longer.

“Good afternoon Horace, thank you for coming,” said Severus gesturing for Slughorn to join him and take a seat.

“No problem, I must say I was surprised to receive your invitation,” said Horace curiously, sitting himself down comfortable across from the Potions Master that had been both his predecessor and his successor. Not only that but he had taught he young man for seven years, and he’d done things with potions that baffled him to this day. He had wrongfully assumed he wouldn’t be as famous as the others he’d selected into his club, but Severus had proven him wrong especially as of late. He was a bit of a hypocrite by moving Severus’ picture forward and Lily’s had gone miraculously missing. He wasn’t having a woman who had tortured her son on display! He may be many things but he didn’t condone violence. He knew if Harry wanted to - he could lead the magical world into a golden era. He couldn't understand what had happened to the girl he'd known! Lily had been cheeky, and had a flair for Potions that came from being friends with a future Potions Master. He'd known she'd go on to do great things, by Merlin, he hadn't expected that from her.

“Indeed,” said Severus choosing not to comment, “Darjeeling tea?”

“I wont mind if I do!” exclaimed Horace, of all the connections he had, he didn’t get Darjeeling Tea often much to expensive.

Severus poured two and passed one of the cups over the saucer was placed in front of him by Severus’ other hand. Relaxing back, he didn’t normally drink Darjeeling, he preferred Earl Grey. Darjeeling though was grown in the greenhouse; the House Elf’s did great work with it. There was a platter of half sandwiches, biscuits and crackers and cheese.

“Thank you,” said Horace taking a sip before adding some milk, and sugar it wasn’t as strong as he was used to anymore. That’s not to say it wasn’t a great brew, he loved it. “How is young Harry, Severus?” enquired the Professor.

“He’s recovered,” said Severus, no doubt Slughorn wanted to befriend Harry so he could have someone else powerful in his pocket. He knew the wizards game, had known since he was a young boy, at least he was harmless, he liked being well connected but wouldn’t harm a fly never mind anyone else.

“I’m surprised he isn’t here,” said Horace digging for information.

“His friends are here to see him,” said Severus wryly, eyeing Horace knowingly. At least he had the grace to look at least a little sheepish.

“What happened to him?” asked Horace, he didn’t believe everything he read in the papers.

“A simple accident,” said Severus brushing it off, simple his arse, but he wasn’t about to confide in Horace Slughorn of all people.

Horace observed Severus over his tea cup, drinking it; he thoughtfully began to wonder why he’d been summoned here. Severus wasn’t a people’s person; he hadn’t even been one when he was a teenager. He’d always been quiet, observant and quick with a sneer. By Merlin, the wizard had a
mouth that could reduce even the toughest men to tears.

“Alright, Severus, pleasantries aside, what do you want?” asked Horace placing the cup on the saucer through playing games. Especially considering the wizard had yet to talk more than a few words at time, there was something on his mind. His breathing catching at the intense look on his face, his heart sank wondering what on earth was going to happen now.

“You taught Tom Riddle did you not?” asked Severus watching him intently, knowing he’d make an attempt to run.

“Yes,” said Horace, wiping the sweat that was beginning to build on his forehead. His heart was thumping wildly; he was terrified that the wizard knew his secret shame. He was glued to his seat, unable to move as he contemplated whether his thoughts were right or not. "Why do you ask?" his voice slightly high pitched.

“What can you tell me about him? What was he like?” enquired Severus, building up to it, hoping to relax Slughorn and get him to slip up a little.

“He was a lot like you actually, Severus.” said Horace, before quickly going on at the dark look crossing Severus’ face. Nobody would want to be compared to the Dark Lord after all, but there were similarities between them. “He was suspicious of everyone, extremely hard working, magic came so easy to him and to top it off he was very powerful and he knew it. He didn’t have friends; like you had Lily, but as he grew older he gained acquaintances and later followers. He was one of the most hard working Slytherins I’d ever taught.”

“Did he ever come to you about Dark magic?” asked Severus his black eyes intense.

“Thank you for your time, Severus…I’m afraid I must go…I have…something another appointment I’m late for…give my best to Harry.” said Horace standing up, his beady eyes searching for an exit. “Goodbye.” he added as he made for the door.

Severus flicked his wand at the door, causing it to slam in Horace’s face, determined to get his answers. He knew, there and then by Horace’s reaction that he did know about the Horcruxes. He couldn’t believe the idiot had kept it quiet all these years. The war could have been over by now if he’d just spoken up.

“You would see hundreds die rather than confess what you have done?” snarled Severus furiously. “Many have died already because of you…you’d see the wizarding world ruling under that evil dictator?!”

Horace turned to face the furious wizard, after failing trying to open the door to no success. He was genuinely terrified, not only because he was being forced to listen to the words coming out of Severus’ mouth; but because he finally had to acknowledge his own fears and realize the wizard was telling the truth. Tears burned in his eyes, but they didn’t fall, the guilt was eating him up inside.

“What happened to the Longbottom’s will pale in comparison what he will do to everyone. Do you want to see nearly every student at Hogwarts forced into slavery to assuage your own guilty conscience by denying whatever it is you are keeping secret?” said Severus his voice low, black eyes flashing in rage as he stalked towards the cowering wizard.

“I…I…I…” murmured Horace still pressed against the wall unable to form a coherent sentence.

“For once in your life, Horace, do the right thing, I swear on my honour as a wizard…none other than Harry and I will ever know.” said Severus honestly. “Let it go, Horace, keeping it in all this time…cannot be good for you. I myself, kept guilt locked up inside, but I received forgiveness and
believe me…it was a weight off.” his voice going slightly warm and soothingly, it wasn’t a tone he used often, but he needed answers. He could have used Veritaserum, it’s not as if Horace would go to the Ministry and tell on him, not without fearing the backlash onto him.

“The students at Hogwarts deserve to graduate without fear. Without having to join sides…let them experience the freedom that has eluded the past three generations Horace.” said Severus sighing tiredly.

Horace met Severus’ eyes the guilt and shame he felt obvious in every line of his old aged face. “I…can’t.” he murmured, he couldn’t get the words passed his throat. He couldn’t even speak the horror of what he knew, what he’d known for the past fifty years nearly.

“Then leave, condemn current and future generations to torture and death.” said Severus giving up, opening the door giving the wizard his opportunity to leave. He moved away from the wizard in disgust, sitting back down looking years older, its obvious he knew, and without Slughorn’s information they would never know if they’d gotten all the Horcruxes or not. Horace froze at those words, watching the wizard move away from in disgust. Watching him, he looked tired and defeated. His mind whirling, visions of the students he’d been teaching flashing before his eyes, unknowingly two tears ran like rain down his face. Taking a few steps forward hesitantly, a few more before halting, feeling torn in two. Closing his eyes, taking a deep breath before removing his wand from his pocket and placing it at his temple. Before he could change his mind, he removed the real memory.

“Here,” said Horace hoarsely, holding out the memory for Severus to take. Which he did, with one of the many vials he had upon his person at all times, typical of a Potions Master. A stopper was placed in it to keep it from spilling out. He didn’t even wait for Severus to acknowledge him, he ran from the room as if the grim was on his heels.

Severus watched the fat wizard leave, before his attention was turned to the memory. It looked so innocent floating around in the vial, but it wasn’t. Severus felt a slither of ominous emotion crawling up his spine, half of him didn’t want to see what the memory contained yet he knew he had to view it. Closing his eyes very briefly, he exhaled sharply, before stalking out of the living room, making his way to his office where the Pensive was stored.

Entering his study, which was rarely used, he stalked over to his cabinet and pressed down on it, and the secret compartment slid down and revealed the bowl. Using both hands he took it out of the niche, taking care not to break it they were extremely rare and delicate. Placing it on his desk, moving his chair to the other side of the room. Opening the cork, he placed the memory into the bowl watching it for a few seconds lost in thought. Taking another deep breath, he touched the pensive warily - he knew he wasn’t going to like what he learned.

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Severus was yanked back out of the pensive by an invisible force as soon as the memory ended five minutes later. You could have knocked him over with a feather, as he stared in horror at something only he could see. Six, six, six, six, six seemed to ring around his head as if he had a broken record playing in it.

Six Horcruxes, seven if you added the piece of soul still resided in the Dark Lord. Dear Merlin, what was he supposed to do? Three or four seemed laughable now, they had only two pieces destroyed, the diary and the Gaunt ring although it wasn’t destroyed quiet yet but he’d be doing it tonight. The question remained was Harry the Dark Lord’s back up? Nobody would have suspected anyone to be a Horcrux… or was Harry an accidental one? Perhaps that’s why he hadn’t been killed right away…but no, if the Dark Lord had known he’d have taken Harry away immediately and kept him imprisoned somewhere nobody would look. He wouldn’t have allowed his Death Eaters to have ‘fun’ with him; it had to have been an accident. Seven was ‘the’ magical number, he
could understand the evil wizards reasoning even if it repulsed him on a level he’d never felt before.

Sitting dumbly on the seat, there were four Horcruxes out there somewhere. One he had a good idea of its location, yet the three others eluded him. Pinching the bridge of his nose, he sat there lost in thought for hours trying to figure out how to go about this. He supposed given the fact they’d only known about them for a few months they were making great headway. Seven pieces! He couldn’t wrap his head around it, standing up; he picked up the pensive, and placed it in its hiding place with the memory still in it. Sliding the panel back up, he contemplated adding spells to it but decided against it. He’d used no magic so far with it, so nobody would feel it and get curious. They’d assume it was just a normal panel, holding his hand against it he sighed warily, feeling a little of what Dumbledore had gone through.

“Dobby?” called Severus.

“Yes sir?” asked Dobby appearing in the office.

“I’ll take an Earl Grey in the living room,” said Severus, grabbing an empty notebook and a Muggle pen his mother had brought with her to the manor. She preferred using her Muggle implements; she found them easier to use than quills having been using Muggle pens most of her life. How one got in his office he didn’t know, perhaps Harry had bought it in. Speaking of Harry, he should be going back up to him, no doubt he was worrying but Severus couldn’t bring himself to go. Harry didn’t need to worry about his bleak mood right now, his friends were celebrating. Sitting down he placed the slice of lemon in the cup and blew on it to cool it down. Did he tell Dumbledore what he suspected or continue on as he had planned before all this happened? Hunting them down himself with Harry’s help of course. He wished he could trust Albus, but he couldn’t, not with this. He knew somehow, someway Albus was going to tell Nick Potter. If he did, it would only be a matter of time before it ended up in the newspaper. The boy couldn’t keep a secret if it saved his life, he allowed himself to be manipulated by everyone around him revealing critical information.

He could barely believe he’d told Lupin and Black, he’d been so angry at Dumbledore he hadn’t been thinking right. He no longer respected Albus, but he still felt slightly fond of him, he’d given Severus a second chance and the ability to atone for his sins. He had also helped keep Lily safe, back then it had mattered more than his own life. Who would have thought he’d end up falling hard for her son? Who wouldn’t? Harry was smart, cunning in his own right not as sly as the Slytherins but he was a Ravenclaw. He was also stunning, Harry insisted he was nothing to look at, probably a result of his upbringing.

Two good things had come out of Harry’s accident, not just the Horcrux being removed but the cursed wounds he’d carried courtesy of his stay at Malfoy Manor and Walden Macnair. He was a right piece of work; he was now where he belonged - in Azkaban prison where he deserved to be. Maybe now he wouldn’t be so repulsed by his own body, he’d tried to get Harry to see the battle wounds showed how strong he was, how brave. Merlin when Harry had Apparated into his mother’s flat, he’d been in agony but no signs of tears had been present. He was so strong and he didn’t see himself as such. Maybe one day he would be able to convince the stubborn boy.

Putting the tea back on the table, he shook his head it wasn’t enough. He wanted no, needed a stronger drink right now. He wasn’t a big drinker though, and tried to prevent himself drinking alcohol when he had a problem, knowing it could lead to the life his father had led. Standing up he walked through to the kitchen and poured a generous amount of whiskey into a cup and drank it in one go. Not reacting to the burn in his throat, once done he screwed the lid back on and replaced
the bottle and put the cup in the sink before slinking away from the kitchen again.

“Is Master Harry’s guests staying for dinner sir?” asked Rose appearing before Severus, startling
the wizard but he didn’t show it.

“I do not know they have my permission should they wish it, go and ask them Rose.” said Severus
quietly.

“Is Master Severus alright?” asked Rose concerned.

“I am fine, Rose. I’ve just received some unsettling news that is all.” said Severus waving away
her concern despite the fact he was touched by her worry.

“Yes sir,” said Rose disappearing, and reappearing in Master Harry’s room.

“Hello, Rose.” said Harry smiling as he noticed her first.

“Is Master Harry’s guests staying for dinner?” asked Rose.

“How about it guys?” asked Harry staring at them.

“We must get back, I have Quidditch practise tonight, and Howard will go nuts if I miss another
one.” said Viktor apologetically.

“I have work tomorrow,” said Cedric shaking his head.

“We are going to see Neville’s parents,” said Luna, speaking for her fiancé.

“Me and Gary are having dinner at his parents tonight, sorry Harry,” said Fleur.

“Its fine, I’m just glad I got to see you all,” said Harry, “No, Rose. It will just be us.”

“Yes sir,” said Rose “I am glad you are better Master Harry.” she added before leaving once again.

"My sister has been begging my parents to let you visit, even if it’s just for dinner one day...they
would like to meet you. Would you come?” asked Fleur.

"I'd love to," said Harry smiling warmly, "As long as I can bring my partner."

"Partner? Oooo who is it?" asked Cho giggling with Fleur and Luna.

The boy's just shook their heads at the incessant giggling the girls liked to do.

Sirius cringed, causing Remus to stare at him blankly, what the hell was wrong with him now? Did
Sirius know something he didn’t? He continued to stare curiously, but nothing was forthcoming, so
he turned to look at Harry wondering who his new partner was that could get such a reaction from
Sirius. Hopefully Sirius wouldn’t do anything stupid and end up ruining the foundation he’d
obviously built with Harry.

“Severus,” said Harry a fond look crossing his face.

“Ah,” said Remus finally understanding Sirius’ reaction, he did wonder how he had figured it out.
Sirius was many things, but he wasn’t observant to his surroundings, at least when he wasn’t at
work anyway.
“What’s he like?” asked Fleur in curiosity, a wicked grin on her face.

Sirius squeaked his face turning red. He did not want to be here thank you very much, for most of his life Snape had been his enemy. He was about to stand up and get out of there post haste when Harry spoke again.

“We haven’t done anything.” said Harry pouting, “He made me wait until I’d passed my Mastery and until I was seventeen. Although he gave me a holiday for my birthday, I think I’m going to go soon.”

“Yes, next week would be best.” said Luna her eyes twinkling.

"It's good that he waited, otherwise it would have called into question your Mastery." said Lukas.

"Anyone that knows, Sev will know that wasn't possible," said Harry wryly.

"True," agreed Neville, Snape was a hard, harsh taskmaster; he didn't accept anything or anyone but the best and brightest.

"Guess I'm going on holiday next week then." said Harry, taking Luna's word for it, she had never let him astray yet.

"Then I’ll have mum and dad invite you over in three weeks time,” declared Fleur firmly.

“Great, I’ve never been to France I think I’ll like it.” said Harry.

“You take care of yourself, Harry. I don’t want to hear that you’ve hurt yourself again.” said Fleur hugging Harry, she didn’t want to go but she had to.

“I’ll try not to,” said Harry his voice muffled by Fleur’s surprisingly strong hug. Her long hair was tickling at his face, so he was grateful when she drew away so he could scratch it. It seemed with her farewell, everyone else began joining in one big pile. Causing them all to laugh at their own antics, before they regretfully had to leave promising as always to keep in touch.

"So...Severus huh?" said Sirius awkwardly.

“Yes, do you have a problem with that?” asked Harry his eyes narrowed.

“I can’t say I understand…I mean he’s the same age as your dad…”

“Do not bring him into this, that arsehole was never a father. I brought myself up, he never once acted like a father to me.” snarled Harry angrily, before he went on. “I love Severus; he’s been there for me at a time nobody else was. He understands me in a way nobody else can. He makes me feel special, when I was here…he made me realize I wasn’t insignificant, that I could do anything I put my mind to…nobody my own age will ever understand me…do not say you do not understand, I don't want to hear it. I love him and I will pick him over anyone, any day and anywhere in this world. I’d pick him over my Potions Mastery, everything…I’d give my life for him do you understand?” his passion and love pouring off him in waves.

“Calm down, Harry.” said Remus placing a hand on Harry’s leg only for him to flinch back as if he’d been struck. Remus reluctantly removed his hand feeling awful, but refrained from touching him again.

“Without him I would just be another Hogwarts student, who was failing Potions because of a prick of a Potions Master failing me because he liked my twin better. Nobody would have taken
anyone on who kept getting Troll grades…my life was so bad. I’d been entered into a
tournament…that was for seventh years, forced to compete with not a shred of compassion from
anyone. If it wasn’t for the guys…I doubt I would have survived…then I was tortured, after being
left by my own brother…my twin. Sev healed me, held me and he was the one that made me
strong, helped me overcome my fears at least most of them. Took me on as an apprentice, and
helped me achieve my dreams.” said Harry hoarsely.

“Okay, just one last question and I am not judging I want you to think it through and when you
answer that’s that, I’ll never bring it up again I promise…” said Sirius gravely.

“What?” asked Harry frowning.

“Are you sure its love and not gratitude?” asked Sirius.

“Gratitude doesn’t last two years…I love him Sirius and I don’t care what you are anybody else
says.” said Harry honestly.

“Then I’ll say no more, I’m just glad you are happy, Harry. If anyone deserves it, it is you.” said
Sirius honestly. He knew if he pushed further he’d eventually push Harry away; he obviously felt
very strongly for Snape and whether he understood or not didn’t come into it. He would just have
to grin and bear it. “Here, this is a belated birthday gift…although after what you just said I’m not
sure it’s the most appropriate gift.” he added handing over the photo album.

Harry accepted it curiously, opening it he found a picture of him and Nick at the hospital, his lip
curled without even realizing it. Although the rest of the pictures were of him in various stages of
growing up, he hadn’t realized he’d gotten so many pictures taken. There was even one with him
and Roxy, when she was just two years old. He couldn't remember it; he'd always thought Roxy
preferred Nick over him. Yet the look in her eyes, it seemed genuine and warm as if she'd really
loved him then. “Where did you get these?” asked Harry surprised.

“I asked around everyone, especially those I knew that had been at the Potter’s at birthdays.” said
Sirius. “Alice had a lot…according to Augusta Longbottom anyway…she sent what she had.”

Harry smiled at the pictures of him and his friends; he didn’t need to ask who had taken them.
Although Viktor was the main focus of the pictures, this had Colin Creevy written all over it. The
boy never went anywhere without his dratted camera. “Thanks,” said Harry, it was a nice gift,
nothing extravagant but Harry liked it nonetheless.

“Your welcome,” said Sirius grinning wryly.

"Your mail Master Harry." said Rose appearing with a bundle of letters for him.

"Thank you, Rose." said Harry flipping through them, a few from Gringotts, one from Fred and
George Weasley hmm he did wonder what that was about. He would read them letter, he placed
the letters aside. Harry also put the photo album beside them. Gringotts always got in touch with
new investments, he had given James Potter a lot of the vaults back, but he had recieved none of
the investments, he wanted to keep them going after all. If they found out James had them back, the
shares would have been pulled from under him out of spite. It warmed Harry's heart that people
cared that much to do that. They were risking their own investments if they'd done that but people
who invest had a little they could afford to lose. Rose disappeared seeing her Master didn't need
her.

His worry was beginning to get to him, wondering why Severus wasn't coming back. Surely
Slughorn wasn't still there? It was hours ago, and Sev couldn't stand being around people long,
well if they weren't Potion Masters anyway. Lifting up the covers, shivering at the cold, he swung his legs out of the bed.

“Should you be getting up?” asked Sirius concerned standing up and coming around to the other side.

“I’ll be fine,” said Harry, hoisting himself up, he wobbled slightly but regained his bearings. He should probably get dressed through; he was only in a baggy top and boxer shorts.

“Are you sure?” Sirius asked, keeping himself within reaching distance just in case Harry needed help.

Harry just nodded and began walking; getting surer of his own legs the further he walked. Although he stayed near the wall, he didn’t want to end up hurting himself again. He felt as though he had pins and needles all over his legs, it was odd to say the least. Grabbing onto the banister he made his way down the stairs taking it one step at a time.

He noticed the office door open and realized he wasn’t in there, when he was the door was always closed. Shuffling into the living room, he found Severus sitting there head slightly bowed and he looked as if he’d aged twenty years in the time he’d seen him last.

“Sev?” murmured Harry concerned.

“You shouldn’t be up yet, Harry.” said Severus standing up helping Harry onto the sofa, checking his temperature.

“What happened?” asked Harry, his mature beyond his years green eyes boring into black ones.
Chapter 69

Invisible

Chapter 69

The Icing On The Cake

Severus opened and closed his mouth wordlessly, his inability to talk wasn’t because he didn’t want to tell Harry, but rather he was still stunned. He’d seen and done many things in his life, not all of them he was proud of but it was experience at the end of the day. Still, nothing could prepare him for the knowledge that the Dark Lord had wilfully created seven Horcruxes, or six, if you didn’t count the main part of his soul, if it could be called as such anymore. He cursed the fact the knowledge had landed in his lap! It was certainly something he would have preferred not knowing. Although he’d rather be the one doing it asposed to Dumbledore or heaven forbid Nicholas Potter, the thought alone was enough to reduce him to shudders. He was a dark wizard and aware of the existence of such magicks, Harry wasn’t he wasn’t quite sure how he was taking it so well.

“So?” murmured Harry, just what the hell had Slughorn revealed to make him so flabbergasted and perhaps a little worried? It was always hard to tell with Sev he was so good at hiding his emotions but Harry was able to detect hints here and there. Spend enough time with them and you find out their tics if you will, when he was worried his eyes became shadowed, being surprised caused him to become speechless. Which by the way didn’t happen often, Severus was a man for a word for every occasion. “What did Slughorn say?”

Severus couldn’t help but chuckle weakly, Harry was too smart for his own good sometimes, but he’d always known that. It’s probably how he’d been able to choose his career path so quickly. Harry had been forgotten by the system and its teachers, even he had failed to see how good Harry was but first year potions are a far cry from making seventh year ones or creating your own which he hadn’t known Harry had done. If he had he would have actually contemplated taking Harry on at the age of eleven as a part time apprentice. His smarts had gone unnoticed by the circus that was Nick Potter the presumed Boy-Who-Lived. He didn’t understand how Albus hadn’t joined the dots yet, but all things considered Dumbledore wouldn’t want to admit it. He’d invested so much time and effort in Nick for to even think it for a moment. Even Albus had to know Harry wouldn’t trust him as far as he could throw him.

“The information from Slughorn was more concerning than I thought it would be. I certainly didn’t expect this kind of information when I invited him over.” admitted Severus, sure he’d expected something, although even he wasn’t sure what he had imagined Slughorn revealing. Any information would have been helpful in his book, as damning as the information was - at least they had a definitive number to go on.

“What would Slughorn know?” asked Sirius from the doorway, staring awkwardly at his godson and Snape. If he’d had any concerns lingering over their relationship it was gone. The way Severus had immediately helped Harry lie down obviously concerned about him…and Harry he stared at Severus with so much love shining through his eyes. It’s the same look Remus graced him with, and if this made Harry happy then who was he to argue? Harry had given him a second chance…he couldn’t waste it by doubting his godsons feelings.

“Why are you both still here?” asked Severus glaring at them, mistrust shining through his black eyes.
“Would it make you more comfortable if we swore a Vow?” asked Remus, his amber eyes solemn and truthful. Severus didn’t trust many people; in fact he could probably count them on one hand and have enough room for later. For some reason he knew that Albus Dumbledore wasn’t on that list anymore, from their earlier conversation. He was still surprised Severus had told them if he was honest, it was very unlike him. He must have been in one hell of a bad mood to reveal it, that’s for damn certain. The war had reached its tipping balance, Dumbledore was no longer the leader for the light side, Severus without realising or caring had taken that part up on himself. He had the most information, he could go forward and end this war, and Dumbledore was too busy trying to put the weight on a child. With startling clarity he realized, this was the way forward, and he truly would swear the vow and do what he had to do - to end this bloody battle once and for all.

Harry stared at Remus curiously, swearing a Vow was one the more serious pieces of magic one could do/say in the magical world. Turning to face Severus, he realized the wizard was actually contemplating it. It meant he’d have to put up with the man; he still hadn’t forgiven him for ignoring him during his third year at Hogwarts. Sirius he could live with, but Remus Lupin? If it ended the war then he would just have to grin and bear it he supposed. Dealing with him didn’t mean he had to like him anyway, nor did it mean they had to become friends or heaven forbid begin to like each other.

“I will as well,” stated Sirius, obviously Snape had learned more information from Slughorn vital to the war efforts, and he’d rather know and swear a vow than be in the dark. Horcruxes, he could barely believe Voldemort had created one! It was the foulest magic on earth. What could have Slughorn told Snape though? The wizard was friends with Dumbledore, if anything why hadn’t old Sluggy told Albus rather than Snape? Unless Snape had coerced the information for him, that would actually make the most sense.

“Why would I do that?” stated Severus coolly, staring at them in a new light.

“What did he tell you?” asked Harry, curiosity getting the better of him. Trying to stop himself thinking about the fact he’d been a Horcrux his entire life. It truly did give him the chills, made him want to vomit, make himself clean, irrational he knew, but emotions were always like that, you couldn’t really control them. He did wonder if the feeling of wrongness of being invaded would ever leave him.

“More?” stated Harry, “Just how many more?”

“If he did as he wanted, then he has a total of seven pieces out there, including the part in his body.” said Severus grimly.


“Well we have one, a possible location of another which means we only need to find another four…it could be worse.” stated Harry thoughtfully, the researcher in him coming out to play.

“One has been destroyed, another will be in a few moments and the possible location of another.” corrected Severus.

Harry threw Severus a look of pure panic and fear; he didn’t want anyone knowing he had been a Horcrux or that he was the Boy-Who-Lived.

“The diary you destroyed during your second year,” explained Severus, “its how Dumbledore
“And you heard about them.”

“He knows?” replied Harry surprised.

“Indeed,” said Severus tiredly.

Harry frowned; there was something about the conversation that was tugging at his mind, what could it be? Why did it remind him of something? Shaking it off, it mustn’t be important if he couldn’t think of why surely? “Alright then that’s three Horcruxes we need to find, between us surely we can figure them out. It’s just the matter of figuring out patterns, his kills might help us in that regard, and do we know who he’s personally gone to kill? Items that went missing from the places? We will need to go back fifty years and start from there, the diary was obviously the first one.” said Harry thoughtfully.

“Ever the researcher,” said Severus wryly, impressed with the can do approach Harry was taking, but unless they wanted to kneel down at the Dark Lord’s feet and prostrate themselves, they had no choice but to fight to their last breath.

“I can help, I’m good with research,” suggested Remus, hopeful that Harry would allow him to - it seemed they both had quite a great deal in common especially book smarts and keeping their head on right.

Harry shrugged looking not the slightest bit bothered whether he helped or not. “Maybe I shouldn’t use the holiday…there’s so much to do.” said Harry staring at Severus wondering what he thought.

“You need a rest; I’m not letting you do anything for at least a fortnight. So it’s either recovering here, or on holiday.” stated Severus firmly and adamantly.

“We need to find out though,” said Harry his eyes shadowed with worry.

“And we will,” stated Severus confidently.

“I’ll just be getting a head start on you, that’s all.” said Remus.

“And I’ll search Grimmauld Place for the one Regulus might have brought home, it’s going to take weeks anyway, there’s so much stuff there - and its mostly all dark stuff.” said Sirius. “Take the holiday, Harry. You deserve one, you’ve accomplished so much and if you don’t take care of yourself your going to burn out.”

“For once Black and I agree, especially with all this information you’ve learned.” said Severus grimly, he knew Harry was just burying it, there was no way he could be coping with the fact he had been a Horcrux. Even he wouldn’t have accepted it so calmly, while they were away he would need to get Harry to open up and talk about his feelings for a while. Yeah he was the cauldron calling the stirrer black, he didn’t speak about his own emotions but he was an adult, Harry had just turned seventeen years old.

"Alright then," said Harry, giving in, truth be told it wasn't a hardship, he was exhausted, not just mentally but emotionally and physically.

"I shall have a Portkey sent for immediately, with luck it will be here by tomorrow morning." said Severus.

"Send a house elf," suggested Sirius. That was the safest thing all around, Portkey’s could be intercepted and changed before being sent on their way again. It wouldn't be the first time it happened, especially during war.
"That is actually a good idea." said Severus.

"You don't need to sound so surprised," grumbled Sirius.

Severus just smirked at him as Harry suppressed his snigger of amusement, for the first time that day feeling truly relaxed and hopeful. They had gotten this far, what's to say they couldn't complete it? They had gotten further than even Dumbledore that was saying something. He wasn't fond of the fact Lupin and Black were helping, but he'd known they would have to tell Black at some point. There was a potential Horcrux in his house after all.

"How are you really feeling?" asked Severus, getting back to the most important thing. Yes, Harry was more important to him than the Horcruxes, finding them or the war.

"I'm a lot better than I was this morning, although I'm so tired, I don't know why - I just feel drained." murmured Harry, he felt as though he was running on adrenaline.

"Come, lets get you back to bed, you need some proper rest." said Severus immediately, they didn't know the damage the Horcrux had done coming out as it had. "You both remain here, I want that Vow."

Remus nodded unsurprised, Severus Snape didn't trust anyone.

"Night, Harry, I'll come and visit once your back from your holiday," said Sirius staring at him wondering if it was okay.

Harry nodded as he got to his feet, Severus aiding him as they left the room without a word.

"They know, I assume?" asked Severus, as soon as they entered Harry's bedroom.

"I told everyone," murmured Harry tiredly, as he was laid down to rest, the duvet draped over him. He loved Severus, as he'd told Sirius and he wanted everyone to know.

Severus stood there watching over Harry, a peculiar feeling coming over him. Harry had barely turned seventeen, yet he was proudly telling people that he, Severus Snape was his lover. He wasn't sure why this boy loved him so much, but it did make him smug that it was him he chose above all other potentials. He wasn't much to look at, he knew that, and this stunning teen wanted him, Merlin he knew he could never deny Harry anything.

"He loves you, you know." said Sirius gazing at the scene in front of him. He couldn't even accuse Snape of anything untoward since Harry said himself that Severus had been putting Harry off until he finished his mastery and came off age.

"Merlin knows why," admitted Severus, in a rare move of not sneering and snarling at everyone.

"Because you noticed him when he was invisible." said Sirius, when everyone else had failed him was left unspoken.

"Perhaps," said Severus.

"You do know though if you hurt him - I'll kill you." said Sirius, seriously.

Severus bit his tongue, the urge to say something he wouldn't regret on the tip of his tongue. He wanted to say they had a nerve playing concerned adults now, but at least they were trying to make it up to Harry. He had a feeling that's the only reason they'd agreed to take Vow's, to get into Harry's good books, for Gryffindor's they were being cunning when it counts.
"Dobby?" called Severus leaving room, his face as always impassive.

"Yes Master Severus?" asked Dobby.

"Go to the travel agency and get the Portkey and ensure they have us on the first available space for a fortnight, even if its two different cruises back to back. The holiday has already been paid for, and it's under Severus Snape. Do not let them mess you around Dobby, I would like to be on the boat tomorrow, if its possible." said Severus firmly.

"Dobby will do that," said the Elf before disappearing with a Pop.

"Now let's get the Vow's done, I still have much to do today." said Severus, hastening down the stairs.

"Like what?" asked Sirius as he kept up with the Potions Master.

"Cancel my contract at St. Mungo's it's obvious I won't be able to keep up with their demands and do everything I need to do." stated Severus sarcastically. It seemed Severus Snape was back and as sarcastic as ever.

So Sirius Black closed his mouth before he said something else stupid.
Chapter 70

Invisible

Chapter 70

Releases, Holiday's & Searches

Lily Evans- Azkaban Prison

A guard of Azkaban walked briskly down the corridors of the minimum security level of Azkaban, a piece of paper clutched in her baby pink nailed hands. Her heels clicked as she did walked, paying absolutely no mind to anyone who stared at her. Unlike the prisoners she nor any fellow guards couldn't feel anything. The necklace they had on prevented the Dementors from sucking at even one percent of their feelings. It wasn't common knowledge though, nobody could know about the necklaces, something the Unspeakables had created which did make their jobs much easier to bear. Especially during war, it wasn't good to advertise something against Dementors otherwise the stampede would be extremely violent. At least this time You-Know-Who couldn't get them. No, they couldn't leave; they were trapped there for as long as the Fidelus Charm was holding over Azkaban prison. She couldn't help but be amazed; the Ministry seemed to have kept their heads on despite the unexpectedness of the war. They'd put all preventative measures in place to prevent a Dementor uprising, which is exactly what it would have been, if the Dementor's joined You-Know-Who. They had branded together and successfully created a new Ministry from its ashes, coming out with their goodness intact despite the death toll hope was at its greatest.

"Hey, Leah, another release?" asked Chloe. She wasn't the slightest bit surprised to see it was Leah, she was the most powerful Witch in the force, and no doubt that's why she'd been used to come here to aid in the release of Lily Potter. Like it or not, the public hated her, she was a pariah even to the dark creatures of society, which was saying something since they were considered outcasts as well. No, Lily Potter had better not look for love, welcoming or aid outside these walls.

"Yeah," said Leah wryly, handing over the paperwork personally signed by the Minister of Magic just over two hours ago. Minister Scrimgeour had been most reluctant, but she had a feeling he'd be keeping a close personal eye on her to make sure she didn't step out of line. They thought she'd defend the woman, who had cursed her son, her own flesh and blood, the fact Harry had disowned himself aside, and it disgusted her to her core. She'd had four children, three girls one boy, all of them were at Hogwarts now, one would be leaving this year, and never once had she considered even at her angriest causing them pain other than the occasional spanking the such as the time they took her wand, when the stole and of course when he'd gone down Knockturn Alley after being told a million times never to go down there, especially alone. Shaking out of her thoughts when Chloe spoke, she'd never let herself lose focus like that before.

"If you'll follow me now you can get her before the others return, they are currently in the visitor centre right now." said Chloe, it was well known between the guards that Lily Potter hadn't received a single visitor the entire time she'd been locked up inside. Not her husband, not her children, not even Albus Dumbledore who was very close to them according to the newspapers. It gave them a feral sense of satisfaction, it infuriated the guards, it really did, that she got off so lightly. Other Wizards and Witches, whose crimes were much less great, received harsher sentences. Not that they were defending the Witches they guard, it was just unfair, she had used an Unforgivable on him, none of the others had committed crimes that would see them in Azkaban for
life, yet they received much bigger sentences.

"Thank you how's the family?" asked Leah, she hadn't seen Chloe in nearly five months, the departments kept them so busy.

"Good, as well as can be expected really, my son is starting Hogwarts next year…and I'm really rather nervous about him attending." said Chloe expressing her fears to a mother who would understand. In fact she was petrified, sooner or later the war was going to break out, and Hogwarts as well as the Minister was going to be the focal point. So she spoke to Leah telling her exactly what she was thinking wonder if anyone could tell her something she could take comfort in.

"I can understand that, Hogwarts has wards that can protect you better than most places, but its not completely safe nowhere is. Especially not in war, but you have to understand if there's anywhere that can prepare your son for what's to come…its Hogwarts. I know how you feel, and you make some good points, but he's in just as much danger in your house than at Hogwarts." stated Leah calmly, a sympathetic smile on her face which wasn't seen as they walked along the near blacked out corridor.

"I know, that's what worries me." said Chloe. It was a constantly fear that nearly everyone felt, even the convicts in Azkaban prison. Merlin she'd had to deliver bad news to two Witches, both had been inconsolable, she had broken the unspoken rule, no contact with the prisoners and hugged them. They had just lost their husbands after all, she'd also made sure that the Dementors didn't get near them; they were in enough pain as it was.

"It's a fear everyone shares, but life as it always does, must go on." sighed Leah, if they didn't life would just be meaningless, everything would be stuck at standstill.

"Don't I know it?" said Chloe, a small smile appearing on her face, her shoulders relaxed a little as she resolutely made her up mind. Flicking her wand she opened the door to Lily Potter's cell, to put it bluntly she was not the same woman who had gone in.

"WAKE UP!" said Chloe, rapping at the door so as to wake the now free Witch up.

Lily jumped out of her skin, staring wide eyed at them, as she slowly but surely regained control of her racing heart. She stared at them wondering what was going on, shower time was passed, the others had all been guided down to the visitors centre, well those that had visitors which was everyone around her. She usually just napped during that time, while she could, it was quiet and she wasn't being taunted or teased. She didn't react anymore, but it didn't stop their words from breaking her heart all over again. Just in the past few months, they'd found new taunts that truly terrified her.

"You are free to go, Leah Stiles will take you to the Ministry of Magic where you will be able to reclaim your wand." stated Chloe, professionally. "You will sign the release forms and any probationary paperwork you might have in terms of your discharge from Azkaban prison do you understand?"

"Yes," croaked Lily in disbelief, a year had passed? Most days it felt as though it was twenty years, relentless and endless. She was free, it dawned upon her, no more Dementors, cold showers, bad thoughts, or stone floor beds. She was going home, Lily swallowed the lump in her throat, and she was going home to her husband and children. Oh how she'd missed them, she had so much to catch up on, she prayed nothing bad had happened to them.

"Get up and walk to the door," said Leah, taking over her wand in hand, ready to deal with this rather unsavoury task.
"Will my family be waiting at the Ministry?" Lily asked her soft voice filled with hope and a touch of fear.

"That, I'm afraid I cannot answer, you will find out soon enough, now let's depart." said Leah, it was true, she didn't know if James Potter was at the Ministry for her. She wasn't completely heartless to answer it with a yes, especially if nobody was there.

"Oh," said Lily hollowly, that didn't sound good at all. Tears filled her dull green eyes, but nonetheless she began walking, her mind going a mile a minute. What if James didn't come? What would become of her then? She had no money, no clothes, no home…she'd be stuck a shudder wracked her frame but she refused to let the tears fall. No, she refused to believe that, her husband had been at the trial, he loved her and she would be home in Potter Manor within an hour. She had to run to keep up with the Witch, and she was wearing heels!

Stepping through the entrance, she gasped at the feeling of the sun on her face. She'd been arrested in September so it must be September again. Hogwarts had just started up, that's if she'd served the entire year, she looked to her right to see the woman and bit down on the questions she wanted to ask. Had she been in Azkaban for a year? Had Hogwarts started up again? Who ended up with her job? Did she still have one? Why hadn't anyone visited? Not James, not Albus not even Remus. Had there been any attacks since she was gone?

"Hold out your arm, Mrs. Potter." stated Leah.

Lily held out her thin arm, knowing she was about to be Apparated. The feeling was awful with a full stomach and being healthy, this wasn't going to be pleasant at all. Taking a deep breath, she tried to get her system ready to accept what was coming, she didn't want to embarrass herself by vomiting or heaven forbid falling over like a little child. She'd been Apparating since she was seventeen after all, and she had been very good, passing the test with flying colours.

Leah grabbed her upper arm before throwing the potion at their feet, immediately afterwards they were at the front of the new Ministry of Magic.

"What…Was…That?!" exclaimed Lily, her voice roughened through disuse.

"A potion substitute for Apparating or teleportation." replied Leah her lips twitching; it's the same look she's supported when she first used it.

"Genius!" said Lily admiration coursing through her, a potion that didn't need to be consumed but thrown and it did its job? She'd never considered it possible before, if anyone had said they'd do it she'd have scoffed and told them it was impossible. Had she really only been gone a year? The advances were much too big for her to just have been gone a year.

"Mr. Peverell is." said Leah in agreement not even looking at her, for fear of saying something she would regret.

Lily froze, completely stunned, Harry had created that potion? She could barely believe her eyes, swallowing the bile in her throat she was about to reply when something else caused her to tense in alarm.

"What happened to the Ministry?" asked Lily gasping in shock, as she got a good look at the building. It was different, taller, broader, newer and more modern. It certainly wasn't the Ministry she'd been taken to or removed from to go to Azkaban. Was it a completely new building/area or had something happened? She felt something slither up her spine, shivering in fright she continued to walk in, the Witch of course refused to answer. Biting her lip, stopping her from saying
something, she wasn't completely free yet.

"Minister Scrimgeour, Lily Potter as requested sir," said Leah, her body stiff as she nodded grimly at her boss.

"Thank you, you may go." said Rufus, waving his hand, watching relief splash across her features before she all but ran from the room. He suppressed a smirk of amusement, oh Lily Potter was not popular, none of the Potter's was, but the hatred was deep rooted for the red headed mother.

"Sign these documents, the first is your release papers. The second are your agreement to come to the Ministry once a week to get your wand checked for the four years that you are on probation. The third is to ensure you continue going to the mind healer, who tells me no progress has been made." said Scrimgeour frowning, not liking that at all.

"How do I get to St. Mungo's if I can't use magic?" whispered Lily.

"Who said anything about you not being allowed to use magic?" asked Rufus arching an eyebrow at her barely concealing his disgust.

"I…I can use it again? Freely?" asked Lily tears clouding her eyes, that was music to her ears! She was free to use magic as much as she wanted.

"As long as it's not dark or illegal, yes. If one spell is cast from the wand that we won't approve of, you go to Azkaban for the rest of your so called probation." stated Rufus his yellow eyes staring at her, showing he was serious and meant every word. He didn't care who she thought she was, if she stepped a toe out of line then so be it. With that he handed her wand over, the paperwork was there for her to sign it.

"Thank you," croaked Lily, accepting her wand with trembling digits. The magic coursed through her, her wand and core singing out as they were united. A small smile crept onto her face, as tired as she was; there was nothing in the world that would ever feel like this. It was like coming home, she'd felt so wrong in Azkaban without a wand.

"Sign. Now." stated Rufus. Tapping the feather on the documents before leaning back, he had other work to do; she would need to realize the world had continued to turn in her absence.

Lily signed her name on all three documents, before she put the feather quill down, rubbing at her wrist; she wasn't used to anything anymore. She shook hear head sadly, she couldn't even sign her name on something without feeling as if she was breaking her wrist. Would it ever go away? Her shrunken tired eyes, gazed at the Minister, "Is James coming?" she whispered her voice defeated, finally suspecting that nobody would be there for her.

"Yes, he's waiting in the next room. Here is your clothes, go change, remember once a week or you will be back in Azkaban again quicker than lightening." said Rufus grimly. He placed the paper package in her arms, everything she wore when she was arrested was in it, no doubt they would be loose on her even her wedding ring. She did look as if she'd lost a lot of weight, probably not voluntary.

"Thank you," rasped Lily, grabbing her stuff and running from the room, or rather a quick walk, she barely had any energy left never mind running anywhere. It was more exercise than she got in Azkaban, but without proper nutritious meals, even the toughest of bodies end up breaking down. Her husband was here, he loved her, and she'd been worrying for nothing all this time. She still didn't understand why he hadn't visited though, but they'd get through this together. She saw the sign 'Changing room' and quickly made her way over, just as the Minister came out of the room, it
obviously wasn't his office. This place was all new to her, she had been sure there hadn't been a changing room there before.

"JAMES!" cried Lily as soon as she got a good look at him; he looked thin too, but nowhere near as bad as she suspected herself to look. Running over to him, dropping the package, she burrowed herself into his arms, relaxing, she was home. Tears began to rain down her face; it had been the longest year of her life. He was so warm compared to her, sobs wracked her malnourished body as she gripped her husband tightly, afraid she was dreaming.

James was shocked by the state of her, she looked positively gaunt, too pale for words, but it could be the Azkaban uniform she wore that made it seem that way. Her eyes looked like they'd shrunk in her face; black bags were prominent giving her the appearance of an insomniac. He hugged her back, but he felt nothing for her, no anger, no disappointment and most of all no love. He'd had a year to come to terms with his feelings or the lack of them. Unfortunately they had kids together, this wasn't going to be easy, plus she'd have to stay in Potter Manor until her probation was up. Four years of living in the same house, oh yes, it was going to be very difficult.

"How is Nick?" she managed to choke out through her sobs. Nearly all her weight was being held by James, she just felt so exhausted that she wasn't able to hold her own body up. She refused to let herself pass out; the day she'd hoped for was finally here.

"Nick is doing well, Roxy is back at Hogwarts," said James awkwardly.

"Why wouldn't Nick be there too?" asked Lily, her head moving up to stare at James completely lost. Why would her son not be at Hogwarts? What on earth had happened? His core hadn't split again had it? Calming herself down, not wanting to exert her body any more than she was.

"Get dressed," said James letting her go, having to remember that Lily wasn't the only one who had hurt Harry, no he had too none of this was solely anyone's fault. The blame belonged to both of them, and it was something they'd have to deal with for the rest of their life. At least he hadn't fired of curses only Death Eaters used against his own child though. Nick wasn't happy; he didn't like the thought of his mother coming back into his life. He and Nick had repaired their relationship, and he actually listened to both his kids now, whether it was something unimportant or not, they had voices and they were using them. It was his duty to listen, it's said if he listened to them growing up, and they'd be more likely to come to him as adults. He knew he was a bit late, but things were going well, especially Roxy, she held nothing back at how she felt. Especially when they'd practically had no time at all for her, in the past few years. Slowly but surely, the summer holiday had been a turning point for them all. It's as if Lily's actions had been the real wake up call he needed. He had written to his son, he hadn't heard back but he didn't really expect to. What he'd done to Harry was beyond forgiving, every night he would read the list Harry sent, of all his wrongdoings to remind himself why he didn't deserve his sons forgiveness.

Lily did as she was told, and stripped out of the disgusting one piece, now that she wasn't in Azkaban she could smell how awful it was. Feeling dizzy, she held onto the desk until she regained equilibrium she hadn't eaten breakfast, perhaps that hadn't been the best idea. If she'd known it was her release date she would have, how awful she must look, what must James think of her? Her hair was matted to her head; unlike the rest of the girls she hadn't had anything to use to brush her hair. She'd used her hands as much as possible, especially to patch up the bald spots where her 'cell mate' had ripped her hair out of its socket. With difficult, Lily managed to get her old clothes back on.

"Can you shrink my jeans?" whispered Lily tiredly, she didn't want to do magic yet, and she just wanted to get home.
James flicked his wand at her trousers, and they automatically shrank two sizes to accommodate his wife's extremely thin stature. She didn't sound like his Lily; she'd always been full of fire and life, this woman before him sounded defeated, tired but blessedly bitter free. Was she still blaming Harry for her confinement? Or had she realized what she did? Could there ever be a future for them? He doubted it, as much as he'd love for them to go back to the way they were, he knew it wasn't possible. The woman he'd known would never have tried to curse anyone never mind their child. Yes even he had been furious at his son for his actions, been unable to call him by his name, but as angry as he'd been, he'd never contemplated hurting him. Well other than taking him over his knee! It was one thing disowning yourself, but another to take the entire fortune and leave them penniless.

"Thank you," murmured Lily, her eyes half mast. "Can we go home now?" her voice vulnerable and scared.

"Of course," said James, guiding her out of the changing room and along the corridor until they got to the entrance and stepped out. To his horror, what looked like the entire population of journalists were there, snapping pictures of them. Oh he knew what the headlines were going to be like tomorrow. Knowing he couldn't use the potion with so many people milling around them, he Apparated the both of them to Potter Manor. It was silent, deadly so, but Nick slept during the day, since his training took place at night. Usually from after dinner until two or three o'clock in the morning.

"What happened to the ministry?" asked Lily, as she was guided to a seat, her back and legs sang in gratitude, it felt so good to sit on something so comfortable again. She noticed though after a few seconds it wasn't as comfortable as she'd imagined over the past year. It was as though her body had gotten so used to sitting on cement that anything soft was foreign to it.

"It was attacked, with such force that the building needed completely demolished and rebuilt. Thanks to the giants and trolls Voldemort employed," said James grimly.

"Is everyone okay?" asked Lily her eyes wide with fear, Sirius? Frank? Alice? Shacklebolt? Tonks? Despite looks to the contrary she had liked them. Although she couldn't stand Sirius and Remus trying to live through both of them, then turning around and condemning them for what they did. They were supposed to be best friends, support each other through thick and thin, but the moment things got bad they barked and walked away.

"Frank and Alice were tortured into insanity, when they were taken to St. Mungo's they couldn't do anything for themselves, they'd retreated fully into their minds," said James hoarsely, Merlin he had just about been sick when he first saw them. "The healers tried Eileen's Potion and it worked to some extent. Frank and Alice are a little more aware of the world, they can go to the toilet, eat but they can't communicate," his son was a genius, and he only wished he could have noticed. He couldn't take any credit for it; he didn't know where his genius for potions had come from either. Both he and Lily were good at potions, but nowhere to that extent. He'd had to be good at potions, his dream had always been to be an Auror, and to do that required N.E.W.T's Potions.

"Oh god!" said Lily totally horrified, oh how she wished she'd been able to read the newspapers. Her stomach rumbled fiercely, she was so tired, so hungry, so dirty; she just wanted to sleep and never wake up. Yet on the other hand she wanted to know everything that happened, and her thirst for knowledge won out. "Was anyone else hurt?"

"Twenty-six people died, ninety two people were injured, the death toll would have been higher if a group of people hadn't branded together to help," said James, they'd had to fight the death eaters and trolls, there had been no other thing for it, otherwise more people would have been killed.
Unfortunately most people in the Ministry had panicked and fled, leaving the injured stranded. Moving to sit down, next to Lily on the couch wondering if his son was eavesdropping on the conversation or not.

"The Auror's?" assumed Lily, staring at James, she didn't know why but she felt there was something wrong, James was acting strange, distant and she didn't like it at all. They had been separated for a year; she supposed it would take time to get back to normal. She inwardly prayed that this was all it was, because she didn't think she could live if she lost her husband and children.

"No, Potions Masters from America, students from Hogwarts, Snape and Harry." confessed James.

"Did anything else happen?" asked Lily, not wanting to discuss Harry, not now not ever. She realized she was wrong, but she didn't want to accept it deep down. The guilt and nightmares were enough for her, if she accepted it then she would know for definite she was evil. She wasn't evil; she'd given birth to the hero of the wizarding world. Merlin she prayed she hadn't totally sullied Nick's good name with her actions.

"Nothing much, we've been rebuilding, and mostly training Nick." said James. His mind travelling the newspaper he'd seen that day of Harry's accident. He didn't even know if he'd recovered, he was completely in the dark and he didn't like it. He just wanted to know if his son was alright. Since the news was in the paper nothing else had been reported, other than the normal stories that were in the Daily Prophet.

"Why isn't Nick at Hogwarts?" asked Lily, getting back to her original question. She was finding it more difficult to keep her eyes open, the warmth from the fire was giving her the first true heat she'd had in over a year. She had the urge to lie on the rug in front of the fire and just let herself drift off to sleep. Forcing her eyes open, she started at James, and smiled softly, it was so good to see a familiar face, one that wasn't scowling at him or talking with scorn dripping from each word.

"I removed him." stated James firmly, he wasn't about to let anyone bully him into sending his son back, or let Albus guilt trip into doing the same thing. Which he did every time they crossed paths, mostly when he came home from work and went to see how his son was doing with Sirius and of course Albus. "He tried to begin training Nick against my wishes, so I told him where to stick it." he'd noticed Lily hadn't even asked after Roxy yet. Two years ago he would have been found guilty of the same thing, but his eyes had been forced open. Now he was seeing everything, including the fact Lily seemed more concerned about Nick. Roxy had found it difficult realizing her parents were wrong; it was a blow to her idealised family image to realize adults…parents made mistakes. She'd clung for a while out of sheer stubbornness before the reality had forced her to see it.

"You shouldn't have done that, Albus has faced Voldemort, he has more experience and could teach Nick them." said Lily.

"He's training him, I just don't want Nick alone with him, Sirius is supervising the training and sometimes taking part." said James bluntly.

"Albus wouldn't hurt Nick," said Lily shaking her head.

"He tried to train him, just after his core had stabilised," said James, "Even he's admitted he was wrong to try." although he couldn't help but think it was merely a platitude really, but he'd given him a chance. Only because he knew Albus was right, if anyone could train Nick to successfully defeat Voldemort and live to tell the tale it was the Defeater of Grindelwald. Albus was older and more experienced than him, despite the fact he was an Auror.

"Oh," said Lily quietly, "Will Albus give me my job back?"
James stared at her stunned; did she seriously ask that kind of question? "Lily...you used an unforgivable...well at least tried to use it on a child, your son. The board of governors would have Albus removed as Headmaster if he even thought of giving you a job. You aren't allowed to have a job that centres around children or brings you in direct contact with them." which by the way serious limited any job she might get, if anyone was even inclined to give her one.

"What are we going to do about money?" asked Lily, biting her lip savagely.

"I got the majority of the Potter vaults back, along with the properties," said James giving her a strange look, the fact they were in Potter Manor should have been a dead give away. "Harry gave them back to me, I think he just wanted to give me a taste of what I put him through." his brown eyes filled with shame. His own son had never asked for much, yet when he did, he constantly denied him. The cat when he was younger, then when he'd wanted an owl. It wasn't as if he hadn't had the money, so why had he treated his son that way? Merlin he hated himself for it, he truly did and nothing would ever help make it go away. The only thing he didn't get back was the investments, which was where the majority of the money had come from. He had slowly began to make new ones, mostly Muggle in nature since the pureblood's wanted nothing to do with him and didn't accept any shares of businesses he wanted to buy/invest in. Merlin his parents and grandparents were probably rolling in their graves, all their hard work in building a respectable name and tripling the Potter fortune down the drain. At least not all was lost, Harry had the businesses, and since he was a Peverell it was still the family line.

Lily swallowed bitterly; it was a bitter pill to swallow that Harry had been the better person at the end of the day. Would he have given them the vaults back if they asked? She would never know, but at least she, James and the kids didn't have to worry about money or places to stay especially if anything happened to any of them. It made her actions all the more deplorable, but she refused to think on it. She just pushed her thoughts about Harry and her own actions to the side, something she'd learned to do quite expertly while in Azkaban.

"Roxy is doing well, settling into her new house, she's happier than she's been in a long time." said James, when it became apparent that she wasn't even going to ask about their daughter.

"New house? She's in Gryffindor just like the rest of us!" said Lily confused.

"She argued with the sorting hat to put her in Gryffindor, despite the fact she didn't belong there." said James tiredly, rubbing at his forehead, the things his kids had done out of fear of displeasing them, he'd truly fucked them all up not just Harry. "I demanded the Headmaster to resort her, she's now in Ravenclaw where she belongs," who knows, he might even have another genius in the family. With her being with people who thought alike, she'd flourish and become more confident in her own abilities - he hoped.

"But the Potter's have always been in Gryffindor," said Lily surprised. James had changed, a lot by the look of things. What had caused it? She was so confused, Merlin she hated the fact she'd ended up in Azkaban and missed out on whatever made James change. Maybe it was what happened to Frank and Alice that made him realize he didn't have it bad.

"It's time for change," said James quietly, two of his kids had been chosen for Ravenclaw because they were smart, smarter over bravery, it could have been worse. His first born was in Gryffindor, and his actions until last year...would have seen the hat once again wrong...but lately he had seen his son show more bravery than most.

"How are Neville and Frankie?" asked Lily. She'd practically saw the children grow up, they'd been over all the time, and Nick had always been an easy going popular child.
"As well as can be expected," said James, they'd lost their mother and father, but they were coping, especially Neville who blew him away with his strength, courage and determination. It wasn't lost on him that Lily had asked after kids not her own before her daughter. Why had he not noticed things like that before? Had his sons status in the magical world really made him the way he was? Big headed and blind/ignorant of everything else. He knew Lily loved Roxy, or at least had…until a few years ago when she began to worry about money all the time. She'd been so proud to have borne a daughter, the first female in the Potter line for a good few generations. The reason the Peverell line had disappeared was because the families continued to have female heirs. "Tish?" called James.

"You got a House-Elf?" asked Lily horrified.

"Yes, things are too hectic, we needed help." stated James; he wasn't in the mood for her beliefs that House-Elf's shouldn't be used as slaves. "Can you bring us an early lunch? Something light for Lily, perhaps soup if there is any going."

"Yes sir," said Tish disappearing on them.

"Where's Nick if he isn't at Hogwarts? Doesn't he want to see me?" asked Lily her green eyes filled with sadness and confusion.

"Sleeping, he will be up in a hour." said James, "He receives training from dinner until three AM so I let him sleep until lunch. I'm usually working during the day. I took on a more flexible schedule, I don't work as much as I used to." he didn't want to quit his job, so it had been his only option, part-time flexible schedule.

Lily nodded tiredly, she felt excluded for some reason, she'd expected things to be the same but everything was different. Decisions had been made without her, her family had moved on and it hurt. Moving towards James, intending on hugging him, to try and reconnect with him but he moved away from her causing her heart to clench.

"You should go and shower before lunch," said James, standing up again he hated hurting Lily like this, but he didn't want her touching him. Surely she didn't expect things just too automatically go back to normal after everything they'd been through? "All your stuff is in the first guest bedroom, exactly how it was before."

"Guest bedroom?" echoed Lily wounded.

"Yes, go on, I'll send Tish up if you are too exhausted to come back down." said James.

Lily's shoulders hunched as she dawned on her that James was rejecting her, he'd never done that in all their time dating or married. Not even after an argument, swallowing thickly, she nodded before getting shakily to her feet. It would take time, obviously, to get back to normal but she was sure she could do it. James couldn't let what happened come between them, it had been nothing more than a momentarily lapse in judgement. She hadn't even consciously thought of what she was doing, she'd just been so angry that she snapped. She tried to explain that to her mind healer, but she'd never accepted that answer no matter how she said it. Then she'd gone and told the Minister there was no progress, it angered her but it was dulled by the fear of what could happen should she allow herself to get truly angry at anyone or anything.

James watched her going, his heart tugging, old feelings arising but he shoved them aside, this wasn't the Lily he'd fallen in love with during his school years. It was going to be a difficult task, but he'd have to sit down and talk to her properly about it all. Preferably when she was rested, fed and aware. Lily didn't understand, feelings and things had changed, and there was no going back.
Severus woke abruptly; sleep leaving him, as he returned to the land of the living with an alarm going off in his ear. Growling low in his throat, wondering why he needed a damn alarm. Then it dawned on him, cursing quietly, he slid out of bed both he and Harry had taken a dreamless sleeping potion so they wouldn't miss a second of their holiday. The island (Cayman Islands) they would be spending a lot of time on was six hours behind them. It was in fact now just going on 7 AM there; here it was one o'clock in the afternoon. Their Portkey would be activating in precisely twenty minutes, they were already packed it would take two days to get to the Island on the boat after that they'd be staying for two days, then after that they'd visit various other destinations in two weeks.

"Harry wake up! Its time to go." said Severus loudly, both of them had slept in Harry's bed, he still wasn't one hundred percent recovered from his illness and the removal of the Horcrux.

"Good afternoon," said Eileen her voice filled with amusement, as she observed her son rushing around like a headless chicken. "There's coffee on the table for you and Harry." she'd thought about putting it in a thermos, but they were going on holiday, to an extremely hot country, coffee would be the last thing they wanted to consume in the sun.

"Thank you." said Severus, gratefully, accepting one the mugs they both had 'Best Potions Master' stamped on them. Although thankfully his was black and Harry's was blue otherwise they'd never know which one belonged to whom. Eileen had taken great amusement in having them made; they were large and contained more than the average cup so he liked to use it more than others. Gulping the coffee, he froze when he caught sight of the mail. Harry's mail to be more specific, on top lay an innocent enough letter, but it had 'Notification' stamped on it. He'd seen a few students get one over the years as Head of Slytherin. The newspaper lay folded up, but he didn't need to see it to know for grave certainty what the front paper said. Nonetheless he unfolded it and closed his eyes; Lily Potter had been released from Azkaban. Had it really been a year? It felt like only a few months since he attended the trial. She looked ill, but old feelings didn't stir, they'd been long gone before she went to Azkaban. She'd brought it on herself; he'd warned them if they touched his apprentice they'd pay, although he wasn't his apprentice anymore. No he was his lover, and he wouldn't change a single thing. Grabbing the newspaper and the letter he shoved them out of sight under the table. He didn't want Harry to know, not yet, he was going on holiday and the last thing he wanted was his mood soured. Which it always did when the Potters were mentioned, Merlin, Harry's hatred of them exceeded his own. Eileen glanced at him baffled by his odd behaviour, but said nothing as Harry chose that moment to walk into the room making a beeline for his own coffee. Although Eileen could see he was slower than normal, she hoped by the time he returned he would be fully recovered.

"Afternoon, Harry." said Eileen smiling softly at him, "How are you feeling?"

"A little better," said Harry grinning at her, and he did he was excited he couldn't wait to get away. Severus was right; he needed a holiday, after everything that had happened over the years he owed it to himself. Between his Mastery, continuing his Hogwarts education, his accident, the Horcrux and the knowledge there was more out here weighted heavily on his mind. The only reason he could cope with it all, was because he wasn't alone. For most of his life he had been, but not anymore, he had people who cared about him, and he in turn had people he could rely on. None more than Severus, who he loved with all his being. Drinking his coffee, he began to flip through his mail opening the one from Gringotts. He gave it a cursory glance over; it was just letting him know he had successfully added yet another investment to his long list of business ventures. He'd
loaned Fred and George Weasley money to begin their 'joke shop' which given the income the other Joke shops got, it might be a worthy venture. He had been shown plans for the shop, things they'd already created, and it seemed they were serious about it. If the joke shop didn't take off, he made sure the shop would be in his name, so he could sell it or keep it for future use. As it stood he would be getting thirty-three percent of all income, he had refused to go any lower. Since the boys obviously hadn't gotten any other offers, they'd had no choice but to accept it. He was the one taking the chance after all, so no, he wasn't about to accept a ten percent income! It was his money going into making their dreams a reality. He would find out in a few months if it was worth it or not. He would keep an eye on them, he didn't want to be done, which he knew anyone would be tempted to do.

"Ready to go?" asked Severus shrinking their belongings, and placing them in his pocket they were being Portkey'd straight to their rooms in the boat. Since it wasn't moving, it was perfectly safe, and it wouldn't move until the Portkey's had all been activated or it was past time for them. After the time specified the Portkey died out, it wouldn't work; it had to be that way because using a Portkey on moving transportation was very tricky business, and had led to lawsuits in the past. He'd tried to talk Harry out of taking his books, but he hadn't been amendable to the idea. He didn't want to see Harry working while he was there, it was supposed to be a holiday, a chance to relax and revitalize himself. Harry had just taken a look at his books and sniggered before walking away; shaking off his thoughts he looked back at Harry expectantly.

"I'll miss you," said Harry, hugging Eileen before kissing her on the top of her head. She was for all intents and purposes his mother, nothing would change that. She'd been there for him the longest, cared for him and gave him solitude as well as a place to stay away from the Potters. He was so used to living with her, and she usually came with them so it would be weird.

"I'll miss you too, take care of yourself and I'll see you soon." said Eileen, patting his arm smiling, she really would miss them, and the Manor was going to be so silent without their presence.

"Bye," said Harry moving over to Severus, feeling oddly emotional like he wanted to cry, but wasn't that just plain madness? It wasn't as if he was dying or never going to see her again! Fourteen days he'd be back home, wrapping his arms around Severus, he touched the Portkey as well.

"I'll see you soon," said Severus softly, unlike Harry he didn't show it with affection but through his eyes.

Eileen nodded, watching as her son activated the Portkey and both of them disappeared. Now that they were gone, her curiosity got the better of her; she looked under the table and summoned the newspaper and letter to her. Placing the letter back on the table, she wouldn't open Harry's mail, but she did wonder why Severus hadn't let Harry open it. She received her answer soon enough, on the front of the newspaper there was a picture of Lily and James Potter coming out the Ministry of magic. So she was out of prison, no wonder Severus had hid it. That would have been one way to sour Harry's mood, no Severus had done the right thing, and Harry was better off enjoying his holiday without thinking about his dreadful relatives. He could deal with that when he returned, turning it over, she began to read the rest of the paper curiously. Hmm the apology for Harry and the retraction of the story, bit late now, it also stated that the Medi-Witch Tantum was fired. Good, Harry hadn't been happy the slightest, he was a very private person; she could only imagine what he'd do when they found out about his real status as the real Boy-Who-Lived. He'd probably squirrel himself away in a potions lab for years; hopefully Severus could get him to see it wasn't the end of the world.

"Lunch for Mistress Eileen," said Dobby, handing over the meal, since it was only one person, they
just prepared the one plate instead of platters. It would just be a waste of food, so it's how Severus had told them to do it while they were away.

"Thank you, Dobby." said Eileen, wondering what to do with herself, there was no point in picking flowers from the gardens. The house was still full of floors from all the well wishers who sent them as a get well to Harry. Hmm, perhaps it was time to get someone in to redo the Potions laboratory, which still hadn't been repaired properly. It would be the perfect welcome back gift, and it was needed at the end of the day, they were Potions Masters. Her mind made up, she walked over to Harry's little study and took a fresh piece of parchment and a pen before beginning to write a letter.

Sirius Black & Remus Lupin - Grimmauld Place - Regulus' Room

"This is bloody useless! How are we supposed to find anything in here?" grumbled Sirius, throwing yet another 'priceless heirloom' into the box. They didn't dare throw anything out just in case they missed the damn Horcrux. So they were boxing anything with magical residue to let Severus Snape inspect at a later date unless they found what they were looking for. They'd been at this for five hours already, and he was hungry and tired.

"Sirius," growled Remus, his amber eyes flashing in anger, honestly this was why he hated doing anything with his lover that required actual work and nothing fun. He just constantly groaned and moaned about it if it automatically didn't work out. They'd tried summoning spells, but to no avail so it was a hands on search. They had just finished searching every nook and cranny of Regulus Black's room, somewhere Sirius hadn't stepped foot in since he got control of Grimmauld Place. They didn't ask the House-Elf to join them, it was vital that nobody knew, especially not a sneaky little Elf like Kreacher.

"Sorry," murmured Sirius contritely. "It just gives me the creeps that something like this could be in the house...even if I do hate it here."

"I know," said Remus, agreeing with him, it was daunting to say the least. He prayed it was here, it left less for Harry and Severus to do, and he could see Harry was exhausted. Yet so blessedly determined to see it through, despite his sorting into Ravenclaw, those had been the words of a Gryffindor, the courage of one too, and the determination of a Slytherin. Spending so much time around Severus would have anyone turning into a Slytherin, and he wasn't saying it was a bad thing. In war it happened to be a very good thing, sometimes he wondered if Nick was the Boy-Who-Lived. Harry seemed to be the more powerful, more determined to see the war over, but given his childhood it made sense he'd want peace. No, Nick was the Boy-Who-Lived, and accountable for ending the war, but not solely responsible, since they would find and destroy the Horcruxes. Still, something nagged at him but it didn't go away, he couldn't figure it out so he brushed it aside and concentrated on his task at hand.

"Nothing, that's it, the entire room has been searched...and unless he put it somewhere else its not here." said Sirius throwing the last item into the box. Regulus' room was now empty of everything, all items had been checked for magical residue, if it didn't have any it was shrunk and put into one box if it did it went into the other.

"How about under the floorboards?" suggested Remus, remembering as a child he used to have a little hidey hole. Mostly used it for pictures of his mother after she died, his dad had been so sad he used to hide them to make him feel better. Shaking his head he brought himself out of his thoughts and focused on Sirius.
"Can't hurt to try," conceded Sirius, kneeling down and eyeing all the floorboards, looking for any that might be out of place. There was only two, but they didn't look as if they'd been yanked up. Shrugging it off, it was best to check, better safe than sorry at the end of the day, Voldemort was immortal until they found them all.

"We better hurry, it's one o'clock." said Remus looking at his watch as he yanked one of the floorboards up, lighting the end of his wand and yanking it inside. His amber eyes looked down the hole, grimacing at the smell but nonetheless looked properly. Nothing, no sight of a single thing other than dust layers and layers of dust. He was going to accompany Sirius to James' tonight; he wanted to see how far Nick had come in training since leaving Hogwarts.

"It doesn't matter, James isn't working today, Lily got released." said Sirius as he nosed in the other hole, looking for any sign of an item but found none. Well, whatever Regulus had done with it, it wasn't in here, but they had a box they'd hand to Severus since he was the expert.

Remus stared stunned, a year already? It barely felt like it, he wondered how Lily was, if she understood why it was done and if she knew her actions were wrong. Azkaban wasn't the nicest place, which was putting it bloody mildy. It made you face up to every wrong thing you did in life, she may have been in minimum security, and the Dementors will still have affected her just not as strongly.

"It's going to be noisy tonight, I don't think Nick wants her there." said Sirius, replacing the floorboard unaware of the fact his lover was staring stunned.

"Why? I mean…I know why…but she's his mother…surely he will forgive her?" said Remus, he wouldn't but he wasn't Lily's son. Standing up, he replaced the floorboard, well that was one room done…they just had a dozen more to go before they had the entire house searched.

"You'd think, especially considering he didn't like Harry much, but he's realized his parents were wrong, that Harry was the one innocent and abandoned in all this. If he does forgive her, it will take a while and a lot of changing on Lily's part. Hopefully she will realize what she done and be the bigger person about it." said Sirius shrugging his shoulders. "Either way it's going to be tense, and I'm not looking forward to it."

Well, maybe he'd chosen the wrong day to decide he wanted to go and see how Nick was doing. Remus sighed, before shoving the box in the corner of the room, it could be put back together at another time, although personally he couldn't see why bother, Regulus wasn't coming back unfortunately, he was long gone.

"Come on then, lets get going, hopefully something will have been cooked - I'm starving."
murmured Sirius, feeling let down but he hoped he found it before Harry returned. That way he had an excuse to visit him, and a reason for Harry to have to see him. It felt wrong having to use excuses, but he wanted to be part of his godson's life even if only in a little way. He'd brought it on himself, but given time, he hoped that Harry wanted him in his life. He just had to be there for him, he already was for the past few months, when Harry was at the end of his tether. He'd taken on too much, a Mastery was stressful on its own, but Harry had juggled so much, and he was in awe of him for succeeding.

Remus snorted, "When aren't you?" he asked his lover as they left the room. They didn't eat anything Kreacher cooked, which he didn't anymore since it always got wasted. Sirius didn't trust him as far as he could throw him, and since Sirius couldn't cook to save himself, it fell to him to keep him fed. He was used to cooking, having grown up in the Muggle world, moving from village to village when neighbours grew suspicious of his constant sicknesses which just happened to coincide with the full moon.
"Oi, watch it Moony." said Sirius throwing Remus a fake wounded look but a grin slipped out before he turned back and headed down the stairs. Getting ready to go to Potter Manor and face the fireworks and whatever else that might come their way.

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Has Kreacher hidden the necklace or will Sirius and Remus actually find it then have a fight on their hands for it? Or will Kreacher just watch them hidden from view and be happy when it's finally destroyed as his Master Regulus wished? will Nick ever forgive his mother or is the Potter family always going to be divided and torn? Will James and Lily reconnect and fall in love again? will Merlin's law punish Lily by only allowing her to use certain spells? spells that can in no way harm anyone? or will it give her nightmares of Harry's life and make her feel his emotions? or both? Would you like to see Roxy's thoughts and a bit about her at Hogwarts? Would you like to see Terrance back in the story? helping them come up with a cure for insanity driven by the Cruciatius Curse? There's only a few Horcruxes left...the story is going to be finishing soon! hmm I think everyone wants to see Mpreg...but I think everyone voted for it to be something that Severus actually creates...to continue their lines and others who prefer their own gender...Do you want to see it spread out or just mentioned in the last chapter? the pregnancy I mean :) Well everyone was in this chapter...at least almost everyone I hope everyone was happy with that! since they hadn't been in it for a while. R&R PLEASE!
Chapter 71

Invisible

Chapter 71

Holiday

Severus & Harry - The Caribbean - Hecate Ship

Harry and Severus landed firmly at the ‘Portkey’ dock which was cornered off so nobody wandered into it. They didn’t want to start the journey with accidents. Looking around, the wide open sun and water gleaming for miles, it just screamed peaceful. Severus guided Harry off the platform, knowing others would be coming by the same means. Although there were quite a lot of people queued up outside, waiting to get onto the ship. He wouldn’t be surprised if they had been in the immediate area, there certainly wouldn’t be many from Britain here on holiday. Harry wandered away, looking down at the water; it was so blue, nothing like he’d seen in Egypt, as beautiful as the country was, this was much better. The heat was greater than he was used to. As he continued to stare at the blue water, his minds worries just drifted away, the Horcruxes, his stupid accident, the fact he had been a Horcrux, and the knowledge he’d be going back to hunt more. This was his holiday and he was determined to enjoy every second of it, and every second of Severus. Turning to face him, a grin spread across his face, he had no more excuses left, and if he had his way…well lets just say they both might be getting a lot of satisfaction in the coming days.

“Come, we must sign in, especially if we are the last passengers using a Portkey.” said Severus, perhaps bringing Harry on holiday hadn’t been his best idea. He’d seen the look crossing his face, hormonal teenagers, what had he gotten himself into? Yet as Harry took his hand in his, he found himself unable to care, come what may, it had been a long time since he let himself enjoy life as he should just like his friend said.

Opening the door, both men stepped into the air conditioned corridor, and made their way to the reception. The ship was already jam packed, Harry observed plenty of them walking around with cloaks on, they must have been imbued with cooling charms otherwise they were all insane. Their accents, he realized why, they were used to the heat unlike him, who already felt as if he was melting. The air conditioning was nowhere near cool enough for what he was used to back in the UK.

“I hate queues,” said Harry, groaning at the sight of it, but inevitably stood in line. Although it moved at a brisk pace, since there were five different people getting them all set for their vacation. Basically just taking the Portkey, paperwork or whatever they had, then handing over the key welcoming them to the ship. The ship was called ‘Hecate’ goddess of magic, as most things; boats/ships were always named after goddess’ or women in general. Ironic really, since in the older days, it was considered bad luck to have women aboard. The American’s were big in believing the Greek gods, even Wizards and Witches. So it would stand to reason, they would name the ships after them.

“Indeed,” said Severus, smirking, he unlike Harry wasn’t impatient.

“Too bad we can’t just go to our room,” said Harry his gaze fixed on Severus’ backside. Which he didn’t get to see very often, cloaks were so restricting to sight. They were so pale compared to nearly everyone there; it made them look as if they were ill. Hopefully they would get some sun while they were there, given how pale Severus was could he get a tan? He was paler than
everyone else; maybe it was the black he was used to seeing Sev wearing all the time. He couldn’t wear black like that on holiday; with a bit of luck he could convince him to wear some other colours that didn’t include grey, black and white. Which was exactly what he had on, black shorts and a white shirt with a grey vest underneath it.

“It appears as if you’ve fully recovered then,” said Severus, biting the inside of his lip. That heated gaze made him feel like a pubescent teenager again. He knew what it was like to be attracted to someone, but he’d never really been on the reciprocated end of that attraction. He had been attracted to people way beyond his reach. He knew he wasn’t much to look at, he still didn’t understand Harry’s attraction to him, but he was beyond caring anymore. It was obvious Harry cared about him, it was written all over his face and in his eyes every time he looked at him. His attitude probably didn’t help matters either, especially when he was a teenager. He’d always been awkward with others, well other than Lily. That’s not to say he was ‘innocent’ that hadn’t been in his vocabulary since he was thirteen years old. Not that he ever considered himself innocent; he’d been introduced to the real world far too young.

“Mostly,” said Harry in agreement, he still felt weak at times, but he wasn’t letting it affect him. He wasn’t going to lie on a bloody bed on holiday, even if he had to take a Pepper-Up Potion every day. He was going to go out and explore the islands, get as many exotic potion ingredients as possible. He would look forward to playing around with them, seeing what they could do. He wasn’t going to tell Sev, he didn’t want to end up tied up on permanent bed rest. He knew how possessive Sev could get, part of him loved it the part that had been crushed by James and Lily with his forced independence at such a young age. Both he and Severus were more alike than either realized; time would come though when they would know each other better.

“Mostly?” enquired Severus, eyeing Harry as if he suspected he would drop down in dead faint any second. Moving up the queue when a space appeared. Perhaps they should have a rest before exploring the ship; they had two days to do it after all before they got to the first Island. If the itinerary was still the same, then that first Island on their schedule was the Cayman Island. If Harry wasn’t up for it then he would remain with him, it was his holiday after all and if Harry couldn’t enjoy it, then he wasn’t going to either. Although it would irritate him that all those potential herbs and potion ingredients were just lying in wait.

“I’m fine,” said Harry immediately, wishing he hadn’t opened his mouth now. Unfortunately he didn’t like to lie; he also hated being lied to.

“Hmm,” replied Severus stepping to the counter, handing over the used Portkey and their documents. Not even listening to the welcome speech, as he continued to watch Harry. Accepting the key, he ushered them away from the counter, and began to make their way to their suite. Harry had enjoyed the extravagance of the hotel they’d last stayed in, so he had gotten them the best room. Severus had never cared for showing off, he would have been happy in a normal room. He had a reason for buying what he did or doing something he did. Such as moving into Prince Manor, he had only moved there when he quit Hogwarts, to keep himself safe. Staying in Spinners End wasn’t an option; it was just too open to Muggle. Plus if they came for him, everyone in the area would have been hurt or killed. He hadn’t cared much for them, or even spoke to them, but he wouldn’t have been able to live with himself if he’d been the cause of their death. He could fight back, they had no chance, and against magic it was utterly futile. So he’d sold Spinners End, he’d given the money to his mother, added more from the Prince vaults not that she knew. Her small shop hadn’t achieved much profit, she’d been happy there so he left her to it making sure she had enough to get by. She’d always been too proud to take money from him, thanks to Harry and her concern for him she’d been convinced to come back to Prince Manor. Somewhere she would remain safe, even if the wizarding world was taken over. The wards he’d say were more powerful than those at Hogwarts, for the simple reason there were more here than at the school. There were
only so many wards one could have when there were children all around them. In other words nothing dangerous, but if they tried anything in Prince Manor the results would be…excruciatingly painful.

Severus unlocked the door to their suite, and Harry walked in, his jaw immediately dropped as he gazed around the magnificent room. Harry walked further into the room, avoiding the furniture gazing up and around in awe. “I thought this was a magical holiday?” he said still gaping utterly flummoxed.

“I’ve told you before, America isn’t as behind as England in using Muggle electronics.” said Severus. They knew Muggle electronics and magic did not go hand in hand, hence there was a sight that clearly stated ‘Do Not Perform Magic on the Room or Its Equipment’ also one that said much to his amusement ‘No Smoking’. Most wizards didn’t smoke Muggle cigarettes, it wasn’t good for you. Those that lived in the Muggle world with family though, that was another thing altogether.

“I know do you know what all this stuff is?” asked Harry, staring at the Muggle electronics, out of pure curiously pressing the button in the middle. The thing immediately came on; Harry cocked his head to the side, watching what appeared to be people in a play acting out scenes. It must be like the laptop Eileen got him a few years ago, or something similar.

Severus shook his head in exasperation, how could Lily have completely abandoned her Muggle roots? It’s obvious she hadn’t even taken them there once. “Have you ever been in the Muggle world?” asked Severus, pressing the remote into Harry’s hand, pressing them to change the channels letting Harry see what it does. “It’s a television, things can be recorded, saved and watched.” making a note to go and buy some books so Harry could read up on all new Muggle inventions so he at least knew what was what. He was a quick study; he would pick up things like a duck took to water.

“No, well…Lily would take Nick and Roxy to the beach, James would always be too busy that day…I don’t think he liked the Muggle world much.” said Harry shrugging.

Severus forcefully bit his lip, the urge to ask Harry where he had been was strong. He already knew his answer, they’d forgot his very existence, either that or just didn’t care enough about him to think about him. Both thoughts enraged him, as did the knowledge Lily out and back to her normal life. After all the hurt she’d caused this precious being in front of him. Shaking his thoughts off, Severus watched as Harry gleefully looked around, it always made Severus feel amused, happier when Harry acted more his age.

Severus watched Harry’s fingers trail along the Baby Grand Piano, and walk to the other side of the room, nosing in the cupboards of the Private bar. He couldn’t see from here, but he knew it would be a mixture of Muggle and Magical alcoholic spirits. Looking around, he noticed on the balcony there was a seven seat table/dining room. At the other side, behind the glass staircase was a library. Nothing compared to theirs of course, as Eileen had stated, they’d had to start up another room as a library. The wall had been simply removed, giving the library the appearance of doubling in size. The Elves had set up new shelves, but for most part that area was pretty empty. It wouldn’t remain that way for long, he and Harry had bought so many books, no doubt here they would do the same thing. Moving over he noticed a bath and shower on the main level. When he returned Harry was nowhere to be seen.

“You should see the bathroom up here!” called Harry, standing at the doorway of the bathroom. A large bathtub, a separate shower that would accommodate five people and two sinks and a bidet. It was the size of the living room, and you could see nothing but the open water, and the side of a
ship but that wouldn’t remain there. The pictures hanging were bright and colourful, complimenting the beautiful colours in the room. The bedroom had a towel wrapped up in the shape of a hippogriff on the bed, smiling softly, he touched it amused. Just then a loud voice vibrated around the room, and probably all rooms in the ship. Welcoming them onto the ship, and announcing that the safety regulation meeting would begin shortly and everyone was to make their way to atrium. Once it finished talking, Harry made his way down the stairs. “Do we really have to go to that meeting?” asked Harry. It wasn’t as if they were stuck on the boat if anything happened, they could Apparate out of there. “If you would rather remain, by all means stay.” said Severus wryly, removing their trunks and returning them to normal. Flicking his wand the trunks floated themselves up the stairs. He knew if he looked he would find them at the bottom of their beds. He’d added a charm to both, preventing anyone namely the help from opening them. He didn’t trust very easily, and he’d rather be careful and cautious than stupid and ripped off. He hadn’t brought much with him admittedly, just two books, his clothes and his potions. Not all of them were strictly legal, so he definitely didn’t want to have someone going through them. “Thank you,” said Harry, hugging Severus close, wrapping his arms around his neck, closing his eyes and just relishing in the contact. Relaxing completely when Severus’ arms wrapped around him just as tightly. Merlin he hoped he could defeat Voldemort; he couldn’t risk losing Severus, not now, not ever. There would be nothing for him to live for if he died, he loved his friends and Eileen of course, but they all paled to comparison next to his feelings for Severus. Shoving those thoughts aside, he was on holiday; they were safe at least for the next fortnight. “You’re welcome,” said Severus, Merlin when he first saved Harry he only fourteen years old, and was lucky if he came up to the middle of his chest. Now his face fit in the crook of his neck, seventeen years of age and already a Potions Master. He’d grown so much, in just a few short years, was it wrong to love someone as much as he loved Harry? Probably, but he couldn’t care less, Harry knew a lot about him, his nature and didn’t seem turned off by it. He’d never find another person like Harry if he lived two lifetimes. “Come on, we best get this over with.” said Severus, then they could enjoy the rest of their holiday without interruption. 

Severus & Harry Continued

Harry and Severus had stayed at the meeting, listening to them giving their lecture. Magical fires were prohibited upon the ship, or anywhere else. Where the exits were, what they were to do upon a fire starting, or if anything happened the boat. Then they told them about spells that were handy in the event of a fire, spells to use when going into the water, to prevent drowning, such as the bubble head charm and floating spells. Of course the potion Harry created (to breathe under water) was mentioned causing him to blush and duck down, not wanting anyone to recognize him. It didn’t last long, since Gillyweed was also mentioned also available to purchase at the apothecary store they had upon the ship for only six sickles. "Six sickles? Are they out of their mind?" whispered Harry annoyed; it was more expensive than they usually paid for it back home. "Everything on a ship costs more, it’s the way they make money." said Severus just as quietly. "Well I won't be buying anything on the ship," groused Harry; he knew what it was like not being able to afford anything. Although people on the boat could probably afford to splurge, Harry didn't, he bought only what he needed. The only items he bought that could be remotely considered for
pleasure was his books. Like Severus had said before, Harry didn’t buy anything for himself on holiday, he usually bought for his friends and that was it.

Severus just smirked sardonically, wondering how long Harry would be able to live up to that one. Once they were finished speaking, everyone began to wander off again. Most going to their rooms, the boat was already in motion, and would remain so for two days.

“Hungry?” asked Severus, turning to face Harry, he had to make sure he ate a lot; he’d spent the past week or so recovering. He had been unconscious so he hadn’t received much nourishment other than the potions he’d given him. He was surprisingly famished himself.

“Yes, actually I am.” said Harry, his stomach growled in agreement.

“Then lets go find a breakfast bar,” said Severus, leading the way.

“You are still coming to the Delacour’s aren’t you?” asked Harry curiously, as they walked through the ship. He was looking forward to seeing Fleur’s house; she’d missed her family a great deal while she was in Hogwarts. Despite the fact she wouldn’t have seen them anyway; he assumed she missed the lack of familiarity of home. The food Hogwarts served had been too heavy for her. He wanted Severus to come with him, Severus was his partner now, and he wanted to share all aspects of his life with him.

“I gave my word, of course I will be there.” said Severus, although he didn’t think he would be eating much. Frogs legs and snails... those were Potion ingredients not food he wanted to consume. Perhaps it was because he’d spent years slicing and dicing them or because they sounded disgusting unappealing. He was hopeful they would have at least another Horcrux found and destroyed before then. The smell of a proper breakfast caught his nose, they were close, and of course he was proven right, when the doors opened giving way to the restaurant.

“Here is a menu, take your time I’ll be back in a few minutes,” said the waiter, handing both of them a menu. After sitting both of them down in a table for two.

“It much cooler in here,” commented Harry, as he read his menu.

“It is indeed.” said Severus, he was actually shivering; it always amazed him how quickly the body could acclimate to certain temperatures. He hadn’t even properly been outside in the sun yet, if this was how it was now, it was going to be difficult to adjust when they got home.

“What can I get you?” asked the waiter returning, waiting patiently for them to speak a small smile on his face.

“Full English breakfast, a side of pancakes with syrup, the fruit platter and coffee.” said Harry, he was starving.

“Full English breakfast with a blueberry muffin and coffee.” replied Severus, handing their menus back.

“I’ll be right back sir,” the waiter said, accepting the menu’s before disappearing into the kitchen. The restaurant was still pretty empty, although it was early at least here anyway. At least they would be able to eat in peace before it got too loud with all the passengers.

“How is the Potion to help the Longbottom’s coming? Any progress?” asked Severus, he hadn’t asked lately and he was admittedly curious.

“Not very well, I don’t think I’m going to be able to do it alone, there are so many different aspects
Harry wanted knowledge on different things. He felt so stupid talking to the healer; he needed someone with definitive knowledge and understanding on the human brain. Like Terrance, he needed to learn about it for his potion, so at least a year's worth of knowledge and he had a sister he thought he said was a healer. He was thinking about asking him if he would like to try and make it together...but he didn't trust him completely, if he ended up taking his idea and publishing it for his own?” said Harry. “Plus he would have to be here, and with the war...it would be at the height of madness to agree.”

“What else?” asked Severus thoughtfully.

“Well I’ll probably need someone like you too, you know the mind better than anyone else,” said Harry, grabbing a roll and munching on it.

“They are both the same thing,” replied Severus frowning.

“No, they aren’t, there’s so many pathways, you know thoughts, feelings and how magic courses through the mind. Terrance knows about brains, how they function its two sides of the same coin but totally different. I can’t get any further in my studies until I learn more about them. To do that requires too much reading, especially with everything else going on. I’m going to need help, it doesn’t sit well with me admitting this either.” said Harry scowling petulantly.

“Then get a Vow from him if you are determined to go down this path. That way he cannot publish anything not his own, at least not without dying and for a young man that idea probably isn’t all that appealing.” said Severus wryly. Many who brewed Potions preferred to brew alone, not wanting to share credit for what they preserved as their accomplishments. However, a potion as Harry was attempting, would take months if not years. What he said was true, for someone not experienced in the mind fields would find it very difficult.

“I suppose I could,” said Harry nodding as he ate another piece of the roll, his mind drifting. The thought of someone coming in and dissecting his work didn’t sit well with him though. Wouldn’t he and Severus be able to do it? Sev was brilliant at Potions, if anyone could do it, it was him. “I guess I’ll just have to see how it goes.”

“At least he isn’t asking every time you see each other,” said Severus, pointing out a good thing about the entire situation. In fact Neville was getting on with his life, and Severus greatly admired that. He was engaged to Luna Lovegood, despite the tragedy that stuck the family he was holding it together remarkably well. The brother though, was younger but he didn’t know anything about him.

“Yeah,” said Harry, “He loves them though, and I can see it in his eyes how much he wants them. I envy him, I always have done.” Neville and Frankie had been raised by parents who cared, about both of them, neither was treated differently. He’d watched them a lot growing up, when they were over at the Potter’s anyway.

Severus didn’t reply there was nothing he could say to make the situation any better. The Potter’s had treated Harry despicably, nothing would change that. All Harry could do now was face a very bright future; he had certainly broken from the mould the Potter’s stuck to. Becoming Auror’s and living life as a ‘hero’ in the spotlight, that’s what they usually did. Harry seemed to shy away from any thoughts of fame and being recognized. Just earlier he’d ducked away when his potion was mentioned. He truly feared what Harry would do if and when the news got out he was the Boy-Who-Lived. It was inevitable; he was surprised it wasn’t already out. As much as he hated it, Dumbledore was right, secrets just didn’t stay secrets; sooner or later it got out. He would just have to stand by him, assure him it didn’t change anything, especially not for him or his friends...he hoped.
“Your breakfasts,” said the waiter, Jim said returning placing the plates on the table before leaving.

“Thank you,” said Harry to his retreating back. “I guess they don’t use House-Elf’s.”

“You’ll find them in the back,” said Severus wryly, glad Harry wasn’t dwelling on the Potter’s anymore. He had wondered on and off if he should have told Harry or not. Now he realized, it was probably for the best after all, otherwise he would be thinking about the Potter’s even more. It was ironic really, since Harry could go months without thinking about them. Oh he knew when Harry dwelled on his past; he just got that look in his eyes, on his face.

“I didn’t think of that,” said Harry sheepishly, as he dug into his breakfast.

“Hmm,” said Severus grabbing his coffee, by this time he’d usually had four cups, so he was dying for some caffeine. His eyes caught outside, the ship was on the move, nothing but water could be seen. Had they moved that far they couldn’t see the other ships? They were probably off to different islands; he really should find out their itinerary, Dobby had not returned with one, he wanted to make sure they were going where he thought they were. He would go after breakfast, and then their days were pretty wide open.

“I brought all my potion journals with me, would you like to see if you can offer suggestions on the potion?” asked Harry, giving Severus his best puppy dog look.

Severus chuckled, shaking his head wryly, “That look doesn’t work on me,” he said. “Never has worked.”

“No? Then there’s definitely another way to convince you,” said Harry, stubbing his shoe off, before seductively trailing his foot up his leg, until he got to something that was stirring in interest to his touches.

“Enough,” said Severus, pressing his hand against Harry’s foot, he was not going to walk around with a hard on in front of everyone. Especially in these shorts, he had no way of hiding it, so he was going to have to think a hell of a lot of cold thoughts before standing.

Harry pouted before reluctantly acknowledging it was too public, removing his foot he put his shoe back on. On one of the islands he would need to buy a pair of sandals, his feet were boiling, hardly surprising since he was wearing socks, so he didn’t end up with aching feet. He hadn’t brought any with him, because he didn’t own sandals. Just wait until they were in their room, then he wouldn’t have an excuse.

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Hogwarts - Ravenclaw Common Room - Roxy

Roxy moved to sit on the blue leather couch, the fire warming her up as she crossed her legs. She had been through so much, yet in a weird way she felt more at peace than she ever had done. She had friends in her new house, friends that genuinely cared, liked the same things she did. In her years as a Gryffindor, she hadn’t had any friends, even Frankie; a childhood friend had found his own thing here at Hogwarts. She wasn’t angry at him anymore, she wasn’t angry at many people anymore. Opening the letter, she wasn’t surprised it was from her dad, her mum had been released but she hadn’t written yet. For the past few years, she’d realized Nick came first; she’d gotten a little taste of what Harry went through. She’d been in denial of course; instead she blamed Harry for the cause of it all. It took Nick and her dad to make her see that Harry was innocent in all this, and that Lily’s actions were her own.
Family life had gotten so hard for a while, but when she accepted the truth, she was finally able to move on. Her dad had taken her to the study and told her to let it out, that he wouldn’t stop her or give her a row for anything she said or did. She’d yelled so much her throat hurt afterwards, and after a lot of tears, potions, explanations and cuddles she saw what her dad and brother had seen before her. She’d often thought about writing to him, in fact she had done but she didn’t send it. Roxy had just scrunched them up and put them in the bin. She just didn’t know what to say, the things she’d said to him was unforgivable. Maybe one day she would be able to write something that didn’t sound silly, she was only thirteen years old at the end of the day.

Roxy read the letter from her dad, explaining that her mother would have to stay at Potter Manor for four years during her probation. It was one of the stipulations the Ministry required, she wasn’t supposed to be alone, unsupervised. His dads thoughts over the past year had changed, he’d mourned for her then became resigned. She had known somewhere deep in side they’d never be the happy family they’d been before Hogwarts came into their life. She just had to deal with it, like everything else that happened.

Her mum had been an inspiration, she’d always wanted to be just like her, and that included putting herself in Gryffindor. Then all this had happened, even a year on she wasn’t sure how she felt about her, but at least she wouldn’t have to face it until Christmas. Her dad said she could stay if she wanted to, that he’d understand, even though he’d rather have her back home in the safety of Potter Manor.

“Are you coming Roxy? We are going to the library to begin working on the essay!” said Roberta, as she rushed through the Ravenclaw common room. Grabbing her school bag, and stuffing her quills and extra paper into it. She couldn’t wait to get started on her first essay for defence of the year. She wanted it to be good enough to get an EE, to do that she had to research properly. Last year she’d only gotten A’s, and she was hoping to change that, her parents would be so disappointed if she didn’t get her grades up.

“We?” asked Roxy, looking up from her letter.

“Yeah, Joan, Hilary and Margret are coming…how about it?” asked Roberta, standing up, slinging her bag around her back. Ready to leave the common room and head to the library, just as the others she’d mentioned trampled down the stairs. They had a few hours before dinner, and they were all hopeful to have it finished by then.

“Give me a second!” said Roxy, running up the stairs to grab her own things, pushing everything from her mind not wanting to dwell on it anymore. She had until the sign up sheet to decide if she wanted to remain at Hogwarts or not. She was just from now on, going to take the days as they came. Who knows? Maybe one day she’d gather up the courage to write to Harry and tell him all the things she felt in her heart.

“Thanks, let’s go!” said Roxy, as she emerged from the girl’s staircase and ran to her friends who were waiting rather impatiently on her.

“Can I come with you guys?” asked Danny.

“Sure,” said Roxy blushing, unable to look him in the eye. He made her feel funny inside, every time he spoke to her or stared at her. She glared at her friends who giggled at her discomfort; they were teasing her mercilessly about her ‘crush’ on Danny. She’d liked him even in Gryffindor but that was only in passing, now that she was in Ravenclaw though she saw him a lot more. His messy blonde hair, blue eyes and the way he spoke, he was just so cute. He was a year older than her, and didn’t need to pay any attention to her yet he did.
“Great,” said Danny standing up and joining the group as they exited the common room.

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Potter Manor - Lily & James

Lily jerked awake, panting as sweat poured of her in waves, and nightmares plagued her sleep, as they did in Azkaban. She had been hopeful once she was back home they wouldn’t be so frightening. Her heart felt like it was going to burst out of her chest; she hated the fear that coursed through her. She’d thought it was the Dementors that caused her unease after she’d been asleep apparently it wasn’t. Lily looked around and her eyes dimmed, James was acting so odd, it certainly hadn’t been the welcome she’d wanted that’s for certain. At least she was home, she tried to console herself, and she couldn’t wait to see her son, what would he look like? A year had gone by he’d probably changed, her little boy all grown up.

Like James had said, all her clothes and everything were in here, if left a poignant pain in her heart. It was as if James didn’t want to be with her anymore. Sliding out of bed, she looked through her wardrobe for something to wear. Putting them on, she shrank her clothes to fit her better. Hopefully she wouldn’t need to keep doing that for long; unfortunately her stomach couldn’t stand much food.

She was grateful to be on the first floor, because after walking only a few feet she was beginning to ache again already. Not letting it deter her she made her way down the stairs. Keeping a tight grip of the banister as she did so, then using the wall to support her until she finally got into the living room. James was busy writing something at the corner of the room; he didn’t even notice her at first.

“Good morning, how are you feeling?” asked James, when he finally did notice her.

“I’m a little better,” said Lily, a small smile on her face, he still cared even if only a little bit and it gave her hope.

“Good, breakfast will be here in a moment,” said James, and just as he spoke, platters of food appeared on the table.

“Wingardium Leviosa!” said Lily, flicking her wand at the plate, as she sat down. Puzzlement flashed across her face, why hadn’t the spell worked? “Wingardium Leviosa!” still nothing.

“What is going on?” panicked Lily; her wand had worked just moments ago.

“Calm down, it might just be that it’s not the right wand for you anymore.” said James not sharing her panic.

“It worked five minutes ago to shrink my clothes!” shrieked Lily, her eyes bulging with panic and fear.

James frowned; the wand obviously worked so why wasn’t it with that particular spell?

“Try a different one?” suggested James eventually, flummoxed by what was going on.

“Accio salt!” shouted Lily, and the salt pot flew towards her.

“Interesting,” said James, he’d never seen anything like this happen before, and he’d seen a lot as an Auror.

“What did they do to my wand?” cried Lily; they’d said she could cast magic so why would they
take away certain spells?

“What do you mean?” asked James, sitting himself down on the dining table.

“Wa…wasn’t it the Minister?” asked Lily sniffling, she felt as though she had lost her magic altogether.

“We don’t have the power to do something like that Lils,” said James, shaking his head.

“Then what is wrong with me?” asked Lily terrified.

“I have no idea,” said James, flicking his own wand out, “Wingardium Leviosa!” the plate of food floated towards Lily effortlessly.

Lily closed her eyes as dread shifted like a volcano about to erupt.

“I’ll go get help, see if they can shed some light on the situation.” said James, moving towards the fireplace and shouting in ‘Headmaster Dumbledore’s office Hogwarts!’

“Albus are you there?” called James, unable to see anything other than the Headmaster chair and desk. Which was it usually was, was filled with tons of paperwork. He knew the feeling of frustration, there was an unending amount of paperwork to do as an Auror too.

“I am. Is everything alright with Nick?” asked Dumbledore concerned.

“He’s fine, but I’m not calling about that, can you come over to Potter Manor? I have a situation here I could use your help with…its something I don’t even know where to begin with.” said James tense.

“Of course,” said Dumbledore stalking over as James disappeared from the fire.
Chapter 72

Invisible

Chapter 72

A Peculiar happenstance

Potter Manor - James, Lily and Albus Dumbledore

"James, what is the problem?" asked Dumbledore, stepping through the flames and into Potter Manor. At least this summer he wouldn't need to convince the Wizengamot to allow James and Lily to remain at Hogwarts again. They were not happy with his requests two years in a row that was putting it lightly. He'd had to trade in favours and demand his own in turn to accomplish it. He hadn't minded really, since it made sure Nick was safe within the wards. Looking around, he frowned in confusion; Lily was sitting on the sofa practically catatonic. He hoped he hadn't been brought here because of an argument they were having. It wouldn't be the first time James and Lily had disagreed about something, or asked his advice. Unfortunately these days, he was too busy trying to accomplish everything he had to in a short space of time. It didn't help that he couldn't get in touch with Severus, Eileen had simply told him Severus was out. The same five hours later at dinner time, either she was lying to him or Severus was off somewhere - who knows where. He had to figure out what he'd done to the resurrection stone.

"There's something…peculiar happening to Lily's magic," said James, his eyebrows drawn together as he tried to put the pieces together himself without anyone's help. As an Auror he'd heard and seen a lot of things, but this baffled him…magic just didn't stop working for no reason. It hasn't stopped, he reminded himself sternly, it was just certain spells, and two had worked fine, one he saw the other Lily said she cast.

"Peculiar? Care to explain?" asked Dumbledore flummoxed as he stared between them, at least his mind had been taken off Severus and his disappearance.

"Lily's magic…well, there's no easy, professional or rational way to say this, its acting oddly. She can cast certain spells, such as the summoning spell. However when she tried to cast a first year spell…it didn't work or react in any way…the levitation charm just wouldn't work for her." said James, "I know its difficult for people coming out of Azkaban to build their magic, but I haven't heard of someone being unable to cast one thing and successfully cast another."

"I see what you mean by peculiar." said Albus thoughtfully, stroking his beard as he sat down, having to do so himself since neither Lily nor James had the decency to ask him to sit, as all good hosts did. "Lily?" he called after thinking about it for a few minutes.

"Lily?" he called again more firmly when the woman didn't respond.

"Yes?" croaked Lily, jumping out of her wits staring wildly at Dumbledore, her green eyes wide with pure unadulterated fear. Nobody could blame her, she'd been magical all her life, known about magic since she was eight years old and been performing it since she was eleven. The thought of losing her magic was too much to bear, actually any one person to bear. "Can the Ministry stop your magic?" she asked, desperate for it to be them, and not something she'd never figure out.

"No, magical bindings are illegal," said Albus soothingly, trying to calm the terrified witch down,
he totally understood why she was so scared.

"Magical bindings? Could that be what's happened to me?" asked Lily wide eyed.

"No, it removes all your magic, it doesn't just limit it, certainly not just to certain spells." replied Albus, of that much he was positive. He didn't understand it; he couldn't tell Lily what had happened. Although something was niggling at him, as if something familiar about it had happened before...but when? He couldn't remember it fully; it must have been a very long time. Perhaps asking around might prove informative, Merlin why had this happened now? He had so much already on his plate.

"Failed partial binding?" asked Lily, just basically hoping for a quick fix.

"I am sorry, Lily, I cannot give you an answer to what you seek." admitted Albus, his blue eyes puzzled. "I shall do my best to find out what is going on."

"Thank you," whispered Lily, tears running down her face, building up at her chin to plop on her knees. This was supposed to be the happiest day of her life! She was free, out of Azkaban, seeing her family again but it was turning out to be anything but. She couldn't fully use her magic, she hadn't seen her son yet, and to top it off James was cold and distant. When the Floo activated, Lily stared at the ground, hastily wiping away her tears, trying to appear composed and normal, easier said than done.

Sirius and Remus stepped into Potter Manor, their faces filled with awkwardness when they sensed the tension built up in the room. Glancing at one another knowingly, they'd been ready for it, although they hadn't expected Dumbledore to be there so soon.

"Is everything alright?" asked Sirius, ever the inquisitive one.

"Fine," said Lily tersely.

"Alright," said Sirius awkwardly, part of him just wanted to go back through the Floo and continue searching for the Horcruxes. It had always been awkward between them, although the past year had been less awkward. It had almost been like having the old James back, the one from his school days. Now they were back to square one, or what felt like it anyway.

"Nick will be down in a minute, why don't we all settle down have an early lunch?" suggested James, feeling the tenseness as well.

"That would be most welcoming." said Albus inviting himself to stay. "Sirius you are on speaking terms with Harry are you not?" knowing from reading the Practical Potioneer that it was true, there had been pictures of every single one of Sirius' Animagus forms.

"Yes," said Sirius, looking at Dumbledore as if he was nuts, he knew that good and well, he'd remained in Prince Manor when he'd left after that damn Horcrux overload of information. It wasn't Dumbledore who was inspiring them to hunt them down and destroy them, no; it was a seventeen year old boy. One who was hopefully enjoying a luxury holiday.

"You don't perchance know where Severus is?" asked Dumbledore, sounding deeply concerned. "I haven't been able to get in touch with him all day. I hope the Death Eaters haven't captured him, it's bad enough they have Kingsley without adding another casualty."

Sirius and Remus looked at each other, silently communicated; did they tell Dumbledore or keep quiet? What could it hurt really? Yet they didn't want to betray Harry's trust, so they decided to keep quiet. He obviously wanted Severus for a reason, and they didn't want Harry's holiday
interrupted. The damn war, the Horcruxes, the manipulation and questions could bloody well wait a fortnight.

"Have you heard anything further about him?" asked Remus suitably distracting the wizard. Kingsley was a very good friend to both Sirius and James. They put their lives in each others hands when they are called out, or even just fighting. It creates a bond, one that normal people couldn't understand. Brother in arms, trusting each other to have their back, it would last even after they left the Auror corps. You never stopped being an Auror, there was no such thing as an Ex- Auror, but a retired one you could be.

"I have not, I'm beginning to think Severus is right, perhaps the Imperious curse is too strong." said Albus, hating to admit he was wrong, which seemed to be happening more often these days. They were useless until Voldemort made a move, they didn't know where his hideout was. He was no longer using the one in Little Hangleton, not that he was surprised it had just been a temporary move while he took everyone by surprise. He'd hoped Shacklebolt would be able to shake it off, get help, but no, he wasn't so lucky. "I have three Order members in both Diagon Alley and Hogsmeade at all times. I will double the amount when the students go to Hogsmeade."

"Shouldn't you stop them going?" asked Remus frowning in concern. The students would be sitting ducks if anything were to happen. The knowledge they had should be used, to prevent loss of life no matter how long it took for Him to attack.

"Everything will work out for the best," said Albus soothingly.

Remus was about to open his mouth to protest, which he knew to be a futile exercise. Albus was a man who never changed his mind, he did what he thought was best and nothing could convince him otherwise. However, they were all distracted by Nick coming into the room; he had changed a lot in the past year. While Nick had always been confident, Remus had realized quite quickly, that it was not confidence but a feeling of smugness and overconfidence in his abilities. The past few years had wiped that out of him, especially when his magical core split. Now it was more of a quiet confidence, being the focus of one on one tutoring seemed to be working well for Nick. He was certainly learning magic at a much brisker pace, perhaps because he had nothing around him to distract him? Or people fawning over him who knew?

"Nick," breathed Lily, gazing at her son in awe, he'd gotten so tall and without his school uniform on he seemed so much more mature and older. Standing up, she walked over to him and threw her arms around him, trembling in relief she at least still had her kids. They would always love her, and it was just the matter of helping James remember why he'd fallen in love with her in the first place. A frown made itself apparent when her son didn't respond to the hug; he merely stood there stiffly his gaze looking over her shoulder as if he didn't want her there. Well he was a young man; he wouldn't want hugs from his mum, no matter how long she'd been away, typical boys. "Oh I've missed you. You've gotten so big!"

James watched the reunion just as tense as his son; he would love to have welcomed Lily with open arms. Unfortunately everything was different now, and he had noticed she had yet to ask about Roxy, not once had their daughter been mentioned by her mother. Why wasn't the therapy helping her? To him she seemed to be in a sea of denial. He couldn't enquire about it, husband or not there was a lot of confidentiality in mind healers they took it very seriously. Did he sit her down and let her know how the kids felt? Or did he leave her to find out herself and talk to her when she is ready to acknowledge it? Maybe he should take a few sessions with a mind healer, they had to each year to continue being an Auror to make sure they were 'sound of mind'. Although this wasn't about being an Auror, this was about being a father; he'd already lost one son he didn't want to lose his other kids.
"This is perfect, the House Elf is really good at cooking!" said Sirius, as he dug into the food.

"I agree, perfectly succulent!" beamed Dumbledore, as if he didn't have a worry in the world. Which of course wasn't true, he worried about a lot of things, none of which was an easy fix. He had noticed Sirius hadn't been able to answer him about Severus, but considering Severus and Sirius didn't get on it wasn't a real surprise. He was also worried about what Voldemort was doing to his Order member, Shacklebolt knew a lot of information it was a daunting thing indeed. He had no idea where the Dark Wizard's hideout was, so there was no way to save him. He'd asked Dung to ask around, but so far no luck whatsoever.

"Her name is Tish," commented James, and he made sure to compliment her now and again. What better way to win their loyalties than being kind to them? Its how his parents had been with the House Elves when they were alive, before he had done a stupid thing and gotten rid of them because Lily didn't approve. Thankfully though they'd all gone to Hogwarts for sanctuary and Albus had taken them on.

"Still good," said Sirius, smiling in sympathy to his godson who sat next to him and Remus and across from his father. Nick had been quieter since he began learning but not to this extent, you could see he was troubled, mostly around the eyes.

Nick grimaced at Sirius as he begin to dig into his own 'brunch' since he always slept through breakfast, his first meal of the day was always bigger than he would have usually eaten at say Hogwarts. The creamy chicken and mushroom pie was fantastic, since Tish had come all the meals were just amazing. He had a lot of pies though, but he didn't mind because they were filling and kept any hunger at bay until seven o'clock when he stopped for dinner.

"How are you feeling my boy?" asked Albus, trying to cut the tense silence.

"Fine," said Nick, he'd never really forgiven the headmaster for trying to force him back into training before he was ready. What couldn't be denied though was the fact he was learning things, he was good at that if nothing else. He'd always looked up to Dumbledore, thinking to be like him when he grew up. This wasn't the case anymore; he was finally content with being just Nick for now. He was terrified of letting everyone down, especially his dad. Growing up it had been fun, being the Boy Who Lived, the attention and the adoration. He hadn't once thought about the consequences of it, and why should he have done? Nobody had told him otherwise. He'd used it to get his own way, quite happy about it. Now though the burden on his shoulders was intense, it had overwhelmed him when they tried to train him as well as him trying to keep up with his normal workload at school. With his dad's support it was easier to deal with, he just hoped it remained that way.

"Good, good." said Albus, he'd tried to raise Nick's spirits about telling him about his own adventures over the past year but it seemed to draw Nick away and into his own little world. Everything he did lately was wrong on some level, and it was beginning to irritate him. Nobody was looking up to him like they had done in the past, even the Order if it was to be believed. They were taking the war into their own hands, he kept trying to think where he'd gone wrong but he wasn't coming up with anything concrete that made sense.

"Can I come and see your training today, Nick?" asked Lily hopefully; she just wanted to get back to normal, what was more normal than spending time with her son. She was hoping that once things got back on track with her kids, James would remember why he loved her.

"I'm not training today," stated Nick firmly.

"Nick?" questioned Albus, "Are you unwell?"
"No, I just don't want to train today, I've not had a day off since we started." said Nick.

"Are you feeling any strain on your magic?" asked James, his brown eyes gazing into the mirror image of his own. He never wanted that to happen again, the thought of his son becoming a squib was as horrifying as the first time he'd heard about it. So he always made sure that he never pushed Nick too far and always made sure he didn't want too much too soon.

"No, honestly I'm fine." said Nick, "I just want a break, and I'll start again tomorrow."

"Nick your training is extremely important, I know some people have greatness thrust upon them, all we can do is do the best we can." said Albus.

"I'll begin again tomorrow." snapped Nick.

"Nicolas," said Albus exasperated.

"Don't call me that," groused Nick, it wasn't even his full name; on his birth certificate it was Nick Sirius Potter not Nicolas Sirius Potter. "I want a day to myself today."

"Alright, I'll take you out shopping," said James in agreement with his son.

"Very well, it seems I am being out voted, so I bid you adieu." said Albus standing up his blue eyes glimmering with disappointment. He was giving up his day, to help and train him and it was just being thrown back in his face. When had everyone stopped doing what he thought best?

"Albus! There's no need to leave." said Lily her green eyes beseeching Albus' own; she didn't feel nearly as awkward with him there. However when he wasn't there she felt as if she was intruding in on her own family, in her own home it was terrible.

"It's alright my dear, I have a lot to do and not enough time to do it, I will see you tomorrow Nick. In future please let me know when I won't be needed. Do not worry Lily, I shall do all I can to figure out what is going on." said Albus formally, before he disappeared through the Floo feeling very let down indeed.

The rest of the meal was in silence, but it wasn't a completely overwrought one.

Potter Manor - James, Sirius and Remus - The Hall Way

"What's wrong with Lily?" asked Remus, watching her from the doorjamb, as James got ready to go out with Nick. She was sleeping on the couch; she wasn't able to do much without being physically exerted. All she had done was walk around the manor for a few minutes before conking out. Having been in Azkaban, stuck in a tiny cell unable to do any exercise well it was to be expected.

"She's tired, she'll probably be like that for a while." said James quietly, as he clipped on his cloak waiting on Nick retrieving his own cloak and money pouch.

"No I mean with Albus, what is he looking for?" asked Remus giving James a pointed look.

"Oh that," said James, "Her magic is acting out, she got up this morning and was fine casting a spell to shrink her jeans and summon things, but the moment she tried to levitate something it well... wouldn't. It's obviously not the power behind the spell since we learn the levitation spell in first year, the Accio charm is a fourth year spell!"
"That is highly irregular," said Remus frowning.

"It is," agreed Sirius thoughtfully, as he stared at Lily. Now if anyone had come up to him say seventeen years ago and told him the family would be in bits he would have laughed at them. Lily and James' love had been whole, pure and it wasn't a sight you saw very often. Despite the fact they hadn't gotten on for six years at Hogwarts, they acted as if they'd been together forever. He would never have imagined the Potter family would have been reduced to this.

"Maybe you should make an appointment with St. Mungo's they might have a better understanding of it," stated Remus. It was true, St. Mungo's had records and journals dating back before the birth of Merlin, written in very old Latin but translated to modern language with precision and care.

"I think I will, she has an appointment soon anyway," said James nodding thoughtfully, he hadn't even thought of that if he was honest. It was a good idea, the more people that were aware of the problem the quicker a solution would be found.

"Why?" asked Sirius, confused. "To help her with her exercises so she can get fit again?"

"No, to see her mind healer, she has to go for the entire duration of her probation, so that's four years." said James.

"You should write to them and make an appointment, you know how busy they are these days." said Remus, they had first hand experience during the battle of the old Ministry. They'd been rushed off their feet; the least they deserved was the courteous of James not just showing up demanding an appointment on the day.

"I think I will," said James conceding the point.

"What else does she need to do during her probation?" asked Remus, he wasn't an Auror he didn't know the exact specifics.

"Staying in the same place for four years, that's always one of the important terms," said Sirius, knowing because he was an Auror and knew about it though his work. Not all people were evil, some were just misguided, ending up with a lapse of judgement, like when they attack or hex Muggles for some reason. He'd heard everything over the years, nothing surprised him.

"But is she allowed outside?" asked Remus.

"Yes, but she's always got to be back in the manor before seven o'clock it's her curfew. It's connected to her wand, so they will know if she breaks it." explained James, Remus knew a lot of information but sometimes it surprised him when he found himself explaining things to him. Remus was by far the smartest and bookish of their group, in fact if anyone could figure out what was wrong with Lily he'd bet it was his best friend. The wand is one thing no sane wizard would ever leave home without, or even just putting aside for a moment. A wandless wizard was a vulnerable wizard, and a vulnerable wizard was indeed a dead one.

"I see," said Remus it was better than being trapped in a manor for four years. She had gotten off extremely lightly; Lily had used an Unforgivable Curse for Merlin's sake. If she had been anyone else, he knew deep down she would still be in Azkaban perhaps for a further fourteen years or for life.

"Do you guys want to come?" asked James as he heard Nick bounding down the stairs; this had been a good idea. His son needed to let his hair down from time to time, as important as it was to train, not everyone gave up their life every moment to fight or learn. Nick despite how vital he was
to the war effort, shouldn't be forced to give up all his time either.

"Only for five minutes, I need to purchase a book, we have something we need to do." said Remus. He didn't want to let Harry down, he was so adamant they could do this, and he wanted him to be right. It might even help his relationship with Harry in the long run. He didn't blame anyone for what happened, he'd allowed it to go on, and he had ignored Harry like the rest of them. So he had given Harry his space, but since Sirius was getting another chance, he hoped it was on his cards too.

"What do you need to do?" asked James curiously just as Sirius spoke, causing him to grin wryly.

"You and your books," sighed Sirius in mock exasperation. Well not completely mocked, he hated reading, even when it was for his Auror training. He was just so impatient, he wanted to be on his feet all the time, and doing something reading was boring in his opinion. He didn't understand how Remus had ended up in Gryffindor to this very day; he was Ravenclaw to his very core.

"I'm ready," said Nick making his appearance.

"Let's go!" said James completely forgetting what he'd asked Remus just five seconds earlier, excited about spending more quality time with his son. Holding onto his son, he Apparated them both to Hogsmeade which was rather lively. Although there was a notable age gap in the children there, from the ages eleven to seventeen was absent obviously at school.

Sirius & Remus - Tombs and scrolls - Hogsmeade

"So what are you looking for?" asked Sirius, following his partner into the bookstore, watching him wandering around the store intriguingly.

"The new defence book that came out last month," said Remus, unfortunately it wasn't the newest one, so it wasn't out on full display in front of the shop anymore.

"Oh," was all the dog Animagus had to say, already bored again. "Do you think we will find it in the house?"

"I don't know," Remus replied shrugging his shoulders, knowing exactly what Sirius was talking about without him having to say anything else. "I hope so, at the very least but there was nothing in his room. I mean it's where he would have put it surely?"

"Not necessarily, if someone came looking for it…it would have been the first place they looked." said Sirius, it's what the Auror's would have done, checked within their possessions, sometimes in plain sight wasn't the way to go about it.

"For all we know it could be in that box already," added Remus, his voice extremely hopeful.

"True," mused Sirius, he doubted it, all that shit had been in his house since he was a young boy, there wasn't a piece in that box he couldn't remember growing up, he was sure of it.

"Found it," said Remus swiping it off the shelves, "Just go home, I'll only be a few minutes." he added rolling his eyes at Sirius, who was leaning against the shelf looking for all the world, extremely bored.

"I'm here now, I might as well wait," replied Sirius shrugging, plus something was telling him to stay, he didn't know why.
"Three galleons please," the assistant bookshop keeper said calmly after ringing it up on the till.

Remus handed them over calmly, accepting the book which had been covered with brown paper and string. Shrinking it he put it in his pocket just as people began shrieking outside and loud blasts soon followed it. Sirius had his wand in hand immediately, crouching down ready for battle his training instincts coming forth without him having to think. Remus removed his wand as he calmly but worriedly joined his partner, as they slowly but alertly made their way to the entrance of the store. One would think it would be safe to remain behind, but it wasn't true, shops were targeted by the 'Fiendfyre' spell. The Death Eaters didn't appreciate anything, the only shop to never be targeted of such a spell was the Potions shop, and all shops down in Knockturn Alley.

"Ready?" whispered Sirius, his hand outstretched just millimetres from the handle.

"Go," said Remus, casting a shielding charm just in case any spells came their way.

Sirius nodded before the door was yanked open, and they faced the chaos, one wizard immediately stood out to them. It seemed Kingsley Shacklebolt had joined the fray, most unwillingly, if the continued struggle he put up. The state of him was truly horrific, his face was bloody and bruised, his clothes ripped and torn, and everyone should be able to see he wasn't doing this on his own free will. He looked ready to pass out, but under the Imperious curse, it didn't matter what your physical condition was like. You could be completely beaten and bloody and still jump through hoops.

"I'll get Kingsley, you get James and Nick!" said Remus.

"No, we stick together." said Sirius gravely, he wasn't going to risk Remus' life, it had almost happened during the attack on the Ministry - never again. He had only just gotten there in the nick of time to prevent anything to happen to him.

"I'll be fine," said Remus as both of them ducked an oncoming spell.

"I mean it, Remus!" snapped Sirius, grabbing hold of him tightly as he fired of spells in the direction of the Death Eaters. "First we get Shacklebolt then we go get James and Nick, if they are still here."

"Alright," said Remus quietly, trying to calm Sirius down, if he got worried he would be more likely to make mistakes.

Sirius let go of his hold, but kept right next to him, he didn't want what happened to the Longbottom's to happen to Remus. He wouldn't be able to live with himself, no he would keep Remus safe, even if it was at the expense of his own sanity so be it. James could take care of Nick and Himself, he was a formidable opponent, plus the Order would be here in a few seconds he'd bet.
Chapter 73

Invisible

Chapter 73

Hogsmeade, Horcruxes and Holidays

Sirius and Remus entered the fight, back to back, trusting each other completely. They were outnumbered for only a few minutes, but that few minutes seemed like forever. Between Sirius and Remus, they had to fight off three sets of spells and fire of those of their own to keep the balance. Not to forget having to duck whenever their partner did, indicating something fatal was coming their way, that there was no known shield for. It's the only reason they ducked, since it was Death Eaters they were talking about, it was every few seconds unfortunately.

"Duck!" shouted Remus pulling Sirius down with him, causing the sickly green spell to wiz past them and hit the shop window before disappearing in a hail of breaking glass.

"Thanks," said Sirius, "Stupefy! Petrificus Totalus!"

"Five o'clock," said Remus turning abruptly and firing of a spell, as Sirius did the same. "I thought Dumbledore was having this place watched?"

"I thought so too," said Sirius, looking down at the floor before saying another spell that would turn an object to stone. His particular one was water; someone must have used the Aguamenti spell to put out the fires. "Duro!" grinning in a feral way when the Death Eater panicked firing off a stunning spell to subdue him so he couldn't spell his way out. Summoning his wand to keep him down, he wouldn't be able to fight now. Stuffing the wand in his pocket, he continued on, trying to get to Shacklebolt. He was just glad the more...sadistic Death Eaters were behind Azkaban and safe, Voldemort couldn't get them out. So if they were caught, they would at least remain there, the last war was a constant struggle, capture them, they get out and the process would just begin all over again.

Despite what Cornelius Fudge had done, he respected him for that alone, ensuring Azkaban was put under the Fidelus Charm. Well that and Albus' decision to actually reassure Fudge, who probably would have gone on the defensive that night if not for the Headmaster's candid words.

"Twelve!" shouted Sirius, his head ducking slightly when he heard an explosion, covered in soot and ash from the fires clouding the place he looked around and saw an influx of red robes. He had to get to Shacklebolt soon, otherwise they would be retreating.

"Come on, we have to find him," said Remus on the same wavelength as his partner.

"I know!" yelled Sirius, choking and gagging as the disgusting taste and smell invaded his mouth and nose.

"Bulla capite!" tapped Remus, his voice muffled and Sirius sighed as fresh air invaded his lungs.
making him feel better. Of course, the Bubble-Head charm, why hadn't he thought of that? This was why Remus was the academic one he was just brilliant.

"Thanks," said Sirius, his own voice now muffled, grabbing a hold of him he began a desperate search for Kingsley. Using his wand to disperse the smoke so he could actually see in front of him. He was staying as far down as possible, since the battle was still currently going on around him. In fact Remus was still shouting spells at any black robes that moved, still doing his bit to help.

"Did you hear that?" asked Sirius his voice muffled, now that the smoke had disappeared he cast a spell to remove the Bubble-Head charm and sighed the recycled air wasn't the best thing in the world. Remus did the same thing as he listened for whatever Sirius wanted him to hear.

Remus suddenly nodded, they were Apparating away, and they had run out of time.

"SHIT!" cursed Remus, "Your left!"

Sirius turned, and saw that there was a familiar green spell spitting from a Death Eaters wand directly aimed at Kingsley Shacklebolt.

"ARESTO MOMENTUM!" shouted Sirius, as Remus ran at the wizard to try and get to him before the deadly curse hit him. The spell stopped in mid air, before hurtling back at its castor, Sirius stood stunned he'd aimed it at the Death Eater not the killing curse itself. Had he unknowingly come upon some form of counter against the spell? Rushing over to Remus and Kingsley.

"Finite Incantatem!" spelled Sirius, removing the Imperious Curse from their fallen comrade.

A broken moan left Shacklebolt's lips.

"Hang on, Kings," said Sirius, using his nickname. "Ferula!"

"Ferula," added Remus, bandaging his arm.

"We're going to Apparate you to St. Mungo's alright? Hang in there." said Sirius, sharing a worried look with Remus, he looked really bad. They had to get him to the hospital right away, holding onto Shacklebolt as Remus cast a spell to place him on a stretcher. Once that was done and Shacklebolt was secure, they Apparated away, praying they'd done enough to save their friend.

"What happened?" asked two Healers immediately making their way to the injured wizard's side.

"He's been kidnapped by Voldemort, he's been under the Imperious curse but we have no idea how long…he's also been under the Cruciatus curse and has at least one broken arm and leg." said Sirius, as Shacklebolt was carted away from them.

"I hope he makes it," said Sirius, strained, as he slumped down on one of the seats in the emergency room.

"Should we go and get some rest? We won't hear anything back, that's if they will tell us." wondered Remus, as he too sat down completely exhausted.

"I hope James and Nick are alright," said Sirius, his brow furrowed in worry.

"Me too," said Remus.

More wizards and witches were brought into St. Mungo's and before long the ones badly hurt were levitated off. Ones less hurt were told to sit down and a Medi-Witch would be with them as soon as
possible. Which was true, they'd barely sat down before they came down and led them off to get healed. Albus Dumbledore made an appearance, Sirius and Remus wished they could say they were surprised but they weren't.

"How is he?" asked Albus, he looked slightly bewildered but at what they couldn't say.

"He's just been taken in," said Sirius, they would still be assessing him to make sure to catch all the severe injuries that needed immediate attention were seen to first. He knew the routine well, despite the fact he had been unconscious when he was taken in for assessment half a year ago now. It was hard to believe, time had gone so quickly, he and Remus had gotten a close call, which made him more determined to be careful. Especially when it came to Remus' life.

"Did he say anything to you?" asked Albus, he was hopeful to get some news out of this tragedy.

"Albus, he's in extremely bad shape, he might not make it." said Remus grimly, shaking his head in irritation, Albus could be down right insensitive at times. "This isn't a time to get information; you should just be glad he's back, anything he may have learned can and should wait."

"Of course," said Albus contritely. "Do not get me wrong I am worried about him…without a spy I find it rather difficult. I want to know what Voldemort is up to."

"We all do, it doesn't mean we want to pry information from a wizard who's hurting." said Sirius, he would have been furious if it was Remus. "Is James and Nick alright?"

"Both are fine, Nick kept a steady nerve and fought bravely, I'm really proud of him." said Albus beaming in delight, he was getting there, before long he would be able to take on the Death Eaters by himself. Maybe one day soon he could take on Voldemort and beat him as he was prophesied to.

"Thank Merlin for that," said Sirius relieved, beside him Remus sagged in relief at the news as well.

"If you wish to leave I'll keep you updated," said Albus, sitting down himself.

"No, we are staying; we want to know how he is. No matter how long it takes, but you can head back to Hogwarts, Albus, we'll be fine." said Sirius, knowing the Headmaster's game.

"No, no I shall remain as well, Minerva can keep an eye on things at Hogwarts." said Albus.

Just then another wave of Auror's and one red headed wizard flooded in, but none of them were hurt, in fact they made their way directly to Remus and Sirius asking how the wizard was. They had cards, flowers, chocolates and other knickknacks for the Auror to let him know he was being thought of in this tough time.

"It's not going to be easy, laddies." said Alastor grimly. "He might take a while to recover from the Imperious curse; we don't know what they've made him do."

"I know, I just hope they didn't make him hurt someone," said Tonks.

"I wouldn't be surprised if they did," said Smith bitterly, Death Eaters were disgusting creatures.

"He's here now that's all that matters, I'm sure between us all he can recover fully," said Arthur. He hoped Shacklebolt was alright, not only was he a brilliant Auror, fantastic order member but a good friend. He hadn't held out much hope that he would be found, but they weren't out of danger yet, since Sirius and Remus had quickly explained how bad he was. Broken bones were dangerous things; it could lead to amputations if they weren't dealt with immediately. With the Imperious
curse on him he was walking with it. They could of course banish the bones, but there would be nothing they could do for the nerve damage, at least not yet but Potions were making leaps and bounds. Harry Peverell was doing so much for that community, he was impressed. The whole Ministry was constantly talking about him and his accomplishments, and his medals since he'd been awarded the Order of Merlin at such a young age too.

"We can only pray to Merlin that that's true." said Sirius sincerely.

Everyone went tense worried silence; the only noise heard was from the Medi-Wizards and Witches calling for people. Also the quiet crying of the children complaining of ailments having been caught in the crossfire between the Death Eaters and the Order.

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St. Mungo's Hospital For Magical Maladies

Arthur had to leave since his wife would have worried to death if he hadn't. Sirius knew from personal experience just how loud Molly could be if she even remotely worried, so wasn't surprised Arthur was the first to leave. The others followed after a few hours, when they were falling asleep waiting to hear back from the Healers. Sirius and Remus were exhausted as well, but weren't giving up on him. He had no family and nobody would be here for him so it was up to them to help him. A familiar face when you were in the hospital helped a lot.

"I'm going for coffee, would you like one?" asked Remus, as he jerked awake once again.

"I wouldn't mind." murmured Sirius, sitting up straighter, rubbing at his eyes. "I'll be outside, I need to get some cool air or I'm going to pass out."

"Alright," said Remus setting off once again to get a couple of coffees for them. It was a testament to how exhausted Sirius was that he was drinking coffee. He didn't drink coffee unless he was worried, stressed or shattered. If they had company he'd force himself to take a few sips, other than that zilch.

Sirius stepped outside, sighing softly; he'd expected to hear from the Healers by this. The state Kingsley was in, no news was in fact good news. He'd obviously survived the worst of it, but he obviously wasn't out of the woodworks or someone would have been by to see them. Staring down at his watch, he realized they'd been there for sixteen hours; daylight would soon be breaking out above the clouds. It was five AM and they hadn't had a moments sleep between them, of course they weren't the only ones in the emergency room awaiting news. Family of the other wounded people were there, but all things considered there had been no fatalities so all was good.

Shivering at the cold, which was invigorating with how tired he was, he headed back in just in time to see Remus returning with their coffee. Sitting down he accepted the cup suppressing a tired yawn, blowing on it in a bid to cool it down so it didn't scald his tongue.

"Are you the gentlemen that brought in Kingsley Shacklebolt?" asked a Healer making his way over. Sirius and Remus recognized him as one of the Healers who had taken Kingsley to be assessed.

"Yes, I'm Sirius Black, this is my partner Remus Lupin, I am an Auror and a good friend of Kingsley's." said Sirius, and if he had to pull the Auror card to get information he would do it.

"How is he?" asked Remus.
"I am healer Strout, I remember you both," she said nodding at them, "Auror Shacklebolt is out of danger, he's been sent up to the IC ward so he can be closely monitored. Even with a Fever-Reducing Potion his temperature is staying extremely elevated. We've done all we can to bring it down, but we must keep an eye on it if it gets higher it could be fatal. He's on a course of antibiotics which will help bring his fever down as well. Now his arm and leg have been patched up but not healed, he had many internal injuries and his internal organs are shook up enough with the amount of damage done by the Cruciatus Curse. Once his fever is down and if he doesn't have any seizures we will be getting his arm and leg fixed as soon as possible."

"Are the seizures permanent?" asked Remus his eyes shadowed with worry; Shacklebolt loved being an Auror, if he had anything like seizures that would be him on permanent desk duty.

"I'm sorry, I cannot say for sure, we will just have to keep an eye on him." said Healer Strout.

"How is he...you know, mentally?" asked Sirius wearily, the professional Auror nowhere to be seen, it rarely was when it was one of their own or family.

"He hasn't regained conscious yet, he had a haemorrhage which we are keeping an eye on. To know for sure, we will have to wait on him waking up. He won't be for at least twelve hours we've given him a very strong pain relief potion." said Healer Strout, as much as she wished she could give them good news, she couldn't. As a healer, it wasn't worth her job to give them false platitudes, no, it was better to tell the truth, for better or for worse.

"Thank you, Healer Strout," said Remus smiling wearily.

"My suggestions is go and get some sleep, nobody will be getting in to see him until we have been able to fully assess him." said Strout, he could be extremely violent upon wakening, he had been held prisoner for the past two months according to the records from the Ministry when he'd been declared missing.

"Thank you for everything," said Sirius, swallowing thickly, being injured months ago had given him a new respect for the Healers. Hundreds of people injured and they'd more or less saved everyone who had come through their doors still breathing. They'd had help, but during tough times communities did come together and help each other.

"It's my duty," said Strout, she would have done it regardless, especially since he was an Auror, they risked their life every day to help them all. During these dark times, Auror's was all that stood between them here and now and anarchy and pandemonium.

"Come on, Remy," murmured Sirius his shoulders hunched as the exhaustion grew to unbearable portions. "Bye." he added before Apparating to Grimmauld Place.

"I could sleep for a year," confessed Remus tiredly, as he began to disrobe, his bed had been calling him for the past nine hours. Sliding into bed, with nothing but his boxer shorts on, this was what he slept in. He was warmer than Sirius, so he didn't need to wear anything. Although Sirius usually did, but not tonight, as he flopped on the bed and he was out like a light. Rolling his eyes, he slumped into bed and covered them before he too was out for the count.

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Grimmauld Place - Sirius & Remus

"Well that's it, the entire house has been searched from top to bottom," said Sirius, throwing an expensive trinket at the wall, one his mother would have gone berserk at him for touching never
mind breaking. A lot of things had changed, but his short temper certainly wasn't it. He would put up with a short temper as long as he didn't end up with the 'Black madness' as it was coined. Four generations ago it had been the 'Gaunt madness' descendants of Salazar Slytherin in their bid to keep their 'blood' as pure as possible took inner breeding a step too far. It resulted in lunacy; it's as if they had a synapse in their brain missing that caused them to descend into insanity.

"What about the dungeons?" asked Remus, maybe they'd find a room down there that they didn't know about. Or that Sirius had forgotten about? Who knew? He wasn't the one who had lived there all their lives; although Sirius hated it most of the place had been refurbished.

"Nothing, all the walls were broken in to give you room to move as Moony." said Sirius, "Well the Potions lab is there, but it was a makeshift one, Snape created it the last year of the war. He can sense dark magic and would have gotten rid of it, if he remembered it he would have said."

"Have you noticed Kreacher taking things?" asked Remus, currently watching the House Elf creeping down the hall with a handful of things. As soon as he was mentioned he popped away, could he know something they didn't? Plans immediately began forming in his mind.

"Yes pieces of junk," said Sirius rolling his eyes, sighing in defeat, he had been hoping to do this, for Harry. He'd let him down so often, this had been his way to prove he wanted to be part of Harry's life. He had a feeling Harry merely tolerated him some times; he would choose to go away with someone else to discuss stuff before coming to him. He'd confessed his thoughts to Remus, who had suggested he read some Potions books, so he could converse with Harry regarding an art he loved so much. The idea had been distasteful at first, but remembering seeing Harry leaving with the other Potions Masters made him realize Remus had a point. So his plan was tonight raid the Black library and begin to read, it would be worth it if he could just talk to Harry without past getting in the way.

"Sirius, I want to try something…promise me you won't get angry at him, just treat him with some respect please?" asked Remus his voice calculating and calm. He wanted the House Elf to cooperate, and to do that he couldn't let either of them get at the others throats. He had a feeling deep in his bones that there was something they were missing, Regulus didn't have anywhere else to stay, and the Horcrux had to be here. "Did Kreacher get along with Regulus?" asked Remus suddenly.

"What are you on about?" asked Sirius baffled by Remus' sudden interest in Kreacher, he'd always been exasperated by his kindness to the bloody thing, it was trouble and he hated him. He would have let him go but it was too dangerous, he knew too much about the Order. "Course the thing liked Regulus, they all did." added Sirius, without his usual disgust when it came to his brother. The residual words written in that book could nearly still reduce him to tears. He'd become a Death Eater yes, but his little brother had regretted it. That's what mattered and he had tried to fix it, he'd thought Voldemort only had one Horcrux. If he had, his brother would have been the hero who brought Voldemort down, that would have been a way to have the light shine on the Black name for the first time. It would have also spared his godsons from a life of difficulty, and they both did have a difficult life just in different ways. Nick had been spoiled, and it had crashed down around him when he realized what the world wanted of him. He was still scared, that was obvious but he was determined to see it through. He'd said to Nick if he wasn't scared then he was suicidal. Anyone that wasn't scared before a battle, Sirius had confessed, was lying. Being scared helped, it stopped you getting overconfident.

"Siri, I think he might know where it is," explained Remus.

"What…let's go!" said Sirius already moving out of the living room.
"No, wait, listen to me, you cannot go in there and demand from him, he will lie and get defensive, we need to get him on side." said Remus.

"He can't lie," said Sirius shaking his head staring at Remus.

"He will work around it, Sirius, please, for me?" asked Remus, he just wanted to do this his way. "If it doesn't work then we do it your way. You draw more flies with honey than vinegar."

Sirius paused, this was important with Remus; he didn't normally stick to his guns so ardently. "Alright, we'll try it your way, but I can't promise anything, you know how I hate the damn House Elf."

"Just try," said Remus, "It's all I can ask."

"Okay." said Sirius in agreement. "Let's get going then."

Remus didn't need to use a spell to figure out where Kreacher had disappeared to. Although he didn't like how they were treated, since he too was considered a 'creature' and stared at in disgust by the general population. Thanks to his association with the Order and the Auror's as well as Dumbledore, nobody had the guts to really say anything. Especially not with Sirius around, nobody had dared to, if anyone had tried they would have know all about it. The cupboard he used as a den, which was right next to the kettle. Remus opened the door, to find the House-Elf inside, feigning sleep, the items he stole apparently nowhere in sight.

Remus threw Sirius a look, 'do not screw this up' he was their best chance of finding this damn Horcrux. Kreacher knew every inch of this bloody house; he cleaned it after all...or rather went around cleaning barely enough muttering darkly under his breath. He could hear everything he said, but refused to tell Sirius, knowing how his hot-headed partner would do.

Taking a deep breath, his mind thought about how to deal with this. Then suddenly he was thinking about Harry and how he'd been with the House-Elves, Dobby and Rose was it? He wasn't exactly sure, but he realized he would have to be kind. It's what Harry would do, and if he found out he'd alienated a chance to find the Horcrux he would blow a fuse.

"Kreacher? I'd like to talk to you, please sit up." said Sirius, a grimace set on his face. He did not like being nice to the House Elf at all. He kept reminding himself it was for Harry and Nick, mostly Harry, he'd do this, and he would have his godson's pride. He'd done worse things at the end of the day, right? Yes...no...maybe, it didn't matter he was doing it and that was that.

"Yes Nasty Master Black?" muttered Kreacher, his bloodshot eyes glaring down his nose at him.

Sirius literally had to bite his tongue; this was harder than he thought it would be. "If you are honest with me, I will give you ten items of your choosing to keep, anything in the house." said Sirius, he could keep it all, as long as he didn't come across it actually for all he cared.

Kreacher stared at his Master barely able to comprehend what he was saying quite reluctantly. "Yes, Master Black."

Crouching down, face to face with the Elf, he was probably the last one to ever see his brother alive and he found himself desiring answers more than getting into a shouting match. "Did Regulus ask you to do anything, Kreacher?"

"No sir," murmured the House Elf, his shifty eyes not able to meet his current Master's eyes.

"Did he ask you to keep it quiet?" Sirius wondered out loud, the quick look the Elf gave him
confirmed his suspicions. Swallowing thickly, he was right; Regulus had let the House Elf in on whatever he had been doing. Perhaps he did have the Horcrux and had been protecting it or something unaware of what it was.

"Kreacher I know about the Horcrux, I know Regulus found one, its very dark magic, it shouldn't be tampered with where is it?" asked Sirius. He hoped it wasn't drawn out, they would be leaving to see Kingsley in just under twenty minutes with any luck. They didn't know if he would be awake, or if they would be allowed to see him or how his mental state was going to be. They'd slept for seven hours then began to search every room in the house to make up for lost time, not that it had been productive until now. Now they had hope that Kreacher knew something they didn't.

Kreacher didn't answer, just continued to sit hunched over in his cupboard.

"Regulus wanted it destroyed Kreacher, so do we," said Remus, holding his breath, waiting for something, anything to happen. Merlin Kreacher had to help them, he just had to otherwise they were stuck.
Chapter 74

Invisible

Chapter 74

Horcruxes and Holidays

Kreacher stared at Black and Lupin, the blood traitors and the werewolf, his disgust temporarily halted. His wheezing breath was all that could be heard in the room. Kreacher didn’t know if he could trust them, the blood traitor was never kind to him. He couldn’t help but eye him distrustfully; what if he was wrong and they didn’t destroy it? He would never be able to do Master Regulus’ last wish. He couldn’t live with himself if that happened, he didn’t know what to do. His breath became even more ragged and wheezy sounding, but his eyes never left the two wizards.

“Kreacher…if you wish, you can keep it until we are due to destroy it then do it yourself.” said Remus in a last ditch attempt to find out if he had it or not. “We cannot do it for a few weeks, the ingredient used to destroy it isn’t here, and it’s with the others who want to destroy them too.”

“We just need to know if you have it, I swear on my magic I won’t steal it from you and allow you to watch or do the deed that destroys it.” said Sirius seriously, magic flashed through him, warning him to hold to his words - or the consequences would be most severe.

Kreacher’s eyes widened in shock, as the magic linked them together in their oath. He could barely believe the blood traitor was that desperate for the locket. He had no choice but to trust the blood traitor now, especially if he could fulfil his great Master Regulus’ last wish. His Master Regulus wanted it destroyed, he’d ordered him to do it, he’d failed, and he had tried everything he could. Kreacher rocked back and forth unconsciously, his mind whirling as he tried to think the best way to go. He couldn’t lie to the traitorous Black, oh the shame his poor mistress; she hated having him here in the house. Oh Master Regulus, he’d loved the traitor and his Mistress more than his own life. It’s why he’d made him keep silent about his absence, his poor Mistress didn’t get to bury her child. It had killed her, it had. Poor, poor Master Regulus, he had to do this, and if the traitor didn’t live up to his words…he would do his best to see his end brought to him. His eyes stiffened in resolve, a wicked gleam coming to them but neither Remus nor Sirius could see it since he was staring at the floor, his hand over his large head. He wouldn’t though; the traitor wouldn’t want to lose his magic.

Climbing back into his cupboard he lifted up his pathetic makeshift blanket and fished for one particular item not even looking at the rest he’d stashed here. He tensed when the werewolf summoned a box, grasping onto the locket extremely defensive. Refusing to turn around for a few seconds, before extremely reluctant, he turned to face them eyeing them with suspicion and wariness.

“This box is for your chosen items, Kreacher,” said Remus, looking at the House-Elf with sympathy; he knew how it felt to be treated with such disgust. It wasn’t fair or right, and he hated himself for never really caring before. Summoning the items from under his bed, he let them float into the box, which was larger inside thanks to a nifty little charm. He’d created it sixteen years ago, using his hands to build it, not magic. He had to do something when Sirius was away, and when Sirius found out he gave him a big workshop filled with various woods. He knew Sirius had done it to keep him in and safe, when he was sick after transforming each month while Sirius went out to look for Pettigrew or doing various things for the Order. Unfortunately they had left the flat and came back here, since then he hadn’t had a chance or the time to craft. Remus closed the lid; he
used magic to make the cupboard bigger and placed a proper mattress in it. It was the least they could do, it was all too apparent just how loyal the House Elf was to the Black family. Even if he couldn’t stand him or any of the Order members. Picking up a napkin from the table he transfigured it into a blanket before placing it in the cupboard ignoring the incredulity and disgust from the House-Elf.

“You can have whatever you want,” said Sirius, his gaze fixated on the locket clutched tightly in the House-Elf’s hand. He had no doubt it was what they were looking for…the evilness and blackness pouring off it in waves was quite alarming. He could feel the blackness calling to him, making him feel impure, angry and that’s from where he was. It was little wonder the House-Elf was as vicious as he was if he’d been in its presence for what? Eighteen or nineteen years nearing. It needed sealed away, in something where its influence couldn’t be reached.

“We need…” stared Sirius.

“I know,” said Remus before he could finish. “I’m not sure there’s anything that can dampen its affects…I can’t think of a spell can you?”

“I’m not sure, but I do know it won’t work on the locket itself. Not that I want to put anything on it, it might cause a reaction we aren’t prepared for considering we have no idea how they really work.” said Sirius, his brow furrowed. He didn’t want to accidentally create two Voldemort’s running about! One was enough for him, so it had to be put in something and placed somewhere nobody would get to it. Although he didn’t think Kreacher would let it out of his sight.

“Accio box,” said Sirius, it was the old one he’d kept his Order of Merlin in, it was now just sitting amongst the other jewellery he had in a small makeshift jewellery box in his room which was cluttered untidily he wasn’t one for wearing a lot of it. “Alright, first things first shielding charm.” said Sirius casting it, tapping on the box nodding in satisfaction, before standing there, tapping the wand against his bottom lip thoughtfully.

“Dampening charm,” said Remus, adding his own his amber eyes alight with the challenge of making it secure for a fortnight. “I can’t think of anything else…you?”

“No, nothing,” said Sirius scratching his head, what else could they do? Notice me not spells weren’t particularly useful in this case. They wanted to keep it found, not ending up losing it again, they’d spent ages trying to get to it. He didn’t want to put blood wards on it or magical ones, just in case anything Merlin forbid, happened to him before they got the chance to destroy it. He might not have acted it all the time, but dealing with death on a daily basis had made him cautious. One moment someone could be doing something as ordinary as shopping then next gone. A badly misaimed spell or a spell intended for them or even an outright attack. Just like them yesterday, which got him sidetracked thinking about Kingsley. Shrugging his shoulders he placed an intruder alert spell in the box, so if it was opened he would know.

“Place the locket in there, Kreacher,” said Sirius deeply reluctant to touch it, he’d been surrounded by dark magic his entire life. He had forced himself away from it, becoming literally the Black sheep of the family, but he would always have an affinity to the Dark Art’s. He under no circumstances going to tempt himself, although he would never actually want another Voldemort around but the Dark Art’s were a seductive sirens call. Once it was in he snapped it closed, there, he’d got a Horcrux, he felt inordinately smug with himself. Harry would have to be proud of that surely; then again he’d destroyed three? Two? He was ahead of them either way, but he did hope that Harry would look at him with pride or happiness just once. Mostly when he saw him he kept his face blank, other than the day he was surrounded by his friends, Cedric, Luna, Cho, Fleur, Neville, Viktor, Lukas? He wasn’t sure about Fleur’s or Viktor’s partners they had foreign names.
“Here, keep it safe, Kreacher, I promise you soon it will be destroyed.” said Sirius, unable to believe how his life was turning out. Ten years ago he would have laughed his arse off at anyone who said he’d be relying on his damn House-Elf or speaking kindly to it. His help though had indeed been invaluable, that locket would have remained undiscovered…the thought gave him cold shivers. He couldn’t imagine a third war with Voldemort, he’d killed so many people…the magical world was barely surviving this time around without adding on one in the future. No it ended now, here and now before he was too old to do his part. He swore he would help Harry track down all the Horcruxes. It was funny really, Harry was the one hunting down the Horcruxes, yet it was Nick destined to defeat Voldemort. The prophecy stated he not they, could Harry be….surely not? Lily had been in the room when it happened; she saw it with her own eyes, so obviously Nick had performed the miraculous feat. Was there a chance she was wrong?

“ius…Sirius…Siri!” shouted Remus, resorting to punching Sirius on the chest staring at his partner deeply concerned by his paling features.

“What?” cried Sirius indignantly, rubbing at the spot where Remus had hit him.

“Are you alright? I’ve been calling you for the past five minutes.” said Remus, his amber eyes alight with concern. “Are you worried about Kingsley?”

“Yes,” lied Sirius, his mind still dwelling on the disturbing possibility of Lily being wrong. They were twins, and she could have been mistaken. Nearly losing her family that night could have made her slightly disorientated…but there was no way to find out. It was sixteen years ago the incident happened, the children couldn’t remember and he certainly wasn’t going to ask Lily. Still the niggling doubt wouldn’t leave him alone.

“Well come on, let’s go and see him.” stated Remus, he didn’t like when Sirius got quiet and brooding. He was used to his foolhardy, silly joker of a wizard. Although he had been gone for a while when they realized everything they’d done to Harry…it had come back when he’d started seeing Harry on a…semi regular basis, had the whole forgiving thing going on.

Sirius nodded his head, as he went out to retrieve his travel cloak, trying to stop himself dwelling on it. He was being stupid, surely, but what if it was true? What if Harry should have been declared the ‘Boy-Who-Lived?’ it meant Nick had the acclamation for something he didn’t do. The prophecy or Harry being the one who had to defeat Voldemort never crossed his mind. “Let’s go.” said Sirius, ready as he clipped it around his neck. Perhaps some time concentrating on Shack would help him take his mind off it. They would think he was utterly mad if he brought it up…maybe he was - maybe he was also just reading too much into it.

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Sirius had used his status as an Auror to find out where Kingsley Shacklebolt’s room was. It turned out that he was still very much near the IC room on the fourth floor, but in a side room, which gave him privacy, or as much as he could get with a Medi-Wizard watching over him. This was a good thing though, it meant he was out of severe danger, and there were always three to five healers in the IC main ward. Keeping an eye on all of their patients, once they’d done all they could for them at any rate, just trying to keep them alive.

“How is he?” asked Sirius entering the room, staring appreciative of the wizard sitting there in his lime green uniform. He wasn’t sure he wanted the answer to his question or not, he was glad nobody else was here, thinking about Albus Dumbledore and his words yesterday. Thankfully the hospital didn’t drop its rules even for a member of the Wizengamot, chief warlock or not. He noticed everything everybody had brought was there, and other items that were definitely new. Most assuredly from the gift shop which was above them on level six along with a café where people could get something to eat. It’s where Remus had gone like ten times last night to get
“Are you family?” enquired the Medi-wizard seriously, standing up professionally.

“I am an Auror, Auror Black, how is he?” asked Sirius, drawing himself up straight, he wouldn’t take any nonsense he wanted to know how his friend was.

“Has his temperature gone down? I know they were really concerned about that?” Remus asked, after placing a comforting hand on his partners shoulder, calming him down and preventing him from doing anything silly. Unfortunately Sirius had a terrible temper, not a violent one, but he did get irritated quickly and would shout out at the world until he was blue in the face. Although he wasn’t as bad as he used to be, and he thanked his lucky stars for that.

“We succeeded in bringing it down,” said Micah grimly, it had gotten extremely elevated after Healer Stouts shift. They’d had no choice but to use the crude method, casting cooling charms wasn’t working and they couldn’t give him any more potions to reduce his fever. Ice and a cold bath had been necessary, but it had worked wonders and now it was nearly back to normal. From experience he knew that it wouldn’t be back to normal for a few days at least, but he was out of danger that was the most important thing. Although it had been extremely difficult, since the Auror had seizures during it. Since giving him Eileen’s potion two hours ago, his shaking and seizures had stopped. They would have given him it earlier but they had used all the potions they could, the potion would have badly interacted with the other potions, especially the pain relieving potion. The Healers and Medi-wizards main concern remained even now the Auror’s mental state.

“Has he woken up?” asked Sirius his blue eyes shadowed with fear and genuine concern.

“No, the pain reliever has been out of his system for two nearing three hours now, he will wake up when he’s ready.” said Micah. “His body has been through serious trauma, never mind what potential damage there has been mentally.”

Healer Percius and Healer Smith had estimated how long he’d been under the Imperious Curse by taking in the extent of the pressure on his wounds. Being cursed and left lying there didn’t cause the amount of pressure on the bones that they had found, no it was by having someone seriously injured under the Imperious Curse and forcing them to do things. They were thankful that the damage wasn’t much, which meant he hadn’t been under the curse for longer than twenty-four hours. It didn’t make the mental trauma any less severe though. He had been tortured and kept prisoner by You-Know-Who, most people didn’t survive. From the bodies he’d seen it was a good thing. They already had a mind healer lined up for him to talk to, he would definitely need it. Thankfully he was already aware of Shacklebolt, since he was the one who spoke to the Auror’s regularly as part of their obligation if they wanted to remain an Auror, it was compulsory.

“So you don’t know how he is,” said Sirius, his heart sinking, before remembering “What about the haemorrhage?”

“The bleeding and swelling has reduced significantly, there is no visible danger,” said Micah.

“Thank you,” said Remus, turning to face the unconscious Auror. His arm and leg were held together in a splint keeping it secure against movement. He looked very thin, he probably hadn’t had anything to eat in a long time, sighing softly, and he sat down feeling useless.

“No problem,” said Micah. “My name is Medi-wizard Micah.”

“Nice to meet you,” said Sirius, “This is my partner Remus Lupin.” introducing him since he hadn’t been introduced yet.
Micah nodded silently before retaking his seat, keeping an eye on the time, a long line of potions just directly to his left. He couldn’t leave the room, in the IC part of the ward no patient was ever allowed to be by themselves, not even for a few minutes. So if he needed the toilet or went to lunch, he had to Patronus someone to come in first. Regardless, he tried to look busy so he could give the men some semblance of privacy with their friend.

Remus observed all the potions; he knew what a few of them were, but Sirius, why he was completely clueless. Potions wasn’t his forte, what he’d learned in school he’d forgotten when he got the grades he desired to get into the Auror academy. He prayed Shack would wake up intact, he didn’t deserve this, he was one of the best Auror’s they had, an active participating in the Order, always there for a friend and a good man.

“You alright?” asked Remus once again. He was so quiet; too quiet really it was daunting to say the least.

“Yeah,” whispered Sirius, staring at Shack, he just wished he had been able to get to him quicker, but unfortunately they had no idea where he was staying. Voldemort didn’t have any property registered in his name, to check the homes of all suspected Death Eaters was illegal unless they had probable cause. With Malfoy gone, as well as his ‘inner circle’ they were at a loss. Even Dumbledore had no possible idea, probably why he was so eager to get to Shack, as if he would have any idea where they took him.

“He’ll be alright, he’s strong.” said Remus, wishing he could be certain of his own thoughts.

“I hope…” began Sirius before freezing, a loud guttered groan passed Shacklebolt’s lips.

“I need you to step out,” said Micah immediately, his patronus sailing through the door heading straight for the Auror’s healer. They had no idea what his mental state was going to be like, if he would realize he was safe or if it would take weeks to get through to the Auror.

“No!” yelled Kingsley jerking away, trying his best to get off the bed, screaming at the wizard trying to subdue him.

“Easy, you are safe Auror Shacklebolt, you are in St. Mungo’s.” said Micah, his big build coming in handy in keeping the confused wizard in the bed. He didn’t want to have to bind him, but if he didn’t stop struggling it’s exactly what he would have to do. He’d been kept prisoner, to bind him would cause him more trauma on top of what he suffered so it had been made clear to him that it was a very last resort only by the mind healer.

Kingsley didn’t listen, his struggles continued, as he kept roaring angrily desperately wanting free.

Sirius and Remus were watching from the door completely horrified, they’d never seen the wizard like this before. It caused them pain to see him this way. They jumped when some of the potions on the nightstand smashed as his hand swiped at them as he continued to struggle. It got to the point where Sirius couldn’t watch it anymore; screwing the Medi-wizard’s orders he went back into the room.

In desperation Sirius pressed his hand against Shack’s mouth preventing him from screaming before saying clearly into his ear. “Shack its’ me Sirius, calm down now, you are safe, I’ve got you, your in hospital. Easy, they’ll have to bind you if you don’t stop struggling. That’s it shack, calm down, you’re safe, we’ve got you.” removing his hand when his friend stopped struggling, obviously part of him was there and understood him. He was so relieved; they could deal with whatever was wrong with him if he was still with them.
Wincing in pain, he had to stop himself from yelping in agony as Shack grabbed onto his arm and squeezed painfully.

“Drink this Auror Shacklebolt,” said Micah, pressing a vial to the wizard’s lips, trying to get him to drink the pain reliever. Inwardly cursing when the vial was swiped away, smashing on the floor. Temporarily letting him go, relieved when the Auror didn’t try and fight him. He seemed to be responding to Sirius Black very well, but having someone familiar would help him he supposed. Flicking his wand at the mess he cleared up all the broken bottles and splattered potions.

For the first time in what felt like years, Kingsley opened his eyes and saw daylight, before didn’t count since he’d been clouded…under the Imperious Curse. His wide terror filled eyes looked around, dimming slightly before relief splashed across his features. He was back, he’d survived, he could barely believe it, his brown eyes simmered with tears he refused to let fall. Not in front of someone he respected, he didn’t care how understanding he was.

“Are you back with us?” asked Sirius, from where he sat perched on the side of his bed, his arm still uncomfortably squeezed in Shacklebolt’s hold. He didn’t care really, just as long as he was alright that’s all that mattered.

Kingsley winced trying to lick his dry lips before simply nodding, his throat hurt terribly. “How…long?” he rasped dreading the answer. Closing his eyes as he remembered them trying to break him, no, he couldn’t think about it. He just couldn’t…he was safe here, he’d made it through.

“Nearly two months,” said Sirius, smiling in thanks to Remus when his partner handed him a plastic cup with fresh water in it. “Here, drink it,” putting his best Auror voice on, since it had worked so far.

Kingsley guzzled the water down thirstily, sighing in relief, before wincing as agony lanced through him.

“Pain reliever!” demanded Sirius; he didn’t know which was which so he couldn’t exactly just pluck one from the cabinet.

“Here,” said Micah handing the vial over, not about to argue since Black seemed to be able to help the wizard calm down. It was the most important thing right now, it came before anything else. He seemed to be stronger than any of them anticipated; this was also a good thing.

This time the Auror did not protest, he took the potion, and after a few tense seconds his body relaxed as the pain left him completely. Looking down at his body, confusion filled him, for the past month his body hadn’t stopped shaking, other than when he’d been under the Imperious Curse and his actions and reactions hadn’t been his own. “The shaking, it’s stopped…how?”

Sirius frowned, Eileen’s potion was well known, how could he forget about it…unless he had some memory impairment. “Eileen’s potion…do you not remember it? My godson created it.” asked Sirius concerned.

“Before you got taken what was the last thing you remember?” asked Remus, ignoring the healers standing in the doorway observing the scene. They’d been here since Sirius had managed to calm Shack down, but they hadn’t said anything. He only knew because he could smell them.

“I don’t know, I can’t think, can’t remember,” said Shacklebolt his eyes widening in horror.

“Calm down, everything will come back at its own time, you had a knock to the head.” said Healer Smith entering the room. One was putting it mildly, he’d probably repeatedly hit his head each time the Crucius curse was cast on him. He wasn’t surprised by the fact he couldn’t remember
much. It would come back in time; he may always suppress what happened to him while he was held captive. The human mind still surprised him though, so he couldn’t say for one hundred percent certainty. It’s why he liked being neurohealer, the head one in fact. He dealt with the matters of the mind, the brain it was his speciality, and how spells affected it.

“Will you give us a few minutes, please?” said Healer Smith respectfully.

Sirius looked at the healer before gazing at Shacklebolt.

“I’ll be fine,” said Shacklebolt, releasing the grip he had on Sirius’ arm belatedly realizing he was clinging to him like a lost little boy. Now that it had been mentioned there were gaps in his mind… things he couldn’t remember and that terrified him for reasons he didn’t quite understand. He couldn’t find it in himself to get worked up, there must have been a calming draught mixed in with that pain reliever.

“I’ll be back soon,” said Sirius.

“We’ll be right outside the door.” added Remus patting Shack’s arm giving him some silent support.
Chapter 75

Invisible

Chapter 75

Holiday Fun

“I told you the spell wouldn’t be enough,” said Harry, his lips pursed to stop himself from laughing. They were on their second day of the cruise, tomorrow they would actually be docking. He was looking forward to it; despite the fact the rest had been rather refreshing. Sev hadn’t let him pick up more than one book and it wasn’t an educational one, Harry found he didn’t mind it was nice just sitting around in the sun doing nothing other than talking to one another. Or going to the club at night, and having a few drinks. He wasn’t used to it, having nothing to do; he was used to his day being filled completely then falling into bed exhausted at night. At Hogwarts he’d read everything he could get his hands on, and then came the tournament. Which made him read more trying to figure out how to survive it. Then it was a maze of studying and brewing for his O.W.L’s and Mastery, which did at one point become too much for him to handle. He’d honestly felt if he read one more book his head was literally going to explode. Then before he knew it he had passed his Mastery and he’d been able to relax slightly.

Severus just looked at Harry drolly, before wincing in pain; the sunburn was down the entire length of his back and chest. He hadn’t felt anything when he went to sleep last night, but this morning he felt as though he was suffocating. His body felt like one big huge blister. He had stupidly tried to go for a shower; he’d lasted all of two seconds before jumping out of it in shock.

“Do you want me to go down to the shop and get a potion?” asked Harry sombrely, his amusement fading.

“Paying double for watered down second rate potions? No thank you.” said Severus his sneer evident. He didn’t trust potions, at least none he hadn’t brewed himself at any rate. Rummaging around in the drawer looking at his long sleeved top in disgust. He dreaded putting it on, he could just imagine how agitated his skin would be at something on it.

“Lie down,” said Harry raking in his bag, looking for something that would take the edge of Severus’ pain until he brewed something for him. Finding what he was looking for, after rummaging for around five minutes. He grinned in triumph; it looked as though Potion ingredients were once again going to save the day.

“I’ll brew the potion for you, it will only take half an hour;” said Harry as he scooped up a handful of pure Aloe Vera, there was no additives in it. They knew because it was from Prince Manor, the plant had been cut down to the root and the juice extracted from the large and small stems. Additives were a big no-no when it came to putting it in cauldrons full of different potion ingredients.

“I can brew myself, I’m not an invalid H---ahh, that feels good,” moaned Severus, as the Aloe Vera began to immediately soothe and take the heat from his back. Sighing softly, as those nimble fingers made quick but lingering work on his raw red back. He wasn’t used to people other than his
own mother looking out for him, but even at that he couldn’t stand too much of that. Biting his
tongue, unable to help his body’s reaction to the soft caresses.

Harry shook his head, grinning wryly; Severus had thought the spell would be enough to prevent
him getting sunburnt. He had of course warned him, since it had happened to him; it wasn’t strong
enough to stop you being burnt in such fiery weather. He’d thought Egypt was warm; it was
nothing on this climate. He couldn’t deny that he liked being this close to Severus, and looking
after him. Even if it was in such a minor way like helping him with this. “Sit up and turn over.”
said Harry when he’d put off long enough, he would have continued for as long as he could. At
least his arms hadn’t been burnt…but that’s only because he refused to bare them. Severus sat up
scooted down to the edge of the bed, his legs open allowing Harry get closer to him to put on the
Aloe Vera. His skin had never been burnt to such a degree before, or at all he made a habit of
staying out of the sun. It was why his skin was so pale and it was just fine with him.

“Will you let me try that unicorn blood?” asked Harry, touching the mark, showing Severus he not
at all repulsed by it. How could he be? When Severus had never been repulsed by any mark he
bore? He’d made that obvious. Harry shivered remembering how Severus had shown him. Merlin
he wanted a physical relationship so badly, but he would wait until Severus was ready. It was
ironic really, he was the younger of the two and he was waiting until Severus was ready. He knew
why though, it wasn’t just because of the whole Mastery thing; Severus thought he’d realize it
wasn’t love and just lust and leave. He didn’t understand why Severus had such a bad outlook of
himself, but considering the things he’d been through it didn’t surprise him. Severus was in for a
surprise, because he was in this for the long haul.

Severus watched Harry’s fingered trace the mark as though it was a fascinating tattoo. Just looking
at it made him want to rip it off his skin, he hated the constant reminder of the bad decisions he’d
made as a teenager. He’d tried everything he could think of to remove it. If Harry thought the
Unicorn blood would work, then why not give it a try? Although he wasn’t as hopeful, he didn’t
think anything other than Voldemort’s death would remove the mark of ownership he’d worn for
decades. “Why not?” conceded Severus, his voice showing just how pointless he believed it to be.

“Let’s get this done first, you look like a tomato.” said Harry snorting in an amused way. His left
hand grabbed the jar and his right hand scooped another handful up. Placing it back gently, not
wanting any of it to fall it took a lot of plant to get any decent amount of the liquid. He made quick
but efficient work with his front, paying more attention to his nipples than anywhere else.

Severus reached around Harry’s midsection and pulled him down onto his lap, causing a delicious
friction against his interested hardness. Forcefully bringing Harry’s head down to his, he
passionately and ardently investigated every nook and cranny of Harry’s mouth. It tasted of his
favourite Muggle drink, sprite, the taste of lemon and lime was strong. “I look like a what?” asked
Severus, his voice hitched and breathless.

“Nothing,” replied Harry, before he reclaimed Severus’ lips, not going to miss out on this
opportunity with talking. Talking was the last thing on his mind right now. Wrapping his arms
around Severus’ neck, glad it was no longer painful otherwise there activities would have definitely
been put off for weeks. Especially if Severus didn’t have the ingredients they needed to brew the
potion to remove his sunburn.

“Are you sure about that?” chuckled Severus, wickedly into his ear.

“Yep,” said Harry, drawing away, giving himself time to breathe, his body singing in anticipation.
The added bonus was they only had shorts on; it was too warm to sleep with anything. He’d never
felt this kind of anticipation with Viktor, and that was his first time. Sev already knew about his
time with Viktor, it seemed to have put some of his fears to rest but not all of them.

“Hmm,” murmured Severus, his voice reverberating on Harry’s lips causing them to become ticklish.

Harry drew back looking into Severus’ smouldering black eyes, wanting to be sure he wanted this as much as him. He had his answer with just one subtle look. Physically Severus did want it, and it seemed emotionally he was ready to take their relationship to a new level. How long had he been alone he was so insecure? And he was even if he didn’t show it...he was supposed to be the insecure one. That wasn’t right though was it? Everyone had insecurities, its how people dealt with it that showed what kind of person you were, and how the relationship would turn out. He was no means an expert, but it’s what he’d observed, from his friends budding relationships and the books he’d read. Shaking off those thoughts, definitely not wanting them in his head right now.

Harry moaned softly, as Severus’ lips attached themselves to his neck, arching it back, giving him all the room he desired. Harry’s breathing panted against Severus’ ear, and his straining erection stifled only by a pair of underwear causing the Slytherin’s lips to twitch in satisfaction. He’d realized Harry was exceeding easy to arouse, the simplest of touches could do it. It was little wonder having received precious little of it during his life; he wasn’t a touchy feely person, so god knows why Harry wanted him.

“What do you want, Harry?” Murmured Severus, sucking on a delicious piece of skin he found at Harry’s throat. His Adam’s apple bobbed up and down as Severus drew back, he knew without looking that it was completely red. His arms stalling Harry, preventing him from moving around too much. He didn’t want to end their first proper passionate night prematurely.

“Everything,” confessed Harry, kissing him once again on his thin lips, gasping at the feeling of those hands trailing up his back and chest. Shuddering in need, his toes curling in pleasure, he desperately latched onto Severus’ neck, inhaling his scent, which was slightly off due to the Aloe Vera. Although considering how Aloe Vera first smelt when it was first cut, this was completely acceptable. “Anything.” he added staring back up at Severus. His green eyes were bright with passion, love and most importantly impatience. He wanted to share absolutely everything with Severus, the good the bad and the very, very good.

“What?” asked Severus seductively, his chin brushing against Harry’s golden tanned throat. That was only two days in the sun; he wondered what Harry would be like by the time they went home.

“Mmm,” murmured Harry, pressing them both down on the bed. Harry’s sinful green eyes were gleaming wickedly. Many things Harry may be, but innocent he was not and Severus found himself grateful for that. Experienced or not, although it wasn’t much, he wasn’t about to allow someone to dominate him in bed.

“Oh no, I don’t think so.” said Severus, wincing slightly as he turned them both around, he felt like his skin got ripped and torn when he moved too quickly. He made a mental note not to let it happen, moving a lot slower until he was on top of Harry.

“Are you alright?” asked Harry breathlessly, looking concerned. His emotions were going haywire, mixing together in a cacophony of sorts but his worry for Severus was paramount to anything else.

“I will be,” replied Severus, the Aloe Vera would work wonders, he should have thought about it earlier. Not wanting to talk, he attacked Harry’s lips again before venturing further slowly. Smirking in amusement when Harry impatiently wiggled around on the bed, yet even as Harry continued to squirm Severus avoided the part of him that was most clamouring for his attention.
And it was clamouring for his attention, since it was almost standing straight up if the tent in front of him was anything to go by.

Stopping for a moment, causing confused green eyes to stare at him before they flared with a need so deep it almost took Severus’ breath away. Barely able to catch it, he removed Harry’s shorts then his own, desperate himself now for relief, but determined to make it last as long as possible.

“My fingers or a spell?” whispered Severus seductively his voice smug and velvety, staring down at Harry his eyebrow quirked in an enquiring manner.

Harry moaned at the image that presented, his time with Viktor had been cursory, but the feelings had been remembered the overwhelming sensations had blinded him to any pain he felt. Biting his lip, he nodded eagerly, reattaching his lips to Severus for a few seconds as he spread his legs further apart. To give him more than enough room to reach back. Part of him did want the spell, so he could feel that thick shaft pounding into him. Yet there was something so erotic and personal about being thoroughly stretched before being completely fucked.

Severus chuckled dryly, already knowing the answer to his question without words needing to be exchanged. With precision he opened the drawer to bedside cabinet and opened the bag and found what he was looking for. Since he was very precise where things were put. Especially when it came to his potions, uncorking it hastily with his teeth he placed it on the level wood and dipped his fingers into it.

Harry arched into the prodding fingers when they hit a spot deep inside him that made his entire body throb with need. Unable to say anything his mouth open, breathing harshly, this was the first time in three years he’d done anything. He’d been too busy to indulge in anything at all since he’d explored his sexuality with Viktor. Hell he’d hardly had the time to sleep, never mind masturbate. So it was no wonder his body was reacting so strongly, so sensually to everything Severus was doing.

“More,” panted Harry, pleadingly, arching up determinedly.

“So demanding,” murmured Severus, his need throbbing between them both, stimulated by Harry’s constant wiggling.

“Please,” begged Harry wiggling seductively, pouting.

Severus laughed in amusement, causing Harry to groan at the smooth chocolate-ly sound leaving his lovers lips. Lovers, Harry thought to himself, they were that now in every sense of the word. Part of him had wondered if it would ever happen he need not dwell on it anymore now. Noticing a moment he came out of his thoughts, immediately and automatically lifting his hips, which shook under the pressure, his body was too gone to put up with too much strain.

“Ready?” Severus said, positioning himself at Harry’s entrance his body tense with anticipation. There was nothing that could be compared to this. His mind was now wondering why he’d waited this long, his mind then went blank as a guttered moaned slipped passed his lips as Harry’s heat encompassed him. “I’ll take that as a yes.”

“Move.” demanded Harry arching up groaning in need, rasping out a choked gasp as his bared throat was bitten as Severus thrust into him in one single move causing the bundle of nerves deep inside him to be stimulated again. Such pleasure as it was, Harry came violently over both of them unable to prevent it. “Severus!” Harry shouted at the same time his eyes closed.

Severus moaned pressing his face into Harry’s neck, trying to prevent himself from coming so
soon, as his entire length was encased in the spasming silky walls. Eventually it calmed down and
gave him the ability to think back, and only then did he begin to move, thrusting in and out of
Harry, his mind buzzing and repeating over and over again the single word Harry had used. His
name, it was obviously not a one time thing for him...he truly felt all he had expressed on his
sixteenth birthday and it warmed his chilled heart.

Reaching between their bodies, he began to coax Harry into a full hardness, which wasn’t difficult
to do. After all he’d been slowly rising again for the past few minutes. The only sound that could
be heard was their moans, groans and Harry’s mews as Severus increased the tempo until his body
came explosively, Harry’s own followed shortly afterwards. Slumping on his side, his chest rapidly
moving up and down as he tried desperately to regain control of his erratic heartbeat. Reaching for
his wand, which was never far out of his sight, he waved it over them removing all trace of mess.

Harry’s bleary eyes opened for a few seconds before closing them, resting his head against
Severus’ chest and pulled the sheet up over himself. He could never sleep without something over
him, he didn’t know why but he couldn’t. Thankfully with the air conditioning always on, it didn’t
make it unbearably hot.

“Sleep, I’ll order some room service in a few hours,” Severus said quietly, barely able to keep his
own eyes open. Thankfully though his breathing had returned to some semblance of normalcy.
Shifting, he turned Harry over slightly so he wasn’t lying on his chest. Not only would it hurt like
blazes in a few hours after the Aloe Vera wore off, the sweat would cause them to stick together
and it truly was the last thing his chest needed right now as burnt as it was. He looked like the
bloody lobster he and Harry had shared for dinner on the first night of the boat. He wasn’t a big fan
of fish but he had to admit it was delicious.

“Humph,” hummed Harry, moving slightly before settling down again.

Severus wasted no time in following him, a few hours rest sounded very inviting.

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Severus’ black eyes opened, momentarily disorientated, wondering why on earth he was so
exhausted. The answer was snuggled into him, his head lying across his stomach. Internally
wincing, knowing it was going to be torture getting Harry off him. Thankfully he couldn’t feel too
much sweat, but it would still be difficult it just depended how long they’d been sleeping. Although
if he was honest, the sunburn didn’t hurt, but he knew it wouldn’t last forever. Stretching his hand
out, he managed to grab onto his wand between his pointer and middle finger. It wobbled for a few
seconds before his fingers tightened their hold, and he had it properly within his grasp. Quietly
flicking his wand and saying the incantation for the time, he looked at the large hovering red
digits. Surprise flickered over his features; they’d been sleeping for five hours, five whole hours.

They had woke up at nine o’clock both days on the cruise, enjoying the chance to sleep in since
they frequently both got up at six o’clock in the morning back home. That’s if he went to his bed,
but keeping up with St. Mungo’s demands hadn’t been easy. He would no longer have to worry
about that, in fact Harry had stirred his desire to do more than just brew potions that had already
been invented. It had been a long time since he’d invented a Potion of his own; in fact it was going
on five years now. A long time to go without stirring the Potions community, although Harry had
certainly been doing that on his own. He was very proud of Harry and glad he’d taken him on as an
apprentice. He’d done him proud, it was just a damn shame he hadn’t had parents who gave a shit.
Yet Harry hadn’t cared, he’d gone on to make a future for himself, when many others wouldn’t
have had the courage to do what he did.

Did Lily even care about how wonderful Harry was? Thought Severus to himself, his fingers
carding through Harry’s long soft hair. Merlin, he wished Harry wasn’t so hostile against everyone knowing he was the true Boy-Who-Lived. Frowning thoughtfully, he tried to remember what the papers said the night after it happened. As far as he was aware, there was no explanation for it, they’d made it sound like sheer dumb luck, or a miracle that had caused ’Nick’s so called defeat of the Dark Lord. He doubted Albus would have made any assumptions; he would have wanted to make sure it was the right child. At least the wizard back then would have, Albus he had known wouldn’t have done what he did over the past seven years. He would have had to accept the Potter’s word for what happened, and considering he knew when he was being lied to he’d ever been too stunned and relieved to think properly and accepted it or Lily had made a genuine mistake and truly did believe it to be Nick. It was a hell of a mistake to make, one that had essentially nearly ruined Harry’s life.

He’d always been a little prejudice at Hogwarts with the students, preferring to give his Slytherins’ favourable treatment since they didn’t receive it elsewhere. He didn’t know how many times he’d held his tongue over the teacher’s treatments of his students. They were not Death Eaters, they hadn’t caused all those deaths, and they were innocent. Yet they were publicly scorned, humiliated and hurt, even if they didn’t show it. Which in turn made them bitter, and some of them turned to bullying to let some of that angst out. Thank Merlin Harry hadn’t turned out like Nick Potter; they certainly wouldn’t be where they were today. At least he didn’t think so, but it was hard to be certain of that. Reese had been worse than he was, at least he had never graded anyone’s work unfairly, and he gave them exactly the grade they deserved. Harry had not deserved the T he continued to get; if Harry deserves the T’s then he was a Monkey’s uncle. Unfortunately he couldn’t spend his entire life watching over his snakes, it had been put on hold for nearing thirteen years at that time. It would have been nineteen years nearly if he had remained; regretfully his snakes had to stand on their own two feet. Which hadn’t happened as he would have liked, his snakes had joined Umbridge’s rampage allowing several of their own to be hurt in the process. After the dressing down he gave them, hopefully it would prevent another occasion such as that from happening.

“Timizit?” exclaimed Harry jerking awake, looking around until he met Severus’ eyes and a sweet smile spread across his face, just for him.

“Two o’clock, we’ve been asleep for five hours,” said Severus dryly.

“Really? I didn’t expect it to be that long,” admitted Harry, amazed, rubbing his eyes still actually tired despite the fact he’d slept so much. He leaned on his arm, touching at Severus’ chest. “Does it hurt?”

“No, at least not yet, I need to take a shower.” said Severus; the stuff had dried in making his skin look as if it was peeling. Which was what happened to all salves eventually, if they weren’t wiped off and it was because of this particular ingredient as well as a few others.

“Wait, let me try first.” said Harry adamantly, praying with all his might it worked. He knew what it was like to be burdened with scars you hated showing the world. Thanks to Fawkes though he didn’t need to endure it, the dark magic imbued scars couldn’t fight against the lightness, healing of phoenix tears and their proprieties. Looking around for his wand, frowning when he couldn’t find it, half crawling off the bed, searching his shorts. The long piece of wood was promptly found causing Harry to grin in triumph, although it wasn’t much of one, it would have taken less time to grab the Potions bag. Summoning it from the floor at the bottom of their bed, where he’d left it just hours ago.

“Did you put it in yours?” asked Harry, turning to face Severus curiously.
“Actually no, I placed it in yours or rather the remains of it,” said Severus, watching him his face impassive but his eyes had a twinkle to them that Harry hadn’t seen before.

“Hmm, I don’t think I unpacked mine,” confessed Harry, moving off the bed, uncaring that he was naked he swiftly found his bag at the bottom of the cupboard and raked through the mostly empty bag. He was beginning to think he hadn’t brought it, but it was unlike him, he’d been taught by Severus to always bring potions and of course empty vials and a potion knife. The knife was only used to cut any useful Potion ingredients they saw and liked the look of. Just as he was going to give up, his hand pressed against Dragon hide, he had bought it after all. Snapping it up, he wandered back over to the bed shivering slightly; the air conditioned room was doing its job perfectly - chilling the room.

Harry dived under the covers before opening his case, inspecting all white coloured ingredients properly, not ever wanting a repeat performance of what he’d stupidly done a week ago. He was able to distinguish which one was the Unicorn blood, and noticed that most of it had thankfully been preserved. How it managed to survive the devastation to the Potions lab he did not know, but he was nonetheless grateful. He would never get Unicorn blood again, when he got that it was a once in a lifetime gift. A gift for helping a Unicorn in need, the blood had been unexpected but extremely welcome. He’d never used it; it was more of a novelty to him, an important one at that. Now due to an accident, he was Horcrux free, something he hadn’t even known he was. They also had a way to get rid of the remaining ones as well.

“It’s extremely rare for a Unicorn to freely give up their blood, and it was freely given otherwise it would have turned black within five to ten minutes.” said Severus his finger brushing across Harry’s arm he was fast becoming addicted to touching Harry in any way he could. Probably because he couldn’t believe he was there, and for once his life was complete.

“Is it really that rare?” asked Harry. “A lot of potions have Unicorn parts in them.”

“Unicorn horn, yes, but seldom is blood used.” said Severus softly, “For that very reason, freely given is extremely rare. It has only happened twice in our recorded history since the wizarding world began writing things down to pass on to the next generation. This started even before the time of Merlin.”

“Interesting.” Harry said thoughtfully, there was still so much he didn’t know. With Severus each day was always educational to say the least, despite the fact he now had a Mastery under his belt. Harry took a hold of Severus’ arm, laying it flat as he uncorked the potion, using his teeth to do so. Spitting the cork out, he tilted the vial a little, and let two drops of the luminously white pearly liquid to fall freely from it and onto Severus’ arm. Hitting the Dark Mark, nothing happened, Severus had been proven correct, even if in his heart he felt disappointed despite everything he had held hope to see the mark gone.

Then like what had happened to Harry, the spectre began to rise off Severus’ taking with the very essence of the mark a black cloud of smoke that turned white in the air screeching angrily. Then as if it couldn’t sustain itself on air, it gave off a little puff before exploding into thin air and evaporating harmlessly. No dark or evil magic can sustain itself on the blood of a Unicorn which was the epitome of pure light magic. Just like anyone who dared drink the blood of a pure creature ended you with a cursed life, a half life. Fortunately with this being willingly given, it was in its purest form and harmless to whomever uses it unless it was against the darkest of magicks.

“I told you!” exclaimed Harry grinning in insane pride. The next thing out of his mouth was a grunt, as he was taken in a death grip; Severus wrapped his arms around him tightly. His face buried in the crook of his neck, his breath shaky and warm. A small smile worked its way onto
Harry’s face as he returned the hug, but remaining delicate knowing his back was probably sore. When it became apparent the embrace wasn’t going to end any time soon he lay his head on his shoulder just enjoying the rare intimate moment together. Severus wasn’t the one for big displays of emotions, such as prolonged hugging and kissing in public. He was very reserved, but Harry didn’t mind, he liked blending in while in company anyway. “I’m glad it worked, Sev.” he confessed, kissing him on the throat but their moment was broken by the fact both their stomachs grumbled in complaint.

“Room service?” suggested the both of them at the same time before smirking wryly.

“You shower, I’ll make the potion, then order room service.” suggested Harry.

“I think its one of your best suggestions,” said Severus stepping out of the bed.

“Better suggestions?” asked Harry in mock anger; Severus just chuckled wryly making his way to the bathroom. Harry’s hand fishing for the cork to replace on the vial to keep the remainder of the Unicorn blood safe. Once that was done, he put it in the box and clambered out of bed, heading down the stairs to the kitchen where a cauldron was already set up.

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Half an hour later, refreshed after a cool shower Severus joined Harry down in the main sitting area, the sun was blindly hot and Severus certainly wasn’t going out there today, he had enough sunburn to last him a lifetime, the potion would turn the burn into a tan almost right away, after that he was certainly going to be using the sun cream from now on. Moving over beside Harry, watching him work with hawk eyes, he didn’t think he would ever forget the sight of him on that dungeon floor. It was hard to believe it had only happened a week ago, Harry seemed to have suffered no ill affects, and he was up and about. Eileen’s potion and Fawkes had well and truly done the trick, and he was grateful for it.

“Perfect,” said Harry to himself, as he began to fold the potion instead of stirring it. It was now a paste and impossible to stir, and near unachievable to fold perfectly. He did not need to do it long, but with the fire under the cauldron he had only a few minutes to get it into a jar and let it settle for at least an hour before Severus could use it. Which would give them time to eat something, maybe watch the TV; the Muggles had the most fascinating way of entertaining themselves. Movies, all sorts of movies, where actors were paid millions to take part in, it made them famous and that Harry didn’t understand but enjoyed the various works nonetheless. “Done.” he said in satisfaction, screwing the cap into place.

“What would you like to eat?” asked Severus wrapping his arms around Harry, a young man he owed everything. He’d spent the majority of the time in his shower just gazing at his arm. Free of blemish for the first time in nineteen years, he’d felt sick when it didn’t work, which revealed to him how deeply he’d thought it would work. Then just as they’d given up hope, it had worked.

“You pick,” said Harry shrugging his shoulders.

“Very well,” said Severus, kissing his shoulder he quickly called room service and ordered a three course meal for both of them to be delivered. They’d missed out on breakfast and lunch, they were both extremely hungry no doubt they would get through the food no problem. He doubted very much they’d be leaving the room today, so they would be bringing dinner for them as well. Tomorrow would be different however, since the ship would be docked on the island and they would definitely be going to investigate it.

“What kind of ingredients do you think await us?” asked Harry excitedly, as they sat down on the
large couch, the TV was put on, but muted so they could hear when their food came.

“On islands they grow in abundance.” said Severus, “Which they sell on to us in the mainland. It’s the main source of income and trade.”

“Won’t they be protected then?” asked Harry, leaning against the back of the couch, lifting his feet and curling them up under a pillow.

“They don’t have the resources for that, they will have greenhouses set up full of them, but not in the wild.” replied Severus.

“Aren’t you going to talk to Eileen? It’s been nearly three days,” said Harry, or at least it would be tomorrow morning or was it afternoon? The time difference was beginning to annoy him already.

“Only if you want to wake her up,” said Severus wickedly.

“You have it the wrong way around, it’s around eight o’clock at night back home,” Harry couldn’t help but point out.

Severus said nothing, but if someone looked close enough, like Harry was would have seen red marks appearing on his neck showing his embarrassment. “Actually that’s a good idea, I’m going to Floo her right now, if the food comes remember to tip them.” said Severus, remembering the first time, Harry had taken it, thanked him then closed the door in his face. Unaware that they relied on the tips given to them by the holiday makers.

“Shut up!” said Harry throwing a pillow at him; it was his turn to be embarrassed.

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“Severus! I was beginning to think you’d forgotten the Floo address,” teased Eileen, putting her book down.

“My apologies, mother.” replied Severus, “What’s been going on?”

“Well, He attacked Hogsmeade, Kingsley Shacklebolt was recovered, he’s currently in St. Mungo’s,” said Eileen, “The paper hasn’t said anything about his current state of mind.” and they wouldn’t especially not after what happened between Tatum and the newspapers. St. Mungo’s wouldn’t want to risk a sudden lawsuit on their hands. It had been a close call before, but thankfully giving the Medi-Witch the boot had sufficed for Severus and Harry.

“How many deaths this time?” winced Severus through the flames.

“None were reported, I think they got off lightly.” admitted Eileen.

“Well that’s a relief,” Severus replied sighing in relief.

“Are you enjoying your holiday?” asked Eileen a twinkle in her black eyes.

“It has been…enjoyable so far,” said Severus his pause obvious.

“What have you done to yourself this time, Severus?” asked Eileen leaning over slightly, to look at her son properly.

“And why would you assume I had done anything?” asked Severus, quickly and too defensively.

“You are my son, I know you all too well.” said Eileen, “What happened?”
“Nothing,” said Severus.

“Well if you don’t want to tell your poor mother, who’s been lonely these past few days in the Manor by herself…fair enough.” said Eileen quietly, her face full of sad longing.

“Mother, that doesn’t work on me, I learned from the best.” stated Severus, barely able to stop himself laughing at her look.

“Are you at least having fun?” asked Eileen, changing the subject realizing she wouldn’t get it out of him. She would just have to pry Harry for information. He would share it of that she was one hundred percent certain.

“Yes, me and Harry both.” said Severus.

“Good.” said Eileen smugly.

“Indeed,” replied Severus dryly. “I have to go, the Floo powder is getting weaker.” it was little wonder, they were calling from a boat in the middle of the Caribbean.

“Give my best to Harry, have a safe trip!” she said before Severus was gone.

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“Is she okay?” asked Harry placing the large tray on the table, evidently the food had come during his Floo call.

“She’s fine, no doubt she’s enjoying having the place to herself.” said Severus, Harry’s worry for his mother was expected.

“Hmm, I know the feeling.” grinned Harry wickedly, “So what are we going to watch tonight? Anything that looks interesting to you?”

“I don’t mind,” said Severus sitting himself down and dividing their food, passing a bowl of soup to Harry and a spoon. He wasn’t big on the Muggle movies but Harry had taken a liking to them. He alternated between his potion journal and the film.

"Alright," said Harry, putting a random one on to watch, not really into it since they were after all eating their dinner. "So what did Eileen say?"

"To have a good time," said Severus after swallowing some soup.

"And? She didn’t say anything about what's happening back home?" asked Harry, observing Severus curiously.

"Yes," admitted Severus, he wasn't about to lie to Harry.

"Well?" Harry said.

"The Dark Lord attacked Hogsmeade just as predicted, luckily with the Order there they had no fatalities, and they managed to save Kingsley Shacklebolt." Replied Severus. “I do not want you beginning to feel guilty.”

“I don’t.” said Harry simply.

Severus blinked his black eyes boring into Harry’s.
“Well I don’t, I’m not responsible for them, they’re grown adults if they want to survive they need to get up off their arses and fight. I can’t be responsible for them, and I refuse to be. They never once looked at me before I became the youngest Potions Apprentice/Master. Although I’m not saying that out of spite, it’s just they…well…need to learn to fight…if they wait on someone saving them then they’re stupid.” said Harry shrugging not sure if he was getting his point across or not.

“Indeed,” said Severus nodding firmly, inwardly impressed.

“Although if it was a friend…I’d probably feel different.” admitted Harry.

“Wouldn’t we all?” was all Severus had to say about that.

“This actually looks interesting,” said Harry settling down, the subject changing.

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“Good evening, Mr. Potter how may I help you? What seems to be the problem?” asked the healer gesturing for him to sit down.

“Look…” said James starting then stalling, taking a deep breath before he continued on. He hoped since the healer was older he would be more open to helping. “I know my wife is persona non grata with the entire magical world, but there’s something happening and I have no idea what to do.”

“Calm down, now can you explain the symptoms to me? I will of course need to see her before I can diagnose anything. I assume she’s having difficult sleeping?” asked Healer Hunter, being professional about the entire thing.

“That’s not it.” stated James cutting him off, “Her magic has gone all wonky, she can cast a fourth year spell but the first years spell is screwing up.”

“Which spells?” asked the Healer his hazel eyes gleaming as if he already suspected what was happening.

“Levitating spell didn’t work but the Accio spell did.” stated James, “I’ve never heard of a case like it before in my life.”

“I have,” said Healer Hunter, pensively. “Tell me was your son an apprentice at the time of the assault?”

“My son?” asked James blankly.

“Mr. Harry Peverell.” stated the Healer frowning.

“Oh, um, yes, yes he was.” said James, he was so used to people not referring to Harry as his son that it was so odd to hear him stated as such nowadays.

“I believe the retribution spell is in play, it has not been done in over ten decades.” said Healer Hunter; his father had been the victim of it. He had thought his father innocent of course, such a folly of youth. When’d he’d researched it, trying to find a way to help him he learned the truth. His father eventually recovered, only once the magic had punished him enough for his misdeeds. It was at the height of irony that he was the one here right now, if it had been someone else they wouldn’t have known for weeks as they researched the archives.

“Nobody cast any magic on her,” said James confused.
“It isn’t cast, it is a law, Merlin’s law, and he cast it in such a way that it would remain affective even after his passing. He wanted to ensure the safety of apprentices from less scrupulous Masters.” said Healer Hunter, putting it as delicately as possible.

“Wait are you saying this…this…Merlin’s law thing is punishing Lily by taking away her magic?” asked James his face paling five shades.

“It’s not taking it away, Mr. Potter.” said Healer Hunter.

“Then what?” asked James calming slightly.

“The spell affects everyone differently, but I suspect she is being punished by losing her ability to cast certain magic.” said the Healer.

“Certain magic?” echoed James, feeling completely overwhelmed he didn’t understand what the Healer was getting at.

Healer Hunter sighed in almost silent exasperation, “Mr. Potter, the spell your wife cast could be construed as a defensive spell and it can be used to harm another. That is the kind of magic she won’t be able to cast, and there is no knowing how long it will last.”

“No defensive magic?” gasped James, wide eyed, how the hell was she supposed to protect herself? He might not love her anymore, but it didn’t mean he wanted to see anything happen to her.

“I am sorry,” said Healer Hunter feeling sympathy for the Auror.

James just sat there, completely shocked.

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Jerking awake, Severus wondered for a few seconds what had woken him up, but he didn’t have to wait long. Harry was shifting and moaning occasionally a word he couldn’t decipher left his lips. Perhaps he was beginning to remember the accident, turning over he quickly began to shake him.

“Harry, Harry wake up, it’s only a dream.” said Severus, making sure to press down on his chest to prevent him from falling off the bed; it depended on just how violent the nightmare was.

“Harry wake up, come on, that’s it easy does it.” said Severus, carding his hand through Harry’s hair.

“NO!” shouted Harry, his green eyes opening, “The snake…the snake was one…the snake was one.” murmured Harry over and over again, his breathing ragged.
Chapter 76

Invisible

Chapter 76

Joining The Dots

James Potter - Ministry Archives - Basement of the Minister of Magic

James read through document after document, he had been at it for ten days now. He had stopped going home eight days ago, instead spending every moment trawling through the mounting of parchment. Normally you needed permission to get into the archives, but since he was an Auror, he didn’t need that. He did however, have to sign in and let them know he was down there. Blinking blearily, rubbing at his eyes tiredly, he was exhausted beyond comprehension. Replacing his glasses, blinking a few times before getting back to work. It didn’t even help having the dates he needed, the healer had said ten decades, but it still didn’t help. He was looking for this Merlin’s law to fully understand it.

The older the documents were, the harder it was for him to read them, words not common today were extremely difficult for him to understand. It wasn’t just one or two either, but masses of words unfamiliar to him. He had contemplated going to Albus and asking for help. He didn’t. Albus had too much on his plate, between the Order, Wizengamot, Hogwarts and of course teaching his son everything he needed to survive the war. He didn’t worry about Nick, since Sirius was with him, Sirius knew better than to leave Dumbledore alone with his son. He wouldn’t allow it; he didn’t want his son put under additional strain.

“Dear god!” muttered James groaning in exasperation as he flipped to another piece of extremely old parchment. Now he wanted the old fashioned words back. The words were written in Latin, rubbing at his forehead he growled - how much longer was he going to have to do this? Breathing deeply, he calmed himself down. He had been taught Latin from a young age; it was a vital thing for pureblood children. The magical world centred around Latin, so it made sense really. His heart clenched remembering everyone finding out his son hadn’t been taught with his brother. He had neglected Harry, and he was so ashamed of himself and his past actions. He wished so badly that Harry would forgive them, so they could be father and son like they always should have been. He knew he didn’t deserve it, oh he was so proud of Harry regardless, and he had such dogged determination - especially for a Ravenclaw. Just like Roxy, who was finally coming out of her shell and proving to be a little hellfire cat. He was so deep in thought that he didn’t even hear the door opening to the archive room.

“Here,” said Sirius, handing over a tray of food. “Are you ever going to tell me what you are looking for?”

Beaten down by the fact he couldn’t find it himself, he finally revealed it all to Sirius. “Information on Merlin’s law, Lily is suffering from it.”

“What didn’t you bloody tell me?” exploded Sirius exasperated. He knew where it was, he had found it years ago, when Harry had been fourteen. James mentioned it in passing, that Severus had threatened him and could have him arrested. Sirius had been worried enough to look through the records, this was all before he found out the rest of the information. That James had neglected his son, denied him an education. He was no better himself, and hadn’t pretended to be. He had only strived to make it up to his godson, and they were getting on better. Not as well as he would hope,
but he had come to him for advice. Him of all people for advice, and he knew things were on the right track. He just had to get used to the fact that Harry would always prefer others to himself.

“You hate research,” James pointed out absently, as he gobbled down the sandwich, then guzzling down the juice. His stomach settled down and stopped grumbling. He hadn’t realized just how starving he had been, picking up the apple he sank his teeth into it.

“Yes, I do.” agreed Sirius, “I know where it is, and you are in the wrong room. Merlin’s law is in the oldest archive we have, next door and nobody can touch it its encased in an unbreakable case. It can’t even be levitated, every imaginable spell was cast on it, including water and fireproof charms.” if it had been anyone other than Merlin it would have been in this room. Yet because it was, it had been protected, Merlin was the most revered wizard in the magical world - even people abroad knew of him and worshiped him too.

James groaned his head thumping back on the wall feeling stupid, if he had only told Sirius all those days ago, he would have already found it. His sleepless state was his own doing, flicking his wand he replaced every single document he had read and those he hadn’t as well. The tray was placed on the floor as he walked to the door he hadn’t noticed in all his time down there.

“What do you want with Merlin’s law anyway?” inquired Sirius, following James through curiously.

“It’s what has been affecting, Lily.” said James, the door opened and he saw the empty room - or mostly empty other than the encased parchment, just like Sirius had described. The room itself brightly lit, much brighter than the other room which almost made James eyes water. Stepping towards it he began to read the small legible scrawl. He’d seen better writing, but considering it was written a long time ago he couldn’t be too picky. “I thought it was just one law!” he cried in exasperation when he saw multiple different ones.

Sirius scoffed at James naivety, “Course not, didn’t your parents make you learn about the law?” his parents had, building him up to be the Black heir before he even went to Hogwarts. His mother had disowned him, not officially of course, he never found out why. Now the Black family was all but gone, at least the main one, he was the last heir with Black in his name and if he didn’t have a child then it would be done completely. There was only him and his cousins left, but they’d all married, taking on their husband’s names. Draco Malfoy was the only remaining male heir that could take over, when he died, but that was only if he took the Black name and left the Malfoy one behind. Which he wouldn’t do since he was the heir to the Malfoy estate.

“No, I refused to, I hated it.” admitted James, wishing he had now.

Sirius rolled his eyes, but he knew Charlus and Dorea had gone soft on James, since they’d had him late in life. Dorea had been a Black before her marriage to Charlus; it’s perhaps why they had been so quick to welcome him into their home. Family was important to both families, the Potters and Black both, although it seemed less important to James. Or it had been until he’d been found out and forced to realize the gravity of his own actions. He would summarise until that point they’d all still been immature wizards, not thinking things through.

“There, Apprentices,” said James excitedly, nearly pressing his nose against the glass to see better. His eyes roamed over the writing until he got to the part he wanted. His eyes getting impossibly wider as he read further, finally realizing the gravity of what Lily had done.

He closed his eyes; the magic was punishing her because she hadn’t learned her lesson in Azkaban. She wasn’t sorry, and it was Merlin’s laws turn to try and get her to realize the extent of what she did wrong. Merlin was smart, knowing he couldn’t remove all their magic, he had made it so
certain spells, hexes and charms wouldn’t work. Anything construed as dangerous just wouldn’t come out the wand. The healer had been wrong it wasn’t defensive spells, but he understood why he’d chosen to stay it that way. Its how he probably would have described it as well. Anything from a levitating charm to the killing curse wouldn’t work. Which probably included stunning and even disarming charms, both were dangerous if you thought about it. Stunning someone could affect their heart if they were flung with enough fury, disarming someone could hurt them as well.

“How is Merlin’s law affecting Lily, anyway?” asked Sirius, observing James’ defeated form.

“Read it yourself, under 1.6 harming an apprentice.” replied James, rubbing his face tiredly after removing his glasses. Yawning tiredly again, as he moved his neck from side to side, creaking could be heard as he sighed softly. Well he couldn’t exactly copy it to take it home, he wondered if anyone had copied it. Looking around the room, seeing only one large cabinet, he meandered over. Opening it he grinned a bit, as he pulled a copy out, he had been right after all.

“Well we can’t know its just affecting her now, I mean it might have from the second she cursed Harry.” said Sirius growling lowly. He hated the fact Lily had tried to harm her own son, with such a bloody horrific spell. Even his own mother had never gotten angry enough to cast magic on him. And she had been completely insane, angry all the time, but never once had she lifted her wand to them.

“It doesn’t matter, it only stops once the person has repented for what they did.” stated James quietly, clutching the parchment to his chest.

“Maybe,” murmured Sirius, not really wanting to talk about it. “Are you coming? Its time to go.” he had to go to Potter Manor and teach Nick what he could. He didn’t have much else he could teach him, he was doing well. Although Dumbledore I’m sure had a lot more he could - he was Dumbledore after all.

“Yes,” agreed James, he’d spent days down here; he couldn’t wait to get away.
“Come on then,” said Sirius, moving towards the door they came in, closing it tightly behind them before heading out of the basement. There was no Floo Networks down here; they had to go up three staircases before they could get anywhere. The trip was spent in silence. James thinking about all he had found out and Sirius thinking about Harry.

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Potter Manor - Sirius, James, Nick, Lily and Dumbledore

“You’re back!” exclaimed Lily, her green eyes filled with relief; she had thought James wouldn’t return. He had been avoiding her for weeks, and she didn’t understand why. She’d tried to talk to him, begged him to listen to her, but he just said he didn’t have the time to have a conversation. Even Dumbledore was barely talking to her, she felt so secluded, and she may as well have been still in Azkaban for all the attention she got. She wasn’t used to it, everyone paid attention to her, it could have something to do with the fact she always spoke about her son. Nobody was interested anymore, and she didn’t even know what to do with her son. He hadn’t spoken a single word to her since she got there. He was training, eating or sleeping and spent not even a second of his time with her. She didn’t even want to linger on the looks she got from him, she was his mother, and he shouldn’t be looking at her like that.

“Have you eaten?” enquired James, speaking to the group on a whole. It looked like Dumbledore had just gotten there, but he didn’t worry since his son didn’t look agitated. Which he always did whenever Dumbledore tried to corner him on his own to talk about his ‘part in the war’.
“Not yet,” said Nick, “It will be through in a minute.”

“It’s though now, Master Nick.” said Tish, placing the dishes magically onto the table for them to enjoy the meal. Avoiding Lily, who had tried to take over her kitchen and begin cooking for the family. She’d gone straight to James, wondering what she’d done wrong and asking if he didn’t want her anymore. James had quickly nipped her fears in the bud, and told Lily in front of Tish that the kitchen belonged to her, and Lily wasn’t to enter it and try and cook for them.

“Thank you, Tish.” said James, dismissing her so she could eat her own meal.

Tish bowed a little before disappearing, ignoring the look on Lily’s face - It was a cross between pained and disgusted. She’d never thought it was right to enslave House-Elves, and it was for that reason she’d made sure James got rid of them. Now she had to put up with another one, doing her jobs. She was the wife, the mother, it was her job to cook and clean and now she didn’t even have that. She’d lost everything, and she hated it, she wanted her life to go back to normal. She wished with all her might she could go back to when things had been simple. Where she had lorded over everything in her manor lorded over her children spoiling them. Having the respect of everyone around her, admiring her, wanting and wishing to be like her.

“Everything alright, James?” asked Dumbledore, sitting down once the others had - he was a guest here and he knew how it worked. James had been extremely busy the last fortnight, never revealing what he was up to. He still asked every time he saw him, hoping he would explain what he was doing. He wasn’t used to James holding out, but he was rapidly getting used to it.

“Yes,” answered James firmly. “I know what is wrong with Lily’s magic.”

“You do?” gasped Lily, dropping her spoon causing it to clatter nosily into the bowl she was using.

“How did you accomplish that, my boy?” asked Albus his eyes slightly wide, he’d never thought James had it in him to do anything for himself. Its how he had made the past few generations, or at least tried to, wanting them to come to him for information. That way he would always know what they were up to, it’s the best way to deal with any…illicit activities. He didn’t want anyone especially from Gryffindor, to be involved in such. He never wanted Gryffindor to end up with the horrid reputation that still clouded Slytherin.

“Ministry archives, if he’d asked me he would have found out a week ago,” said Sirius, punching James lightly on the arm.

“Ha, ha.” muttered James, cleaning up the spill he’d made when Sirius punched him.

“Care to enlighten us?” asked Albus, observing James and Sirius proudly, he was glad the pair had made up again.

“It’s Merlin’s law that is affecting her magic,” said James as if they were speaking about an every day thing. Not something he’d been trying to figure out for the past near enough fortnight.

“What’s Merlin’s law?” asked Lily confused, she’d only heard it mentioned once - by Severus a few years ago.

“It’s the laws that have governed our world, especially before there was a government.” stated Albus calmly, “We needed to be careful, especially as we grew and more Muggles found out about our magic. It was a dangerous time, if you were suspected of being a Witch or Wizard you were ostracised. Sometimes people got together and killed anyone they believed was a danger to their way of life.”
“Remember this was before Hogwarts was built, and they couldn’t control their magic and had no safe place to practise.” added Sirius. “There were obviously no books available, the only way they learned was if they had magical parents and even at that it wasn’t much.”

“Why would a law affect my magic?” asked Lily confused.

“Merlin was and remains to this day, the most powerful wizard our world has ever seen. Speculation is that he took on as many apprentices as he could, so to pass down his knowledge to the next generation and so on and so forth. Not everyone was willing to let their child learn from Merlin, especially those who wanted to take on their own apprentices. He found his share of abused teenagers took them on and found a way to punish those who shamed the purpose of being a Master. Of course over the years he added stipulations to his law. Including those who tried to hurt apprentices, from the parents to other Masters who were trying to kill of or harm the competition.” explained Albus, as they all listened intently to what he was saying.

Lily swallowed thickly, “So how is it affecting me? Is it really taking my magic away?” her entire body trembled as she waited in fear for an answer.

“That I have no idea, I’ve never seen the practice put to use,” admitted Albus. It’s why he hadn’t recognized the symptoms of what was happening to Lily. It was his turn to face James, and enquire about what the system would do to the woman who had hurt her own son. Its something he couldn’t condone, he had taken her on to teach students, and she in turn embarrassed him by harming a child.

“Here, this explains everything.” said James thrusting a wad of parchment to Albus before turning to his eager son. He obviously wanted to know more information. “Basically she hasn’t repent for what she did, her magic is either just started to go wonky or it has been since she went to Azkaban. She won’t be able to cast any spells such as the stunning, disarming, levitating spells, basically anything that could cause even the most minuscule damage to anyone. It won’t get better until they truly realize how wrong they were. If they don’t - well they won’t ever have full control over their magic again.”

“What!” squeaked Lily, the anger at being referred to as ‘she’ forgotten at what James said last. “What does that mean?”

“It means you can’t leave Potter Manor, if you were attacked you wouldn’t be able to defend yourself. It’s not just Death Eaters you will need to watch out for either.” said Sirius grimly.

“What?” repeated Lily confused, why would it be more than Death Eaters? Who would attack her?

“Everyone is really angry about what you did to Harry, you tried to cast an Unforgivable on your own son Lily. There’s people out there who can’t have children who are unable to comprehend what you did. Plus the fact Harry has saved many peoples lives, they are all very grateful to him. Then there’s those who adore him, he has made some really good potions that have also saved lives. Giving wizards and witches second chances with their loved ones.” said Sirius, seriously.

Eileen’s Potion was probably the most popular potion these days.

Lily hunched down her meal forgotten as she curled into herself, her mind replaying what the Witch had said - the one who had got her out of Azkaban. ‘Mr. Peverell is’ as she had said the Potion was rather genius, people did love him. She didn’t get it, he made a few potions and her son was forgotten? Nick had saved the entire magical world all those years ago, if anyone deserved the praise it was still him. When he defeated Voldemort for good everyone would revere him the most again, she was sure of it. They would forget about Harry and concentrate on her son, and hopefully it would help her and her husband’s relationship get back to normal.
“It is rather ingenious,” admitted Albus, placing the parchment back down having read what he wanted to. “They are right, however, Lily you shouldn’t go out on your own. Your magic or lack of it has made you vulnerable; until it recovers you cannot go anywhere. Which means you cannot come to Order meetings or participate in any raids we try to prevent.”

“Alright,” murmured Lily, “Excuse me.” she stated before dashing away, unable to stand the smell of the food.

“Since Nick is doing so well, I wondered James, if you would consider allowing Nick to learn Occlumency?” asked Albus, looking at James with a hopeful look.

“Occlumency? Why?” asked James, a frown on his face.

“You know as well as I, that Voldemort likes to make his opponents vulnerable. If he knows Occlumency he is safe from his mind being invaded during a duel. It also helps prevent Voldemort from possessing him, which is only a possibility at this point.” said Albus quietly so only James could hear. He didn’t want to scare Nick, not with all the process he’d made so far. Albus knew how much Voldemort liked possessing people - it was one of Voldemort’s easiest feats of magic.

“I don’t know,” said James unsurely.

“I have someone I trust completely, he can be sworn in, never to reveal what he sees, not even to me.” said Albus, assuming the reluctance was due to the fact it was invading his son’s privacy.

“Nick? What do you think? Would you like to learn Occlumency” asked James, including his son in the decision. He was old enough to make his own mind up; asking them what they wanted had worked so far.

“What’s Occlumency?” asked Nick cautiously. Not as quick to agree to everything like he had been as a child.

“It’s the art of closing your mind from external penetration. It means that nobody will be able to see your memories, influence your thoughts.” said Sirius trying to tell Nick in a way he’d understand. He certainly hadn’t when his parents had tried to teach him and his brother when they were ten years old.

“Why would I need to learn that?” asked Nick.

“It stops anyone from getting into your mind,” explained James taking his own attempt at it. “Which means nobody would be able to possess you; it’s something Voldemort likes to do to his victims, weakening them in the process.”

Albus shot a look at James, irritated at him, he didn’t want Nick getting scared and destroying a year of work. He was so good now, excellent dueller; he’d successfully held the Death Eaters at bay. He was proud of him, there was no doubt, but there was just some things he knew Nick shouldn’t be privy to - and that was bloody well one of them.

Nick shivered at thought of that happening, he was suddenly all too eager to give it a try. “Alright.”

Albus looked at Nick taken aback, had he just agreed to it? Just like that? How odd he hadn’t expected that.

“I want to be there when he swears,” stated James, he would make sure it was full proof. Not that Nick really had any memories to be ashamed off, it was all their actions towards Harry he was afraid of making the headlines again. Not only for himself, but he doubted Harry wanted his life
plastered all over the newspapers. No, he had other reasons to be on the front page now, very good reasons - the past belongs in the past even if it meant he was also stuck there.

“Of course,” said Albus, slightly subdued, he had hoped his word was enough. Mostly because if anything important came up, he would have wanted to be informed. He guessed it was out of the picture now, at least he had won on the fact Nick would be learning Occlumency.

“Good.” stated James firmly, “I’ll be at Hogwarts tomorrow to get it over with.” then he would spend what was left of his holidays with his son.

“Can I come?” asked Nick, he sort of missed Hogwarts.

“Of course,” replied Albus and James together, causing James’ brown eyes to darken further, they were his children. Just because he was letting Dumbledore train him, it didn’t mean he could do whatever he liked.

“Thanks, dad.” said Nick finishing the soup.

James relaxed and smiled at his son, feeling better that Nick hadn’t even acknowledged Dumbledore speaking.

“Ready to start?” asked Sirius, from where he sat watching James closely.

“Yes,” agreed Nick quick to get up, he was almost good enough to beat Sirius now. He couldn’t wait until he could actually defeat him in a duel, of course he didn’t take into account that Sirius wouldn’t want to hurt him so he wasn’t training him fully with the full force of his spells behind him.

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The Caribbean - Harry and Severus - A few days left of their cruise

Harry and Severus walked well away the trail the normal holidaymakers went, instead going to fields that grew potion ingredients in abundance. Harry had on a pair of hiking boots, shorts and his vest was tucked into his shorts he was just too hot to wear it. On his back he had his black backpack, which was filled with jars, vials and bags for anything they found. Half of them were already packed with all sorts of ingredients they had found on this current hike.

“This is new,” said Harry hunkering down to see the plant properly. It was very colourful, and reminded him of the Wolfsbane or rather Aconite as it is more commonly known. He didn’t touch the leaves, just in case it was similar enough that the leaves were also toxic. “It looks like a new version of the Aconite plant doesn’t it?” Harry asked looking up at Severus curiously. Almost drooling at Severus instead of concentrating on the hike or ingredients. He wasn’t used to seeing Severus in shorts and t-shirts. Especially not with colour on his body, he wasn’t as brown as him but he was a nice golden colour that Harry just constantly wanted to touch him.

“It does,” agreed Severus, peering at the plant other than the colour that is, this one was lighter than the dark purple you found in Scotland. Without pause he opened Harry’s backpack and removed an unused jar, passing over his Dragon-Hide gloves and a knife so he could remove it. Perhaps it was more potent than the one he usually used; it would definitely be worth looking into.

“Take as much as you can.” he would be trying it for sure, although that meant getting in touch with Lupin.

Harry nodded without saying anything as he put his gloves on, then he began to snip away, taking it from the root upwards, all of it was useful. There were hundreds of plants, just growing in the
wild, but he couldn’t take too much. Stem by stem was placed in the jar Severus was holding. Making sure he didn’t accidentally brush the toxic leaves on Severus’ hands. “I read this was referred to as Wolfsbane because they used to dip arrows into it to kill wolves when they hunted them for food. Well wolves and other animals anyway. Didn’t it poison them in return?”

“They did in Medieval Europe, I don’t think they would have continued using it if it did make them ill or killed them, that is, if they ate the wolves they hunted. It may have just been to kill them so the wolves didn’t eat their scares supplies of food they’d gathered in caches. Or to stop them from harming their children, babies and toddlers were easy prey for wolves.” said Severus.

“So the Wolfsbane potion actually causes more harm than good?” asked Harry, he hadn’t really thought about it. Snipping up another root he placed it in the full jar satisfied he had enough. “Will we take a root and plant it back home? If it’s just the same we can just discard it.”

“It does, but everyone that takes it is well aware of it, but considers it a risk worth taking. The knowledge that they won’t hurt someone, infect another person.” said Severus his face tense.

“It sounds like you are speaking from personal experience.” Harry stated, cocking his head to the side.

“I am.” revealed Severus, “Sirius Black sent me after Lupin on the full moon, I was almost bitten but your…James Potter saved me by transforming into his Animagus form and pushing Lupin away.” hadn’t he already told Harry this? He was sure he did know - perhaps the explosion had caused some forgetfulness.

“Wasn’t he expelled?” Harry asked aghast.

“Of course not, it’s Dumbledore we are talking about here.” said Severus dryly.

“Good point,” replied Harry conceding his words with grace. Using his knife, he dug into the earth to get the roots of the plant to take home with them. “Still, it might explain why Lupin looks ready to fall over any minute, he looks constantly sick especially after the full moon.”

“It does.” agreed Severus, wondering what his lover was up to now. Handing him an unused bag, so he could put the root in preserving it until they got back to Prince Manor.

“There.” chimed Harry happily, sealing it closed. “How long do we have now?” he wondered.

“Thirty minutes,” said Severus, until the ship began moving, and once it did - you wouldn’t be able to Apparate back on. You couldn’t Apparate onto moving items, it was completely impossible. The Squibs were probably already well on their way back to the ship by now. Sliding both the jar and bag back into the bag, which was thankfully spelled feather light, they had a lot of stuff in it.

Standing back up, removing the gloves and handing them to Severus who placed them in the bag too. Turning to face Severus, he wrapped his arms around him and kissed him passionately. Since he didn’t like public displays of affection, he always touched him when they were in secluded areas. He so badly wanted everyone to know that this man was his, but he would take what he could get. If he couldn’t show the world, then he would just show Severus how much he loved him. Breaking apart flushed with arousal, breathing deeply, before he went back for more.

“You are completely insatiable.” said Severus breathlessly, his usual black fathomless eyes filled with fondness and something Harry wasn’t very familiar with - love.

“Only for you,” whispered Harry, his chin resting on Severus’ shoulder.
“Hmm,” was all Severus said in reply. He still didn’t see what Harry saw in him, but he was questioning it less and being more grateful that he did want him. “You are tired.” he stated, as Harry tried to place nearly all his weight on him. Now Harry wasn’t the skinny fourteen year old he’d successfully hoisted into his arms when he was unconscious. He was a tall, filled out young man - and he wasn’t a bodybuilder by any means, he couldn’t keep the weight from almost knocking him over.

“Yeah,” murmured Harry yawning, before stepping back. It was the sun; they ended up sleeping every afternoon - mostly after some pleasurable fun. Thinking about that made him twitch, causing Harry to squeeze his legs together. He had no room in these shorts to hide anything let alone an erection. All the walking they did in the sun, of course didn’t help their tiredness any.

“I thought as much,” said Severus calmly. His hand absently, running through Harry’s hair, despite the fact he’d stepped back. “Do you wish to head back or continue?” they had enough to satisfy him for five years. Two weeks nearly of constantly hunting out new herbs, plants and potion ingredients. The trunks were filled with them and other items Harry had bought for himself (surprisingly since Harry rarely bought anything other than books) as well as things for his friends. The fact he had bought stuff for his friends wasn’t a surprise, everywhere he went he liked to pick up things for them. He assumed it was more to do with the fact he did have friends as well as money - that he liked splurging on them.

“Another twenty minutes won’t hurt,” said Harry, it was the last island they’d stop at, so he may as well make the most of it.

“Try fifteen,” corrected Severus wryly.

“We best get to it then,” Harry said excitedly, his tiredness forgotten as he began walking again, nothing but mud under their shoes and wild plants, as far as the eye could see. A smile erupted across his face as a hand laced with his own, perhaps there would be a time when Severus was comfortable with people seeing them together. It gave him hope, and that was strong enough on its own without the love he felt.

“Nothing, we might as well head back.” said Harry, after ten more minutes on foot. It was mostly plants they’d already seen and collected from. How they survived in this weather he didn’t know, it’s not as if they got watered - they were in the wild. Oh, he was looking forward to getting some rest, and his mind kept going over the long list of ingredients in the Wolfsbane potion. He wanted to make a potion that wouldn’t cause them harm, the Aconite was poison. He doubted he would be able to change it, but it’s something he would like to do. There was a lot he wanted to do, needed to do, but the question remained was - would he ever get around to it? There was so many ideas circling around his brain, most of which he scribbled on his potions journal before he forgot.

“Indeed,” murmured Severus, holding onto his partner, he Apparated them both to the side of the ship. It was becoming increasingly familiar to them; since this was the only area of the boat you could Apparate. The rest was shielded so you couldn’t get into someone else’s room even by accident. “How about some lunch or will we have it in the room?”

“I’m tired, and I have things I want to add to my journal before I forget.” Harry immediately said.

“Room service it is.” stated Severus, stepping into the air-conditioned ship, sighing as they immediately cooled down. They ambled down to their room, after Severus ordered the room service at the front desk, in a curt tone. The same one he used on the first years at Hogwarts. Harry could barely remember it, although he’d only been taught by Severus for a single year, which was what... fifty one, maybe fifty two classes. It was a lot when you thought about it actually, but he didn’t want to think about it or bring it up.
“What is going on in that mind of yours now?” asked Severus, as Harry lay on the bed spread eagle. It hadn’t even taken them five minutes to get back to the room. Severus took a seat on one of the chairs in the room, watching Harry in fascination. Harry couldn’t seem to pick a potion he wanted to make; it’s as if he was unable of focusing on one at a time.

“I want to see if I can change the Wolfsbane potion,” said Harry, already scribbling away. He knew the ingredients and recipe by heart, so it was no trouble to write it down.

“How do you plan that?” asked Severus curiously, he had altered it a bit, but even he couldn’t do more with it.

“Well I was thinking more along the lines of turning their lycanthrope into an Animagus if its possible.” said Harry quietly, chewing on the end of the quill as his mind ran a mile a minute.

“Stop doing that,” grumbled Severus, opening the drawer and flinging a sugar quill at Harry. It was a disgusting habit he was trying to get Harry out of. Not only was it horrible to watch, but the ink splatter went everywhere, it’s why he’d bought Harry a large box of sugar quills.

“Sorry,” said Harry sheepishly as he began to nibble on the sugar quill, unaware of the affect he was having on his partner. As his pink tongue poked out to lick it or suck on it, as his mind was miles away thinking hard. “Do you know anyone that’s a wolf Animagus?” he hadn’t heard of a wolf Animagus though.

“Yes,” replied Severus immediately, much to Harry’s surprise.

“Really?” asked Harry turning around eagerly.

“Of course, you know him as well.” stated Severus, “You also had the option of being a wolf if I remember correctly.” yes he was right; it had been one of the very first possibilities, which meant that personality was the strongest. It symbolised teaching/learning, loyalty and of course independence. The wolf also mated for life, although whether it was for the life of their current ‘mating partner’ or whether they only took one on full stop. He hadn’t studied the life of wolves and had no desire to either.

“One of the Potions Masters? Let me guess…” said Harry thoughtfully; trying to decide which one had the most wolfish traits or personality. “Damon?”

“No, Rick,” said Severus smoothly. He called him Rick, but his name was actually Eric James, but Eric preferred Rick so that is what he called him. In fact until his name came up in the Potions book, he constantly forgot about that little detail.

“He lives in America doesn’t it?” asked Harry thoughtfully, removing the quill and licking the sugar from his lips.

“Yes,” replied Severus, shifting slightly. He didn’t know what the hell was wrong with him; it’s like going through puberty again. Perhaps it was because he’d gone so long without a lover, and sex that he found himself acting like a teenager.

“Can we go and see him before we go home?” questioned Harry, his book abandoned as he stared at his lover.

“I can Floo him and find out,” suggested Severus, he hadn’t seen them in a while - it would be nice to see them again. He knew Jacob lived nearby, and he’d just had a child. He wouldn’t mind congratulating them…as long as he didn’t have to hold the baby. He’d never held one before, and had no desire to just in case he hurt them. No doubt Penelope was over the moon, as well as Jacob.
Jacob wouldn’t have to worry about his wife annoying him out of his lab. Penelope had someone to spend time with while Jacob brewed and created potions.

“Great,” cheered Harry, before he began to write with his quill again. That was until he heard someone knocking on the door, their food had finally arrived.

“I’ll get it.” stated Severus, standing up before Harry could.

“Alright,” agreed Harry, creating a wolf Animagus potion would enable werewolves to painlessly change form without being hurt. It would at least take the pain away from transforming, which would enable them to have a more normal life. Without being hindered with pain after the full moon, for days maybe weeks at a time. Maybe with a wolf Animagus it might give them more insight to a wolf mind - enabling them to keep their sanity while they shift for the moon. At least without poisoning them with the Wolfsbane plant.

Sighing softly, flinging the quill onto the table, he closed his book a thoughtful look on his face. He shouldn't be trying to create this potion; Neville was looking to him to create a potion that would help his parents. He just couldn’t think of anything that would bring the potion together. He’d been working on it nearing half a year now, but he wasn’t having much success. Scratching his chin thoughtfully, finding it slightly stubbly he would need to shave it was getting bristly.

“You look worried,” said Severus, entering the bedroom again, sliding one of the trays onto the bed, before placing his on the nightstand.

“I know I shouldn’t be starting on another potion,” Harry said warily, “I just can’t help myself, plus I’m not getting anywhere with it. I feel like I’m never going to get it either, it’s not simple.”

“No, no its not.” said Severus, nobody had come up with it before. Then again the same could be said for all other potions that had been created over the years. They weren’t possible before they were made, it took time, and Harry had created more potions than people usually did in their first year of being a Potions Master. In fact it wasn’t normal, like the other Potions Masters had said; they usually took on Potion assistant jobs after passing their Mastery. They didn’t normally have the recourses, money or confidence to go and create any.

“I’m obsessing and it’s doing my head in.” grumbled Harry, moving his book to the stand before grabbing the tray closer. The smell of the burgers was causing his stomach to rumble hungrily.

“Exactly why I brought you on holiday,” said Severus wryly, “Apparently it didn’t work.”

Harry grinned at him as he uncovered his food; he removed the tomato not wanting it on his burger. Squeezing tomato and mustard packets into it before taking a large bite. He would miss these, that’s for sure; they were so tasty he wished he could take them back with him. Perhaps he could have Dobby make them for him; he doubted they would taste the same though. He noticed Sev had something different, a large steak, steak chips and asparagus to go with it.

“You’ll find if you don’t try and get answers they will come to you,” said Severus reassuring Harry. Sort of how concentrating on a target too much you ended up missing it. It’s something you had to learn on your own, which Harry probably would too.

“Mmm, I love these.” murmured Harry, around his mouthful of beef.

“I’ve noticed.” snorted Severus amused.

“Did you get rid of the Horcrux? The one Dumbledore had I mean…the ring?” questioned Harry, apparently out of the blue.
“Of course, before we came on holiday.” said Severus, his mind flashing to that night, he’d never seen Harry like that before. His mother had said he had nightmares from time to time, when he first began staying with her. Even he had spoken to him about them the night he stayed in the flat with both of them after Harry had been healed from his injuries that had been caused by the Death Eaters. He knew the nightmare had been on Harry's mind constantly, but this was the first time he’d brought it up.

He hadn’t been able to get much sense from Harry; he’d almost wanted to use Legilimency to get his answers. Then when Harry fell back asleep, he had assumed he wouldn’t remember. How many people actually remembered their nightmares when they woke up properly? He’d had his share of violent nightmares and he knew the answer to that. He had been surprised, pleasantly so, when Harry woke up twenty minutes later coherently speaking. His nightmare had been about Voldemort’s snake, Nagini, he had seen through her eyes which meant they had been connected.

It could only mean one thing, the Horcrux, which meant Harry had killed it when he killed Nagini. It explained why Voldemort had been so angry about her death. It must have been created just before the Dark Lord came back, just months before otherwise he would have seen her before. If he was creating more then that was dangerous, although he might have been just trying to round it up to seven Horcruxes in total that he had and his body. Unaware that some of his Horcruxes had been destroyed, they would need to make quick work of them otherwise the Dark Lord would find out. It was the last thing they needed, he would become desperate, wage an all out war and create more which they wouldn’t know about.

"I have a feeling I'm missing something,” confessed Harry, "Like it's not the first one I came across, other than the diary I mean.”

"At Hogwarts I presume?” wondered Severus, as he cut up his steak with the knife.

"Well it wouldn't have been Potter Manor or our home.” said Harry, it was a safe bet. Severus' lips twiched at that pronouncement, home, Harry and he both loved Prince Manor. He’d only gone there after leaving Hogwarts behind. He hadn't wanted to risk going to Spinners End, it was unsafe, and no amount of wards would have been secure enough. Forcing him to make the decision to find a home elsewhere, and since there was one readily available he had made an executive decision to live there. He’d never thought he would be so fond of it, or that he would have a partner who loved it as well. To Harry it really was home, probably only the second one he’d ever had. The flat above the shop being the first one, Harry had never once referred to Potter Manor as anything remotely resembling home. “If you did, it will come to you sooner or later.”

“Hopefully sooner,” murmured Harry shoving the empty tray away as he relaxed on the bed, the side of his face burrowed in the sheets.

“Indeed,” replied Severus, agreeing wholeheartedly. "Are you still adamant about not returning to Hogwarts?”

“I’m just going to take my N.E.W.T’s at the Ministry.” said Harry shaking his head; he should have just done it in the first place. Instead of exhausting himself beyond measure, to try and complete both his Mastery and attend Hogwarts at the same time. He would have it over with within a few weeks leaving him to concentrate on more important things. “Plus I think we need to step up my defence training.”

“Not that much to learn,” admitted Severus. He had taught Harry well, although they could do with duelling, get into the swing of things again. It had been a while, they’d concentrated on his Mastery itself by the end, and probably why Harry had made the decision to attend Defence against the Dark Art’s classes. Although if he was correct it hadn’t lasted long, no doubt he had been bored
to tears. Everything he’d taught him was well beyond what they taught at Hogwarts. Harry had even been taught Occlumency and Legilimency. Although it was only beginners Legilimency, he wasn’t comfortable with someone trying to penetrate his mind. Occlumency though he was a Master at, he tried from time to time to slip in undetected, he hadn’t succeeded yet. Harry was so used to keeping his emotions to himself he’d mastered Occlumency with finesse.

“I’ll probably get my N.E.W.T’s done before Hogwarts starts back up.” mused Harry, he didn’t need to feel guilty about leaving Luna on her own. Neville was there with her, despite the fact they were a year apart. It was after this year at Hogwarts Neville would be gone; thankfully Luna would only have one more year to go.

“It’s less than a fortnight before Hogwarts begins again,” said Severus sardonically, “I don’t think even you could get through them all in that short time.”

“Want to bet?” challenged Harry smirking, his green eyes twinkling devilishly.

“Against you?” asked Severus, “No thank you.” Harry was nothing if not determined, and he wouldn’t be surprised if he did manage to get the exams finished in a fortnight - just to prove him wrong.

Harry pouted; watching desire fill Severus’ black eyes, the half eaten tray of food was abandoned as Severus pulled Harry towards him. Harry laughed before it was cut off as he was taken in a breathtaking kiss.
Chapter 77

Invisible
Chapter 77
Back Home
Prince Manor - Eileen - Unplottable

Eileen hurriedly made her way back into the Manor, her arms full of different flowers, her clothes a little muddy but she didn’t mind. She had spent all bar seventeen years of her life, doing everything on her own. She hadn’t really cared, just glad to be away from the oppression the Wizarding world wrought out of her. Of course she had to end up married to someone who would be as bad as her parents. Yet she had constantly hoped that Tobias would change, become the man she had fallen in love with. It hadn’t happened, being disowned, having no money, she really had absolutely nowhere to go. She had convinced Tobias to let Severus attend Hogwarts, lying straight to his face that the accidental magic would get worse and possibly kill them all. Although the way he treated them both, she wouldn’t have been surprised if such an occurrence had transpired. Shaking off her grim thoughts, she wandered into the living room, placing the flowers on the table, removing her dirty gardening gloves.

“Can Dobby help Mistress Eileen?” enquired Dobby, gazing at her with his big green eyes.

“I’m fine, Dobby, thank you.” said Eileen kindly, “How are things in the kitchen?” she was preparing a welcome home party, a small one. Severus wouldn’t like it, but Harry would love it, no doubt. He had spent his entire life ignored in favour of his twin. Well, no more. She would always make sure that Harry understood he was loved and wanted, as long as she had breath in her body.

“Everything is nearly ready, Mistress Eileen.” said Dobby eagerly, they were all over the moon at having something big to do.

“Good, now the others will be here shortly,” said Eileen, as she placed the flowers into a lovely arrangement. If there was one thing she’d missed after leaving Prince Manor it had to have been the gardens. The flowers were her pride and joy, especially now since she had the energy to keep up with everything. She hoped the new bulbs she’d planted would come out in time for summer next year. It was late in the year to be planting them, but it wasn’t as if they would be affected with the weather in the greenhouse. The seeds she’d ordered would take much longer, but with luck, they would grow nicely. They had also been placed in the greenhouse, already planted and watered.

The Floo network flared, causing Eileen to look up from her task, a smile spread across her face inwardly relieved it wasn’t the old fool again. Dumbledore had been Floo calling three times a day, for the past fortnight. He didn’t give up, and she didn’t really expect him to until he got whatever he wanted. He had always been a stubborn old fool, how else would he have been able to wear her stubborn son down until he agreed to spy for him? She was always grateful his trial had been made too public; otherwise he would have been out there risking his life all over again.

“Hello dears!” said Eileen abandoning her work, flicking her wand and removing the grime from her clothes as she welcomed them to Prince Manor.

“Hello, Eileen!” said Fleur bringing the older woman in for a hug. They all adored her, and Harry
always spoke very highly of her. She had been there for him in a time no one else had, and she had their gratitude.

“You look lovely!” exclaimed Eileen, admiring the dress she had on.

“Thank you,” chirped Fleur, as if she’d never been complimented before.

“Thank you for inviting us,” said Gary, handing over a bunch of Lilies, smiling in thanks. It was customary to bring something when you were invited to another Witch or Wizards home. It wasn’t something that Half blood’s or Muggle Born’s practiced, it was mostly with the old pureblood families. Which was exactly what he was, and his parents had drummed it into him.

“Oh, thank you dear, you didn’t have to.” said Eileen, bringing him into half a hug since her right hand was currently occupied.

“No problem,” said Gray, who was surprised by the hug, but nonetheless really happy. He had been worried he wouldn’t be accepted here the first time he visited. They were a close nit group of friends, had been through things he had only ever heard about. Cedric Diggory had also worried him, but his worries had been for naught. Cedric Diggory was happy with his current girlfriend. They had all accepted him and he felt really blessed by it.

“Why don’t you take a seat? Is there anything I can get you? Juice? Coffee?” asked Eileen, aware that the younger generation didn’t care much for coffee or tea unless they were tired or cold.

“Dobby?”

“Yes Ma’am?” asked Dobby appearing before her.

“Put these beautiful flowers in a vase with water, I’ll decide where to put them later.” said Eileen, it was very impolite to leave your guests to do such a task.

“I’ll take an orange juice if you have it?” asked Gary unsurely, he knew the magical population here preferred pumpkin juice. Fleur had complained about it often enough, she just didn’t like it at all too sickly for her.

“Same, please.” said Fleur, not wanting to give the House-Elf additional work.

“I would like an Earl Grey, please Dobby.” said Eileen as she sat down beside her guests.

“Right away,” said Dobby collected the bouquet of flowers with care before disappearing.

“What time will they be back at?” asked Fleur excited to see Harry. It may have only been a fortnight, but after spending every day with him she missed her friends. They’d all sworn to meet up at birthdays and such, which they had been doing but it wasn’t enough. She just wasn’t sure what her boyfriend really thought of her decision. Whether he would move here with her or if he preferred staying in France. With a war going on, anyone wanting to move here was mad, so she wouldn’t be able to blame him, should he wish to go back to France.

“They should be here in ten minutes,” said Eileen, glancing at the clock on the wall. They had left the cruise early, opting instead to go to a fellow Potion Master’s home for a few days. Rick had housed them in his guest room, but they couldn’t stay longer than a few days. Apparently Master James has other commitments, a few conference with new budding Potion Masters on the rise. Apparently Harry had a new idea for a potion, and he wanted to work on it. It didn’t surprise her; Harry was constantly thinking about potions, it’s what made him a good apprentice and now Master.
"How are you both?" asked Eileen, truly curious.

"We are good, Gary got offers from five different Master Wand crafters, he’s finding it difficult to chose from.” said Fleur honestly. “Aren’t you?"

“It is difficult, all of them do have good qualities.” agreed Gary, his face flushing in embarrassment. Most people were lucky to get one offer, maybe two but with five Masters wanted him he did find it difficult to decide.

“The location is also important,” said Eileen, “It depends on where you wish to settle down.”

“I know,” said Gary, nodding thoughtfully. They were spread out all over the place, America, England. Then there was ones in France, Germany and another in Ireland. “Fleur also wants to come and live here, don’t you?"

"Thank you, Dobby." said Eileen absently, as the refreshing beverages was placed on the table and the House-Elf left without saying anything. He didn’t want to interrupt their conversation after all.

“Really?” asked Eileen surprised, when it sunk in what the teenager said. “How do your parents feel about that?"

“They are very support of me, and whatever I choose to do.” said Fleur quietly, “I was thinking of taking a part time job at Gringotts. It will help me improve my English as well as give me independence.” her parents would give her money, but she didn’t want to live out of their pocket forever.

“Your English has come a long way,” Eileen said confidently, “But if it’s what you wish to do, you can stay in the manor if you like until you get on your feet.”

“That’s very nice of you, but my parents want to buy me a property. One that is protected just like this manor if I choose to come here, they say they want me safe.” confessed Fleur. She had spoken to them a few times about it, but she still didn’t know what to do. Especially with Gary not able to decide on which person to pick. She loved him, but she didn’t want to end up in America or Germany and their relationship wouldn’t survive long distance. Both of them wanted to do different things, and it was causing tenseness in their relationship that hadn’t been there before.

“Very well, but if you change your mind, all you need to do is ask.” said Eileen, pouring out some orange juice to her guests just as the fireplace roared to life once again.

“Neville! Luna!” called Fleur beaming at them. Their engagement had been so sweet and intimate, just them all together. They were so happy, and after the tragedy that had befallen Neville, with his parents she was awed to see him so strong.

“Hey guys,” said Luna sweetly.

“Thank you for inviting us Lady Eileen,” said Neville, bowing low as he handed her a bottle of wine. Making sure she didn’t get up, not wanting to put her out.

“How many times… it’s Eileen,” said the older woman shaking her head in fond exasperation. Lady Eileen was incorrect; she wasn’t the Lady of the manor even if she was the only female there. If she hadn’t been disowned and her son wasn’t the Head of the family then she would have been Lady. It was reserved for matriarch of the family, or newly wedded Lord and Lady of the estate. Accepting the wine she placed it on the table out of the way.

Neville just grinned, he had been raised to respect the older generation, especially his grandmother. Of course he’d learned a whole new respect for her when he’d been placed over her knee for being
cheeky. His parents hadn’t been happy, and made sure it didn’t happen again. Neville had never forgotten the lesson though, and made sure to be respectful at all times. “Hello, Eileen, how are you?” asked Luna, giving the woman a warm welcoming hug. Eileen always did say if she needed someone to talk to she was always there. Eileen knew that Luna didn’t have a mother to turn to, so offered her someone to get advice from. Its something men weren’t known for, they just couldn’t get around how ‘emotional’ females were.

“I’m fine, you?” questioned Eileen, as both Neville and Luna greeted Fleur and Gary before sitting themselves down. Luna was positively bursting with energy, she couldn’t wait, this was the longest she’d gone seeing Harry.

“We are good,” said Luna, “Just finished getting our school supplies for the year didn’t we, Nev?”

“We did, decided to do it earlier avoid the crowds,” said Neville nodding his head. “Not that it’s busy, since the attack people have been jittery.”

“It will take them a while to get over it,” said Eileen sadly, “But if we’ve learned anything over the years is that nothing keeps us down long.” the Wizarding world would rebuild and prosper again.

The Floo flared again, emitting Cedric and Cho.

“Oh, thank Merlin we aren’t late!” said Cedric grinning at them all.

“No, there’s still five minutes before they are due.” said Eileen welcoming them in, but as always they were over to her before she could stand. Cedric and Cho gifted her with another bouquet of flowers.

The last of the party joined them just a few seconds later, when they too stepped out of the Floo.

“Hello,” said Viktor bowing to Eileen “Thank you for the invitation.”

“No need, I’m sure Harry will be thrilled to see you all!” said Eileen welcoming both men.

“Do you know how he’s been?” asked Lukas, taking a seat next to Fleur and Gary as well as his fiancé.

“He’s fully recovered, enjoying his holiday immensely.” said Eileen beaming at them.

“That’s great.” chimed Luna, Fleur, Cedric and Viktor in unison, before they grinned at each other in amusement.

Dobby and Rose popped in and began to put the food on the table; they had made quite a sizable buffet. All finger foods, but it would fill them up until dinner time no problem. There was also cake there as well, since Harry hadn’t been able to properly celebrate it. There was sizable pieces missing, but everyone was free to help themselves to it - it was certainly much better than it going to waste. Which it would sooner or later, the preservation charms didn’t hold forever.

Patty, another House-Elf that joined them both, but with juice as the others put the food on the table. Before long the table if it could, would be groaning under the weight. House-elves had a tendency to overdo it when it came to feeding large crowds. In their opinion, it was better to have too much than not enough, they considered it bad manners.

“Do you know what caused it yet?” asked Gary. “Or should I ask if he knows what he did wrong?” Harry was probably hitting himself for making that mistake. Especially considering he’d just passed his Potions Mastery. Accidents do happen; it’s just the matter of learning from them.
“Oh he knows,” said Eileen her eyes dimming slightly, the knowledge of the Horcruxes were wearing down on her. If it was how she felt, how the hell did her sons feel? They knew so they would see it as their duty to find and destroy them all. They had to if the wizarding world had any hope of bringing Voldemort down for good. The accident had turned out to be a good thing, but nobody else could know that. “Oh, please help yourself, I’m sure neither Severus or Harry will mind!” at least they wouldn’t be tired, since they would have just gotten out of bed, quite literally if she had the times correct.

“Wouldn’t mind what exactly?” enquired Severus, having heard his mothers voice as they materialised in the room. He stared at the visitors wryly, not surprises his mother was making a big deal about it.

“Harry!” called out his friends, immediately standing up and hugging him, the men patting his back welcoming him home. A few comments on how tanned he looked, and how much better he seemed was passed around as well. Harry just laughed a huge smile on his face - oh he was so happy to see everyone.

“A party?” asked Severus an eyebrow rose in enquiry.

“He didn’t get a chance to celebrate his birthday, he deserves a special day even if it is late.” said Eileen. “You look well rested Severus, I’m glad you both had a good time.”

“We did,” said Severus his eyes held a twinkle to them that Eileen had never seen. He watched Harry talking to his friends. He was glad Harry had them; he needed people who cared about him. Especially when the news came out that he was the Boy-Who-Lived. It would happen, of that Severus was certain, he dreaded it, but it would happen. Whether it was during the final battle or some other occurrence. He had a feeling Luna already knew, if she was a seer like Harry said, and he had no reason to doubt it.

“How is Kingsley Shacklebolt?” enquired Severus, watching as Harry looked over curious himself.

“I have no idea, nothing has been in the paper, I saved them all for you.” said Eileen, “Dobby will get you them when you have a free minute.”

“It must be bad if he hasn’t been released yet.” said Harry from where he sat. “The paper told us when the others were all released after the attack on the Ministry.”

“That was because of an actual attack, a big one that the Daily Prophet wanted to fully investigate. Since they couldn’t get into St. Mungo’s to ask around they had to wait until they got out. I doubt they were as interested in what happened to one wizard.” replied Severus, as harsh as it sounded it was regrettably true.

“Dumbledore has been calling non-stop since you left on Holiday. I didn’t tell him where you had gone, but he obviously wants to talk to you.” said Eileen, after a few minutes of silence between them. Where both of them watched Harry gift his friends with more things he’d bought for them on holiday - it seems to be all he does every time he goes away. “Sirius Black wants to talk to you as well, said it was urgent, and told me to tell you that they had found it, whatever IT is.”

“I’m not surprised, he did say he wanted to talk to me.” said Severus dryly, however he was more excited to see Black - something he’d never imagined happening. Another Horcrux, which meant they’d found four of them, he believed Harry when he said Nagini was one. How else would Harry have been able to see out of the snakes eyes? It made complete sense, so Harry had on his own, brought down two Horcruxes without knowing what they were. He had also ironically enough gotten rid of the one inside of him, so technically it was three. The Gaunt ring had been down to him, now they’d found another. Five in total, albeit if it did turn out to be one. They had only two
additional Horcruxes to find, if he had created seven like Slughorn suspected and a young Tom had been willing to create them.

“I think I’ll go and talk to him now.” stated Severus, standing up, “I hope you enjoy your stay at Prince Manor, I apologize that I have to depart but it cannot wait.”

“Thank you,” the visitors said in unison, already aware that Severus was always…proper. Hopefully Harry would get him to relax a little.

Harry stared at him curiously, but his wish to spend more time with his friends won out. He just nodded quietly, before turning back to them and once more being engrossed in a conversation. He found out that Lukas had been headhunted by different hospitals and he was torn between them both. With Viktor travelling all over the world, they wouldn’t get to see each other as often and with a wedding to plan he wasn’t sure whether to put his career on hold. The same was happening to Gary, but Harry had taken him aside and spoke to him honestly about it. Did he want to put a career above family? Did he love Fleur? If it’s what they wanted maybe they could come up with a solution that made them both happy. After all a job was only a Floo away, it didn’t need to be the end of them. Thankfully Luna and Neville didn’t have that difficulty, Neville planned on getting his Mastery in Herbology while Luna planned on getting a Mastery on Magical Creatures after she graduated from Hogwarts. Cedric was already an Auror on active duty now, and Cho still had another year of school to go before she had to choose one.

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Grimmauld Place - Sirius Black and Severus Snape - Under Fidelius

“You asked to see me?” asked Severus stepping into Grimmauld Place. He was glad it was empty of anyone, since he hadn’t been around he didn’t know when or if there would be Order meetings. He was slightly surprised to see it so…clean, it never had before.

“We found it,” said Sirius in supreme satisfaction. “Kreacher!”

“Yes, Master Black?” asked the House-Elf appearing before them, a little cleaner and taller than ever before.

He was no longer muttering under his breath or glaring at them in disgust. Sirius could barely believe the transformation that had happened in the House-Elf. Not only that, it seemed as if it had regained a lot of energy, especially if the house was anything to go by. The secret must have been killing him, at least according to Remus who found himself feeling sorry for Kreacher. If anyone knew what it was like to be torn down keeping secrets, it was him.

“Give him the necklace, please.” said Sirius; he was not so nasty to Kreacher anymore. He had no reason to be, since he was no longer calling him all the names his mother did. Which had been nearly every damn name under the sun.

“How’s Harry?” asked Sirius quietly. Watching as Severus removed a vial of pearly looking liquid
from his trousers.

“He’s well rested,” replied Severus. “The holiday did him good.”

“He’s not worrying about them is he?” Sirius asked. He was referring of course to the Horcruxes; he didn’t want that for his godson.

“Harry always worries, he cannot switch it off.” Severus said scoffing at the absurdity of Harry NOT worrying. It wasn’t just the Horcruxes either, but the Potion to help Alice and Frank as well as all his other ideas. Leaving the Horcrux in the box, he breathed evenly before he knelt slightly, and dropped two drops of the unicorn blood onto the locket. Watching it begin to sizzle and spit, stepping back warily, they both winced as it screamed as if in agony before it went silent and the locket opened with a final click.

Grabbing it he pressed it close in his hand, nodding in satisfaction the Horcrux was gone. This locket belonged in Hogwarts; it was Salazar Slytherin’s after all. It was an heirloom that the Dark Lord didn’t deserve. Unfortunately it wouldn’t be able to be displayed until they were sure Voldemort was gone for good. Sliding both the locket and the unicorn blood into his pocket, he nodded briefly to Black before leaving without saying another word.

Sirius stared after him thoughtfully, he would need to go to Prince Manor soon - he missed his godson.

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Ministry of Magic - N.E.W.T’s test centre - Harry

Harry grumbled under his breath, you would think everyone would know he wasn’t a Potter, but no, some idiot had screwed up his first exam. So here he was taking it again, this time his proper name was on it. He hadn’t even noticed, so it was party his fault too. Already knowing the answers and questions, he was able to do it quicker than the last time. He still read it thoroughly though, he didn’t want to make any mistakes. His first exam was Ancient Runes, which was the only exam he would need to take for this particular subject. There was no way to do a practical exam, at least nothing that would take more than a few minutes. That few minutes were a few runes you had to get right on the exam paper itself.

It wasn’t the first time someone had accidentally called him a Potter either, he thought savagely as he remembered the day he’d passed his Potions Mastery. Even his O.W.L’s were under Harry Peverell, he certainly didn’t want to have to retake all those exams again - even if they would be easy. Harry ignored all the looks he was getting, from those who were pretty familiar with whom he was. He just continued walking towards the exit ready to get back to Prince Manor. Where no doubt Sev and Eileen were worried - he had been ten minutes longer than he had said he would be.

Opening the door instead of using magic, like he had seen the others do - he had never been that lazy. Leaving it to close nosily behind him, he froze when he heard the unmistakable sound of a scuffle. No, that wasn’t a scuffle that was a fight, judging by the screams. Removing his wand, he turned around and began to silently follow the sound a spell on the tip of his tongue. He jumped when he heard a tortured howl leave someone’s lips. As soon as he rounded the side of the building, he found three wizards beating and using nasty spells on someone. Not just three wizards, they had masks on their faces, masks that gave away as being Death Eaters.

“Expelliarmus! Stupefy! Bombarda! Sectumsempra!” yelled Harry in rapid succession. Able to avoid any spells they flung at him, because he was round the corner of a building. Seeing they couldn’t beat him, two of them left quickly, abandoning their bleeding comrade. His body shook and shuddered as he bled out, with quick efficiency.
He turned his wand to where his back had been seconds ago, suspecting that they were only lulling him into a false sense of security. After a minute passed, Harry realized they were obviously not coming back, and hadn’t Apparated to appear at the back of him. Still not letting his guard down, he kept his back to the building as he made his way over to the moaning wizard. Flinging up an alerting and shielding spell in case he was surprised.

“Don’t worry, I’ll get you to St. Mungo’s.” said Harry quietly, checking him over for anything fatal. He was thankfully familiar with a few diagnostic spells. He noticed there wasn’t wrong with him that would prevent him being able to sidelong Apparate him to the hospital for treatment. Thank Merlin for Lukas, who had showed him a few and got him curious enough to read a few books.

“Can’t,” croaked the wizard, trying to shove Harry off him.

“Why?” asked Harry, looking down at him as if he was mad. He placed his hands up in surrender, hoping it would prevent the wizard from struggling and pushing him away. He was seriously injured, and he didn’t want to see him hurting further.

“Unregistered.” moaned the wizard, his eyes fluttering as if he was about to lose consciousness.

“You’re a werewolf?” asked Harry, wondering if he had understood him right.

“Yes,” the male confessed, he sounded resigned; he expected to be carted of to the Ministry or left for dead.

“Alright, alright,” said Harry sounding a little panicked, but it wasn’t because he was dealing with a ‘werewolf’ but because this wizard obviously couldn’t go to St. Mungo’s which meant he would have to heal him on his own. Breathing deeply, he thanked Merlin he always carried his potions bag with him and he quickly unfurled it. Were there potions that Werewolves couldn’t get? He had absolutely no idea - hopefully he wouldn’t hurt him trying to help. Ripping off his cloak, he folded it as often as he could, before easing it under the injured werewolf’s head. Merlin he wished Sev or Lukas was here, they would know what to do. Breathing deeply, trying to stop his hands from shaking - he was better than that. He had dealt with more severe situations...hadn’t he?

“Here, drink this, it will help with the pain,” said Harry, pressing the vial to his lips. Quietly urging him to drink it, and despite his reluctance the werewolf did began to swallow the potion. His entire body relaxed, as the pain diminished considerably. Every pain reliever potion also had a muscle relaxant in it, which was why that happened.

Harry removed the curses and hexes that had been left on the defenceless wizard. He didn’t even have a wand on him for fuck sake. Nothing really surprised him; they had tortured him for three days after all. This werewolf wasn’t as sickly looking as Remus. He wondered if it meant he didn’t take the Wolfsbane Potion. He hadn’t sounded the least bit ashamed of being a werewolf that could only be a good thing. In fact he was muscular like Viktor; he realized when he removed his t-shirt to get to the cuts on his stomach and chest.

Harry whirled around, his wand in his hand just as the wards alerted him to someone being there. He wasn’t quick enough; he was grabbed off the ground by his neck. Choking Harry began to kick out at the person, in hopes of being released. He realized it could only be a werewolf; nobody else had that kind of strength to actually lift him of his feet. “I’m trying to help him.” Harry rasped out. “If you don’t let me he will die.” that did the trick, he could sense the surprise on whoever it was. They let Harry go abruptly, coughing and spluttering Harry moved away from the person. Keeping him within eyesight at all times. Snatching his wand from the floor he began to sterilise the wounds, using a knitting spell before spelling them wrapped in bandages. Just because the wound
was closed, it didn’t mean the area didn’t need protected for a few days.

“Who are you?” grunted the man who had just had Harry by the neck.

“I could say the same for you,” snapped Harry, rubbing at his neck absently.

“Fenrir Greyback.” sneered the confirmed werewolf. His eyes gleaming with viciousness, waiting for the wizard to begin flinging spells at him. Ready to defend himself if the need arose.

Harry swallowed thickly, looking up at the moon, thankful that it wasn’t anywhere near full. He was familiar with who Fenrir Greyback was. Even if Remus hadn’t told stories about him, the Ministry called him the most notorious Werewolf in the UK. He was just glad it was nowhere near the full moon, he had nothing against werewolves but he didn’t want to be one thank you very much.

“I see you’ve heard of me.” grinned the wolf sadistically.

“Yes,” said Harry quietly, as he continued to work, ignoring the sadistic look on his face. The howl earlier…this werewolf must be part of Greyback’s pack. He had taken too long, Greyback was risking a lot to come for him, and they were right outside the Ministry of Magic after all.

“Well, who are you?” demanded Greyback, standing proud and tall. He paid no attention to the dead bled out wizard on the floor. More interested in the wizard who was alive and helping a member of his pack even after he had attacked him. If he could call nearly throttling someone an attack - which he didn’t really. He was still breathing after all.

“What’s it to you?” muttered Harry, Greyback was the alpha, he could sense it - he was used to getting his own way.

A growl of warning left Greyback’s lips.

“Harry Peverell.” Harry said eventually, grunting in frustration when one of the wounds went way past his trouser line. He missed the surprise on Greyback’s face, as he had to remove the young werewolf’s trousers. Sighing in relief that when he saw it end just a few inches, he wouldn’t have been able to heal someone’s…privates. That was a whole other thing altogether. He noticed his ankle was at an odd angle though.

“Ouch, that’s definitely broken.” muttered Harry, summoning his bag, not wanting to turn his back on Greyback for a second. If the rumours were true - he wouldn’t want to. The only reason he probably hadn’t attacked so far was maybe fear for his one of his pack mates. Although everything he had heard about Greyback contradicted that. “This will taste disgusting, but it’s better than trying to walk on a broken ankle and leg. Which would become further ripped and torn on the full moon.”

“Why would they attack you?” muttered Harry under his breath. But he was still heard by both werewolves’ because of their superior hearing. He got the injured werewolf to swallow two other potions, one that will heal his bone and Eileen’s potion which would help anything he couldn’t see. Meaning any internal injuries he had sustained in the attack.

“What are you talking about?” grunted Greyback eyeing the boy suspiciously. He was an odd one, he knew Don was a werewolf and was still willingly helping him. Wizards never helped them, especially light wizards; the boy was a Potter even if his name was now Peverell. It was impossible not to hear the rumours, even before the Dark Lord found them and asked for their allegiance. Which made the situation sticky, he owed the boy, and he had after all saved Don’s life.
“Aren’t you aligned the Death Eaters and Voldemort?” questioned Harry, pointing to the dead wizard without even looking back.

Fenrir moved over the wizard cautiously moving as well, keeping him within eyeshot, a smart move to make. A possessive growl left his lips when he noticed the mask. Ripping it off his face, he bared his teeth furiously, how dare they attack one of his own? After he had gifted the Dark Lord with his allegiance? Snarling furiously, he stood back up looking ready to wreak havoc on everything and everyone.

“I’ve healed you as much as I can, the ankle will heal within the next twenty four hours. I suggest you keep your weight off it for that time and let it heal. The longer the better, but the bandage will help a bit if you do walk on it.” said Harry. “This will get rid of the bruises, this will stop any infections if you get one, and this is another healing potion if you need it. If you need anything, any potion just let me know, I’ll send it.” he said as he gave him the potions he might need. He didn’t care if they were aligned to the dark, if the dark had done this then there was a chance it could make them turn to the other side or stay out of the war altogether. It’s the best he could hope for at any rate, they hadn’t attacked him so until they did he would never blame them for something they couldn’t help with.

He wasn’t stupid; Greyback was THE alpha, the most known werewolf in the country if not the world. His word was the ones the werewolves listened to, at least the ones that didn’t try and fit in amongst wizards and live/lead normal lives like Remus. He had thought it was normal for werewolf’s to be that way, until he got older and read books. Most werewolves lived as packs, it made sense really since they all hated wizards - why would they live amongst them.

The young werewolf groaned as he sat up, already feeling much better. “Thank you.” he said, his eyes were still filled with surprise as he held the potions close.

“It’s alright, not all of us hate werewolves.” said Harry quietly, “Don’t worry about the vials they are unbreakable.” he added before standing up, making sure he kept Greyback within sight and backing away.

The sound of someone Apparating caused him to whirl around, half a curse leaving his lips before he stopped abruptly. “Severus!” breathed Harry, his entire body going lax in relief. Severus himself had raised his own wand, ready to cast a shielding charm to defend himself. He was proud that Harry cursed first asked questions later; it would save his life one day. Even better that Harry had the forethought to control his reactions. Nodding in pride, his black eyes glinting before he took in the situation.

Severus stiffened, seeing Greyback, who he knew was a loyal supporter of Voldemort’s. Oddly enough he had disappeared a year before he was brought down. He never saw the werewolf in a meeting after Voldemort decided to hunt down the Potter’s and kill the twins - or Harry as it stood. He remembered the Dark Lord being furious with their absence. He couldn’t call them either; he had never branded them with his mark. Either Greyback was too Alpha to have another persons mark on him, or the Dark Lord didn’t see them as worthy of being officially his Death Eaters. Considering he called them ‘half-breed’s’ behind their back he would be willing to bet his fortune on his second guess. It was around the time that Regulus Black had disappeared as well, but his obsession with the Prophecy had forestalled any searches for the missing comrades.

“Don’t, he didn’t do anything. One of his pack was injured…by Death Eaters.” said Harry, still facing Severus. Trying to convey through his eyes, don’t attack him, if they didn’t he might stay away from the Dark side at the very least. It was the best outcome they could hope for, werewolves were strong, impervious to some of their magic, faster than them - in other words they
could lose to them. At least all the werewolves that didn’t take the Wolfsbane Potion. That potion weakened them, made them constantly sick, weak and not even a proper wizard or werewolf. The potion poisoned them, both parts of them, it wasn’t right in his opinion and that’s why he wanted to create a new version, one that wasn’t slowly killing them. At this rate, Remus wouldn’t live to reach forty five if he wasn’t careful.

He trusted Severus to have his back, it’s why he hadn’t once turned back around despite the fact Greyback was there.

Greyback however, wasn’t paying any attention; he was hoisting his injured pack mate onto his feet after Don had dressed himself. Keeping a tight grip around his middle, keeping the weight off the broken leg. He did give Snape a long hard stare; he’d always known the wizard wasn’t loyal to the Dark Lord. He could smell the deceit coming off him in waves. If the Dark Lord couldn’t figure out who the spy was, why would he help him? In fact he’d gotten off on the fact the wizard didn’t know. Wizards were weak, even the Dark Lord, but he had offered them freedom, the one thing they didn’t have here. He noticed the lack of brand burnt into Snape’s arm. He had somehow removed it, something that’s said to be impossible.

Severus wrapped Harry up in his arms and Apparated them away wanting answers but definitely not wanting to remain in the company of Greyback. He knew what happened to people who showed their disgust at werewolves and him in general.

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Prince Manor - Severus and Harry - Unplottable

“Are you alright?” asked Severus; despite the fact Harry looked fine.

“Yeah, he didn’t hurt me,” said Harry, not telling him about the fact Greyback had nearly choked him to death. He didn’t want to see if Severus would get angry enough to try and track Greyback down. Harry knew he’d only been protecting his pack. It wasn’t something Harry could fault him for, since he too would do anything to protect the people closest to him.

“What happened?” demanded Severus. Sitting down, Harry went with him, lying down on his back, and his head in Severus’ lap. Severus noticed Harry did that a lot, constantly cuddled into him as if he was starved for affection. He’d been waiting on Harry getting back, when he failed to appear he started getting worried, he’d stalled going after him, not wanting Harry to think he was hounding him. Twenty minutes had come and gone, all worry about what Harry would think fled out the window. Apparating to the Ministry and seeing him with Greyback had terrified him to the core.

“I had just finished my Runes exam, again.” sighed Harry exasperated by that fact still. “I heard a commotion at the side of the building. I looked around and saw three Death Eaters beating someone and hexing them. I flung a few spells, including Sectumsempra; it was the only one that hit its target. They flung a few spells back at me, but missed, I was besides the building they had no way of being able to hit me. They Apparated away, they didn’t even try and attack me from behind like I suspect they would. They mustn’t have much courage, but we all know they are cowards who have to attack in groups.” his voice had gone cold and dark when thinking about that. Nobody other than Severus really knew the mark the attack had left on him, and it wasn’t just the wounds. Even though they were gone now, the scars were just inside apposed to outwards.

“That Death Eater will be found just outside the Ministry building, I don’t think much of an investigation will be put into it.” said Harry, “Will there?”
“I doubt it very much, Scrimgeour loathes Death Eaters, he will just consider it another dead would have been potential threat.” stated Severus, relaxing fully. “Did Greyback say anything to you?”

“No he was there for his pack mate, he howled when he was being attacked, it must have alerted them or him.” explained Harry. “They’re so strong compared to Remus, it seems impossible to believe they were both werewolves...or that all three of them are.”

“There’s a difference between them,” said Severus sardonically. “Greyback in addition of being one of the most dangerous werewolves is also proud of what he is. The rumours have it that he has been biting children for the past few decades. Desiring to build a power base that could one day take over the magical world - wizards more specifically.”

“I’m sensing a but…” Harry said, staring up at Severus, enjoying the hand rubbing at his scalp absently.

“There aren’t enough werewolves out there for Greyback to have been biting for the last decade or so.” Severus said quietly. “There’s been some savage attacks, yes, connected to werewolves but they do what they have to, to remain undetected from Muggles, animal hunters and of course wizards who try to ‘bring them in’ for the reward. Lupin is the only one I know who was bitten by Greyback. Although that was in retaliation from what Lyall Lupin said, his father. He believed all werewolves were vicious, soulless, evil and deserving of death. So Greyback gave him food for thought by biting his son, probably forcing the wizard to change his mind in regards to werewolves in the process.”

“I knew about that, it’s the only time I heard Remus get angry.” said Harry thoughtfully. Remembering back to when he was younger, where the odd occurrence of Sirius and Remus showing up at the manor. Nick had thoughtlessly asked him how he became a werewolf. Remus had answered as best as he could, trying to keep his anger under control. He hadn’t succeeded, instead electing to get some fresh air while Sirius continued on from where Remus left off. He’d been hiding in the secret passage way between the rooms listening in.

“Fenrir Greyback is, perhaps, the most savage werewolf alive today. He regards it as his mission in life to bite and to contaminate as many people as possible; he wants to create enough werewolves to overcome the wizards. Voldemort has promised him prey in return for his services. Greyback specialises in children... Bites them young, and raise them away from their parents, raise them to hate normal wizards.”

Harry was brought out of his thoughts by Severus speaking again.

“Lupin is the opposite from Greyback; he is repulsed by what he is. I doubt very much Greyback and Lupin have seen each other since it happened.” stated Severus, he would love to see the confrontation if it did happen that’s for damn sure.

Harry snorted, “Lupin wouldn’t stand a chance against him.” Greyback was tall, a lot taller than him, and extremely intimidating. He wasn’t afraid to admit that, there would be nothing left of Remus if he started anything with the alpha werewolf. Sighing softly, he dozed for a while before Severus spoke to him again waking him up.

“When is your next exam?” enquired Severus, true to Harry’s word, as soon as he got home, or rather after his friends had left he’d gotten in touch with the Ministry. They had immediately fallen over themselves to quickly set out a timetable for all his exams. His last exam, Harry had said was just over the fortnight mark.

“Four o’clock, tonight.” revealed Harry, suppressing a yawn. He had woken up at five o’clock this
morning, getting some last minute research done. Brewing more of the teleportation potion, which was in extremely high demand right now. He’d had offers from various Potion Masters wishing for the recipe, all willing to pay him handsomely for it. He didn’t know them so he didn’t trust them. He had however given the recipe to Rick, Potions Master James, so he wasn’t flooded with demands from America. He had paid though, but he would make it back within seven months of brewing depending on how many people wanted it. It wasn’t the money Harry was doing it for; he just didn’t want the Dark getting their hands on his potions and using it to outsmart the Auror’s.

“I’m going to go down and investigate some of the ingredients we brought back, care to join me?” asked Severus, not moving from his spot yet.

Harry thought about it, for all of three seconds before he stood up nodding. He could sleep tonight after dinner, right now he was going to make the most of the alone time he had with Severus. He might even get lucky and persuade Severus to have some…fun with him in the lab. His eyes twinkling deviously, he sauntered out of the room leaving Severus no doubt what he was thinking about.

Severus groaned at the image that presented to him in his mind as he followed his insatiable brat out of the room.
Chapter 78

Invisible

Chapter 78

Newts, Conversations and Surprises

Severus stirred the silver rod into the potion, counting the amount of times he did so. His mind was constantly distracted, by the events almost a fortnight ago. His little minx had distracted him from his potions completely, he had taken him bent over the potions table, the moans, whimpers and screams he’d garnered from his insatiable brat still rung in his ears even now. Shifting slightly, feeling arousal build up, just thinking about it. He could no longer remember why he had been so hesitant to have a physical relationship with Harry anymore.

-----0 Flash Back 0-----

Severus muffled a groan of appreciation as he watched his lover saunter down to their potions lab. The urge to fuck him as hard as possible, caused him to stiffen in his trousers. Following him down, he stepped into their lab and closed the door flinging every locking charm he knew, so nobody could disturb them. It was only his mother in the house, and hopefully she would know better than to try and enter a locked room. His black eyes met twinkling green ones, a possessive need arose in him. He wanted to show Harry who he belonged to, Harry was his and he’d made it so. He had warned Harry he was extremely possessive, and that had only gotten stronger as they bonded further as lovers instead of Apprentice and Potions Master.

It seemed as though Harry was in the mood to play, as he set about preparing a cauldron. Oh no, Harry certainly wouldn’t be doing anything like that after teasing him in such a fashion. He was rather smug at how comfortable he had gotten in their relationship. Then again Harry had constantly tried his restraint since he agreed to ‘date’ him when the time came. He’d kept his libido under control, but that was no longer needed.

Stepping up, he put his arms on each side of the table, trapping Harry in the small space. “Did you seriously think you could tease me?” whispered Severus, his voice seductive and low, biting Harry’s earlobe none to gently. Listening to Harry’s breathing speed up and gasp lowly but in the dungeons it was heard as if he’d bellowed it. “Did you?” he asked again his hot breath tracing against Harry’s neck. Biting down and sucking on the skin, Severus felt Harry stiffen further in his arms squeaking breathlessly.

“No,” Harry managed to get out breathlessly. He’d never heard Severus like this before, and it was turning him on like nothing else ever had. His skin was heating up almost feverishly, hyperly aware of each movement with his lover pressed against his back.

“No?” murmured Severus, his tongue lapping at the mark he’d left on Harry’s neck. It was already red; he knew pretty soon it would be purple. He wanted everyone to know Harry was taken, and what better way than to mark him where everyone would see it? Nuzzling Harry’s neck softly, feeling his Adams apple bobbling up and down as he gulped.

Harry mutely shook his head, reaffirming his answer; too breathless to speak dear Merlin he’d never felt anything like this before. His entire body was high in anticipation, wondering what Severus was going to do next. He had been stupid if he thought he could get the better of Severus. He was Slytherin after all; he’d only wanted to tease him a little. Although if this was the rewards
he got for doing it...he really ought to do it more often. Any tiredness he’d felt was gone, in place was raw, pure pleasure with the likes he’d never felt before.

“How disappointing,” replied Severus, his voice close enough to Harry’s neck to reverberate all over him causing him to shiver.

“Severus,” moaned Harry, finally able to get something passed his lips. Rubbing his backside against Severus’ as he tried to get his arm out of Severus’ hold to rub against his own arousal that was becoming too much for him. Severus wouldn’t let him do either of these things, as he kept his arms where they were stuck between them, as well as moving away so Harry couldn’t get any friction whatsoever.

“Oh, no, Harry,” said Severus seductively, “I’m going to hold out on you until you are screaming in mindless pleasure that you’ve never felt before.”

Harry whimpered, before gulping loudly as the spreading warmth flowed through him, turning his legs to jelly. That promise had just served to inflame him in ways he hadn’t anticipated. The books he’d read had described it, and he had thought it was what he had experienced previously. So naïve, this was just so much more, he wanted Severus and he wanted him now. Yet Severus wouldn’t let him turn around, he couldn’t move, couldn’t get rid of the ache building up inside him. He was already beginning to feel like a raw bundle of nerves.

“I’m going to bind your arms, Harry.” said Severus, waiting for a few seconds to see if Harry would object. He didn’t, invisible robe sprang from the end of his wand, and furled around Harry’s wrists. Binding them together before stretching them along the table causing Harry to wheeze for air, his entire body trembling with desire. “Alright?” asked Severus, running his hands through Harry’s hair. Aware that he might not like it, he’d been bound and almost killed a few years ago after all. There was no sign of panic, or fear on Harry so he continued on, his heart clenching in love that Harry trusted him so much. Harry was comfortable enough, leaning on his elbows as he waited.

Severus made quick work of removing Harry of his shirt with magic, unbeknown to him; his cloak was still at the side of the Ministry building where he’d left it. Refraining from touching him, causing Harry to whine low in his throat, arching himself up begging for anything Severus had to offer him. Another shiver worked through Harry when he chuckled softly, before he moaned wantonly.

Opening Harry’s trouser buttons, managing to avoid touching him to his secret delight, before he began to slowly pull them down. A quick flick of his wand, his shoes, socks and pulled down trousers were gone, folding neatly at the other side of the room. The only thing hiding Harry from him now was a pair of boxers, which were tented and wet with precum. Smirking in feral satisfaction, despite the fact his own were probably the same. He began to slowly and methodically remove his boxers, listening to Harry grunt and growl in frustration as his attempts at rubbing against anything was thwarted once more.

“Severus,” moaned Harry, his voice needy and desperate. Trying to rub his legs together to generate some friction, only for Severus to mutter under his breath and his feet were suddenly moving without his consent. He couldn’t move them back no matter how hard he tried. It was as if something metal was between them preventing even a miniscule movement even possible. It didn’t hurt, it was just impossible to move, it made him feel extremely vulnerable but even more turned on. He hadn’t done anything like this before, licking his dry lips, trying to get himself under control but one touch from Severus and it was gone out the window.

“I think I like you like this, Harry.” whispered Severus tauntingly. “Will I leave you like this for
Harry squirmed as he gasped in needy puffs.

“How much do you want me to touch you, Harry?” whispered Severus, dropping small kisses down his back. He could barely feel them, but he knew what he was doing and he whimpered once more. “Do you?” he asked again, his finger trailing further down, touching the very place Harry wanted him to be. Causing it to spasm, the pink hole practically begged for him to take what he wanted.

“Y-es, yes, yes, yes, please, Severus,” begged Harry, arching back hissing as he was met with nothing. Merlin frustrated tears were forming in his eyes. He wasn’t used to being denied; perhaps this happening again wasn’t a good idea- strike off any thought of teasing Severus ever again. His legs were beginning to ache being kept in that position as well. Something slick at his back caused him to forget about it. His breath was hot against the table; causing condensation as he waited eyes closed breathing harshly.

“Alright?” asked Severus, his own voice breathless.

Extremely impatient now, he pressed back, causing whatever it was to pop through his ring of muscle. A surprised squeak leaving his lips, it wasn’t what he expected it to be. Clenching down on it, Harry looked back his face and body flushed red, he felt as though his body was dissolving with the intensity of what he was feeling. Then suddenly it vibrated inside him, causing him to arch up, his mouth open in silent exclamation, a choked sound left his lips afterwards. It was touching that spot inside of him repeatedly, just as he felt as though he would cum violently the vibrations stopped.

“Severus!” cried Harry, tugging at his bound arms, “I ca-ant…” he whined, he couldn’t do it. It was all too much for him; he wasn’t used to this kind of pleasure. Turning back he laid his forehead against the table shuddering as he tried to calm his over stimulated body down.

Gasping in renewed shock, when he felt Severus leaning over him, skin on skin contact, he must have removed his clothes as well. Arching his neck when Severus began to bite and nibble at the other side, sucking on him until he knew there would be vivid bruises on his neck. He felt Severus moan as the plug began to vibrate against them both. Harry whimpered when he felt Severus biting into his back. His entire body stiffened as he felt himself poised to cum, only to have Severus clamp down on him causing him to screech as he was once again prevented from his orgasm. Another whispered spell was muttered, before the hand removed.

“Wa-a-at did you did?” rasped Harry; his mouth felt like sandpaper, he was so parched.

“It is painful?” asked Severus, his pleasure temporarily forgotten as he made sure Harry wasn’t hurting.

“No, just odd,” admitted Harry quietly, as much as it was bugging him that he couldn’t finish, he didn’t want it to stop! He felt as though he was going to be slowly driven insane with all these warring emotions inside of him. His thoughts were forgotten once again as he was over stimulated by the vibrating. When would he stop playing with him? His entire body was on the cusp and damn it he wanted release. “P-please Severus, please, please, touch me.”

“Here? Here? Or here?” whispered Severus tauntingly. Chuckling wickedly as Harry whimpered piteously, rubbing himself against him. Oh yes, he would make sure his little devious brat knew who he belonged to and never to mess with him. Harry still had a lot to learn in the arts of forbidding ones partner pleasure yet piling it on. Finally he was enacting his wildest dreams of his
boy, after putting up with his teasing for a year. This though was better than his dreams, so vocal, so sensual and eager.

“So eager my Harry,” whispered Severus directly into Harry’s ear, licking down the lobe.

“So eager!” pleaded Harry, his body lying complacently; he was unable to work up the strength to do anything other than feel.

Severus took pity on Harry, as he removed the spell on his legs, and unwound the one on his hands until he flipped him over. His sweaty body flopped over, but there was one part of him standing at attention, swollen, red and purple in places desperate for release. The spell on his hands was redone, looping them up over his head; his green eyes clouded with raw pleasure and need. Hooking his hand under Harry’s head and lifting it up, he kissed Harry viciously, desperately as if he was trying to mark Harry as his completely.

“That’s it Harry, give in,” whispered Severus, across those needy lips. One hand snaked down and grabbed onto the plug inside Harry. With careful strokes, he began to take it out; thankfully he’d had enough lubricant on it so it didn’t hurt with how Harry arched up. He couldn’t deny though it had aroused him like nothing else had seeing his lover’s greedy hole swallowing it, milking it for all it was worth. Standing back up, he watched as the plug stretched Harry’s hole further, with a final quiet pop, it was out. The little hole began to milk thin air; the little whine Harry let loose hardened him further.

“Wrap your legs around me,” demanded Severus, “Good boy.” he murmured nuzzling close to Harry’s erection causing him to gurgle out a cross between a whine and choked sob. Realizing how close Harry was to loosing it completely, he placed himself at Harry’s entrance. He didn’t even wait until Harry pressed back he thrust straight in, able to do so since it had been stretched by the plug. He knew from experience it wouldn’t hurt burn a little maybe, but it all added to the intensity of the pleasure.

“FUCK!” Harry swore, trembling violently, the relief was almost overwhelming, “Oh, god!”

Severus remained where he was buried to the hilt in his lover’s tight heat, biting his own tongue to stop himself ending this prematurely.

“Stop!” wiggled Harry, trying to get Severus to move.

“Stop?” enquired Severus, knowing without a doubt it wasn’t what it sounded like but continue his merciless teasing.

“No!” DON’T STOP! FUCK ME NOW!” growled Harry, his eyes glowing with fervour and power.

“So demanding,” murmured Severus, before he thrust in powerfully, it was a good job the table was melded with the cement floor otherwise it would have toppled over.

All that could be heard was their breathing, the slapping of flesh meeting flesh, as they gave and received more pleasure than they thought possible. Harry was a mess of incoherent babbling, as he arched up, trying to match Severus’ pace. It was a lost cause from the get go, but he still tried as wave after wave of bone melting pleasure overwhelmed him. His legs were curled around Severus’ body, dragging him further in, his toes curled in what would feel like a permanent position for hours after.

Severus could feel the impending tingling; non-verbally he removed the spell he’d placed on Harry’s penis. Severus tried to drive himself impossibly deeper into Harry, hitting his prostrate
twice before Harry’s body stiffened as he came between them spurring until he had emptied himself. All the while milking Severus causing the wizard to drive once more into him. Grunting Severus bit down on Harry’s shoulder as he unloaded himself, unlike anything he’d experienced. They remained there for what felt like hours, but it was only minutes. Eventually Severus moaned as he came out of Harry, feeling the draught after being in his hot, tight heat. Feeling his seed trickling down, he grabbed plug and sterilized it before placing it inside Harry’s already oversensitive body.

Looking up, he noticed Harry was close to passing out; his green eyes were half-mast, sated and exhausted. Picking up his wand he removing the bonds on Harry’s arms, removing the spillage from their chests, sitting him up only for Harry to whimper as the plug sank deeply into him. Harry fell against Severus’ chest, too tired to stay even sitting up. Harry wrapped his arms around Severus, nuzzling at his neck, his orgasm had been so intense, and he’d nearly passed out. Only be sheer will power had be succeeded in remaining awake. Severus’ own arms wrapped around him, before he felt as though he was being sucked through a tube, as they were Apparated. Directly into their bedroom, Harry no longer used the one down the hall. He had practically moved in since before their holiday, and he was determined to see it remain that way.

“Come, you need some rest,” said Severus, leading Harry to the bed, but his wobbly legs caused more problems than they solved. Eventually he had Harry on the bed, and sliding amongst the black silk sheets, grabbing the duvet he covered the pair of them up. He spelled the curtains closed, bathing the room in complete darkness. Severus grunted as Harry turned around cuddled into it. At least he wasn’t in the middle of the Caribbean he supposed, and it wasn’t too hot. Closing his eyes smug in the satisfaction and knowledge he had thoroughly exhausted his lover. Well it would be a time he wouldn’t forget in a hurry that’s for damn certain. Flicking his wand yet again, he set the alarm for three forty-five; it would give Harry enough time to get to the Ministry for his exam.

-----0 End Flash Back 0-------

The day after, since Harry had retired straight to bed aters, still exhausted, he’d found out his lover was still…innocent in the ways of pleasure as he had suspected when Harry asked him what he was doing. Instead of telling him, he had given him a book to read through. Which he had done, in their room of course, he hadn’t seen him for hours afterwards. When he had seen him next, he had been red faced but calm. Just as he’d left for another exam he’s proposed trying out the position in chapter ten. Needless to say Severus hadn’t moved a muscle from the fireplace until Harry had returned. He excused them both, and unnecessary to say Eileen hadn’t heard from them again that night - much to her amusement. If the twinkling in her eyes had been anything to go on.

Speaking of the devil, Harry wandered into the lab not three minutes later.

“How did the meeting go?” asked Severus, sterilizing the stirrer and placing it on the table. Giving Harry his full undivided attention.

“Really good, I think I’m beginning to understand how the brain works now,” said Harry, “It was nice of him to take time out of his schedule to educate me.”

“Indeed,” agreed Severus wholeheartedly.

“Do you think I’ll have to wait a month for my results?” questioned Harry, as he walked over to the corner and grabbed himself a cauldron. Pouring water into it from his wand, and setting up a fire with finesse he’d developed from practice.

“I doubt it, the reason it takes so long after taking them at Hogwarts is because of the amount of
students taking them. They have to sort through the results of roughly two hundred and forty
student papers, on each and individual paper. It certainly keeps them busy, even with magic they
have to double check everything,” stated Severus, “I’m sure your results are already marked, at
least most of them, you could probably find out if you went to the department that deals with it.”
they had entire departments dedicated to it. The new Ministry was bigger, so they might even have
more Witches and Wizards dedicated to it.

“Oh yeah, I didn’t even think of that,” said Harry thoughtfully, before adding. “Remus will be
through shortly, just as soon as he feels better.”

“Just remember it might not have worked, do not get your hopes up.” said Severus cautiously, the
new Aconite wasn’t toxic. He hadn’t been able to believe it at first, but the results always came out
the same. They had brewed the Wolfsbane potion for Remus Lupin and a lone wolf called Jackson
Reed. Who had agreed to become part of the testing stage, he was well compensated, and they had
to use him. Remus wasn’t enough, they had to know what affects they had on wolves that hadn’t
used the other potion and of course those who had. The results wouldn’t be immediate, but gradual
over time, Jackson and Remus did not get on at all. In fact Jackson had called Remus a sheep in
wolves fur, obviously Jackson could smell the disgust the older wizard had for his wolf
counterpart. Jackson had no fear of his wolf, and he’d only been a werewolf for just over seven
months now. He no longer had them near each other, although it did mean more work for him.

“I know,” said Harry nodding benignly. “I hope it works though, it will allow them to keep their
mind and stop them becoming like Remus.”

“Don’t let him hear you say that,” snorted Severus amused. He still didn’t know how the hell
Harry managed to find a lone wolf and convince him to go along with it. Money wasn’t usually an
incentive for werewolves, but he supposed it didn’t hurt to have it.

“It’s true, I mean look at the difference between them,” Harry pointed out, one healthy and
muscular and the other sickly, pale and rake thin.

“You never did say how you managed to get him to go along with this,” Severus said, unable to
censor the curiosity in his voice.

“Well…I sort of lied,” said Harry sheepishly, “I told the committee member who had dragged him
in that he was a friend…and I had been with him on the night of the full moon before. That it
wasn’t possible for him to be one, they didn’t even question it, and they just apologised to him and
let him go.”

“You what?” said Severus, his voice strangled slightly, unable to believe his ears. “They believed
you? Just proves what I’ve always thought, the bloody Ministry is extremely ignorant.” once he
had time to actually digest it, he found himself proud of the underhand tactics Harry was using to
get what he wants…it was positively Slytherin and he admired that above all else. Perhaps he was
rubbing off on the bookworm. If the rumours were to be believed its how Greyback had managed
to escape at one point too.

“Not all of them,” Harry pointed out, they couldn’t all be otherwise they would never get things
done in the damn Ministry.

“No, not all.” conceded Severus, but in his opinion most of them were.

“Letters for Master Harry,” said Dobby from behind the closed door of the lab.

“Come in, Dobby!” called Harry, slicing his next ingredient up before scraping them into the
“Here you go, Master Harry,” said Dobby placing the letters on the table away from the ingredients and bubbling potion.

“Nice…um…top, Dobby.” said Harry, barely able to say it and keep a straight face. It was five different colours; it was like he hadn’t been able to decide which one to use so decided on them all.

“Thank you,” said Dobby his chest puffed out proudly. “Dobby knitted it himself, he did.”

“Yes…yes…I suspected as much, you can go now, thank you.” said Harry shaking his head as the House-Elf disappeared. He would always be grateful to Dobby though, he had helped him through a very tough time. Showed him a kindness despite the danger it could have presented to himself. Gave him food to eat when he was starving, and tried to ease the loneliness when he was locked in a dungeon by himself. Shaking off his horrible thoughts, he didn’t dwell on it much anymore, but it did creep up on him and surprise him.

Looking at his watch, he picked up the glass stirrer and began to stir fifteen times anti-clockwise before adding the already prepared ingredient in one at a time with each stir. Once all fifteen beans were simmering in the potion, he removed the stirrer and placed it on the table, absently spelling it clean. It would now be fine for twenty minutes, and then he would add the last ingredient in.

Magicking a timer above the cauldron, he grabbed his letters curiously, frowning at the messy illegible scrawl. It looked as if a five year old had written it, who could it be? The writing wasn’t familiar to him, checking to see if there was magic on it; he found it absent of anything malicious. Opening it he unfolded the letter and found the inside writing was a little better than it was on the outside.

“What…the…fuck?!” muttered Harry, the letter falling from his grasp, his brow furrowed in confusion. How was that possible? He’d had it two weeks ago! Two bloody weeks it shouldn’t have affected him at all. Unless it was a combination of the three potions he’d given him.

“’arry! Harry!” shouted Severus, concerned, he wasn’t listening to him. Looking at the letter, wondering what had gotten Harry all wound up. Usually he didn’t stoop to reading other peoples mail, but he had to know what was wrong. Picking it up, he arched his brow and grimaced in distaste he could barely read it. This coming from a man who had endured reading eleven year old chicken scrawls under the guise of homework for years.

“Who is Don?” asked Severus blankly. Not wanting to admit feeling jealousy surging through him, but some of it must have shown on his face judging by the look Harry gave him.

“He’s the young werewolf I saved from the Death Eaters, remember?” said Harry, feeling funny in the pit of his stomach. He wasn’t sure what the emotion was, but he had felt it when he saw the possessive look crossing Severus’ face. It reminded him of that night together in this lab, he’d made him feel so much. Even two weeks later the marks were still there, albeit faded obviously but still discernable.

“Ah,” said Severus, clearing his throat as the feelings faded leaving him feeling slightly embarrassed.

“What have we created, Severus? How can it help so much?” asked Harry, completely overwhelmed, slumping against the other lab worktop. Shaking his head feeling completely shocked, he really didn’t understand it at all. Rubbing his temple in agitation, his mind went through every single herb and ingredient that went into Eileen’s potion.
“I have no idea,” said Severus just as baffled as Harry.

Eileen’s potion had taken away the pain of transforming from human to werewolf, and from werewolf to human. Whether it was permanent or just one month…they would wait a month to know for sure. They had started of creating something solely to save a loved one…now…now its properties had surpassed beyond anything they could have dreamed of achieving.

They were changing the very history of potions through sheer happenstance.

Unbeknown to the stunned pair this was just a little of what they would achieve together.

Harry’s fear of being found of the ‘boy-who-lived’ would pass shadowed in the corner of both their joint potions and his own.

All Harry had to do was prevent the fact everyone knowing from crushing him, otherwise all that was meant to come to pass…will not.
The few days after they got the letter, saw that Severus and Harry was so busy they rarely ventured from the dungeons, Eileen had to come down to seem them if she wanted to. More often than not she only saw Severus and Harry when she was showing someone down the dungeons; they were polite but wary of her. She couldn't hurt anyone never mind these men. They looked, if they wanted to, able to crush her where she stood. Well all but Remus Lupin, of course, he was almost as thin as her. She made sure Dobby kept them fed, she wasn't about to let them starve on some quest to find answers. She knew they were eating, since she'd asked the House-Elf if the trays were empty, and he'd replied the affirmative.

"I think we've done all we can for now," said Harry, stretching the kinks out of his back as he placed the quill on the workstation. Muffling a yawn as well, he hadn't been sleeping much. They woke up really early and went to bed extremely late, both determined to get to the bottom of the mystery. Along the way they'd created a new Wolfsbane Potion, one that would allow them to keep their mind, eradicate the pain of transforming to and from their wolf counterpart and the biggest benefit was that it didn't poison them. The new Aconite plant wasn't poisonous, and so they had planted it in the greenhouse and ordered more from a reputable business that was sending via owl, seeds as well as nine plants that were fully matured. All but one of the old Aconite plants were removed, and given to Neville who took them with pleasure. They no longer had a need for them, but kept one just in case anything came there way that required it. The only thing was they weren't sure just exactly what Eileen's potion was capable of, they'd both come to the agreement, albeit reluctantly that it would always remain that way.

They had two different recipes, and until the next full moon they wouldn't know which one to brew. One recipe had just the Aconite plant removed and the non poisonous one added. The second had Eileen's potion integrated into it, quite successfully as well, which had surprised them. If Don did not feel the affects of transforming next month, they would just make sure the werewolves know Eileen's potion eradicated the pain on what looked to be a permanent basis. Especially if they didn't want to take the Wolfsbane Potion, it would take a while for word to spread that it really doesn't cause harm only then did they reckon it would be used. If for whatever reason, the Potion only helped one transformation they had the answer already.

"It would seem to be the case," conceded Severus, "I am curious to know if it will work constantly or if it's a one time thing. If it is just a one time thing, it will make the Wolfsbane Potion more expensive. Considering most Werewolves cannot get jobs, if they had to choose it would obviously be the old cheaper version that will get chosen."

"I don't know we grow everything so surely it will be alright to make it at least just a galleon cheaper than the original recipe?" suggested Harry, shivering at the cold in the dungeons. Absently whispering a spell to heat him up, as he thought about ways to make the potion cheaper without leaving them out of pocket. Sure they had a lot of money, but nobody in their right mind would constantly each month brew something that would lose them money. Breaking even is probably the best they could do, a lot of their time went into brewing the monthly Wolfsbane Potion.
"I suppose it depends on how much we need to brew, how big the demand is going to be. If we do not have enough in the greenhouse to cover it, then we will need to buy more supplies." stated Severus, "Dobby?!

"How can Dobby be helping Master Severus and Harry?" answered the House-Elf, eyes bright as he regarded them.

"Bring us something to eat and coffee please," demanded Severus, but without any heat behind it. "Bring the coffee first if the food will take time."

"Rose is already cooking it Master Severus," said Dobby, "But I can bring your coffee right away!" he exclaimed hyperly before he was gone.

"Not even a quarter the Werewolves come forward for that potion, if that, hardly any of them register, not that I blame them." said Harry, disgusted. He'd seen how they were treating Jackson Reed, it wasn't right sure they were a werewolf one night a month, but that didn't mean they had a right to be treated as if they were the most foul loathsome creature on the earth.

"No they don't, it's why Lupin and Black went abroad to open clinics to help them, on Dumbledore's orders. I think he was hoping that they would return the favour and fight for the light side when the time came. Lupin would have done it regardless and Black would have followed him. Once Dumbledore realized how futile it was I think Black kept them going for years before they realized they had to come back. They'd missed out on their own lives by helping other people. Even if they hadn't come back when they did, they would have been recalled as soon as Dumbledore realized the Dark Lord was back." replied Severus, speaking as matter-of-factly.

"They should have helped those closer to home, their own country." said Harry frowning, he hadn't really thought about that before. He'd known Lupin and Sirius had been gone doing something like that. Still, it didn't matter now, what was done was done; maybe he should do something similar and open a clinic for those in need. His mind began to wander, was it a clinic they needed through? Or just a safe place to stay, food to eat and a place their wolf could roam without the thought of hurting someone during the full moon? The money he made surely he could help people? He knew what it was like to be ignored, whether you were a child or adult it hurt.

"They should have," agreed Severus, as Dobby returned with their coffee, and as always silently left again.

"Here," said Severus, handing over a coffee to Harry, it was chilly in the dungeons, and they couldn't heat the room itself.

"Thanks." murmured Harry, his hands automatically curling around the cup getting some heat from the piping hot sides.

"Breakfast and letters for Master Harry and Severus." said Rose, appearing with their meal, placing the tray on the table, away from their hot beverages.

"Thank you, Rose." said Harry, giving his gratitude to the elder House-Elf.

"No problem, Master Harry, Severus," said Rose, bowing before leaving; to her it was her job there were no thanks needed.

"Your results are here," stated Severus, handing over the letters that were for Harry. He had seen enough Ministry envelopes to know without even seeing inside what it was. Plus he remembered getting his own results; it had been a deciding factor on what he would do in future. Failing Potions
hadn't been an option but one couldn't help but fear the results and the wait even he did, despite the fact he knew distinctively he'd passed with flying colours.

"Brilliant!" exclaimed Harry, ripping open the envelope before his eyes roamed eagerly over the page, seeing how he'd done for the first time. He hadn't been nervous, he'd just wanted to pass his N.E.W.T's and concentrate on potions. He already had a career so the results had no effect on him whatsoever, but at least it would be them out of the way.

Wizarding Examinations Authority

Ministry of Magic, Educational Division

Griselda Marchbanks, Head Examiner

Nastily

Exhausting

Wizarding Tests

Pass Grade Fail Grade

Outstanding (O) Poor (P)

Exceeded Expectations (E) Dreadful (D)

Acceptable (A) Troll (T)

Lord Harry Peverell achieved the following N.E.W.T's

Defence Against the Dark Arts O

Potions O (congratulations on beating the highest score on record)

Ancient Runes E

Charms O

Transfiguration O

Arithmancy A

Care of Magical Creatures O

"What you expected?" enquired Severus, eating his breakfast watching Harry closely.

"I didn't do as well as I hoped on Arithmancy but the rest are good," said Harry, his brow puckered as he thought about it. He hadn't studied as much for Arithmancy it was more difficult and harder to get into. Runes he'd loved, and had expected an outstanding, he'd done so much studying for that in particular. There was nothing he could do about it now; it wasn't as if he wanted a career that dealt with Ancient Runes on a daily basis. It didn't fail to amuse him, seeing the O for Defence and Potions when he hadn't even been at the school to learn them yet the two he had been at a school learning from teachers were falling short. Although he supposed Severus had been a teacher as well.
"Five outstanding, that is more than just good," said Severus seeing the results for himself. He had passed all exams, and that was more than most, a lot of students failed their O.W.L's never mind their N.E.W.T's. It seemed as if Harry had bet another record, highest exam score for Potions. A smile twitched across his face, Harry had confounded the examiner by pointing out mistakes they had in their extra credit questions. He would have loved to have seen the look on their faces. He'd had the gall to call Harry a liar at first, but Harry just continued on until he'd garnered the attention of many examiners including Griselda and she'd been utterly embarrassed to have let the tests go out with such a mistake in them. She's hastily corrected the question, and went around the others who were also taking the exam and changed it too.

"I did better in some than I thought I would," agreed Harry, but he was a perfectionist, his only consolation was that he hadn't ended up failing any classes.

"It seems as though Flourish and blots have the book I wanted in stock," said Severus, reading the letter he'd received from them.

"Which book?" asked Harry curiously. As he read his own, including his one from Gringotts. He had given money to Fred and George Weasley to invest in a business venture. Since he wasn't a lot, he had agreed, it seemed it had been a very good idea. Already he had more than double what he'd invested in the first place. Rumour has it that Zonko's was having trouble keeping up with the newer and better inventions. He summarised they wouldn't have competition soon, if Zonko's hadn't been in the same place he would have bought them out and put the Weasley's in there as well. Two of the same companies in the same place was actually just stupid.

"A book about why people retreat into their own mind, different scenarios and examples, by a healer Jason Rainer who apprenticed under Healer Mungo Bonham who happened to be the founder of St. Mungo's. It's a rather rare book, only a dozen were ever written. It is by no means expensive, or a highly desired book but I think it might help understand what happened to the Longbottoms a little better." stated Severus, placing his cutlery on the tray having finished his meal, the letter still clutched in his hand.

"I just don't understand why the Death Eaters would think Frank and Alice were the Secret Keepers to Azkaban." said Harry, repeating something he'd said a few times since the unfortunate couple had been attacked at the Ministry battle. The money Neville had given him to create a potion to help them hadn't been touched yet. He probably would when he actually tried to create something for them, but until that time he had no need to touch it. Neville thankfully didn't need his parents so much anymore, it was Frankie that did, and he was younger than Neville. It was nearing a year since their parents had been attacked; Neville was taking it on his own shoulders to look after them both. They both hated their grandmother, and visiting her a few times a year had been the worst days of their lives. She was so strict and couldn't tolerate unruly children, or the fact they didn't act as proper 'pureblood' heirs as they were. Neville wasn't about to let her rule their life or worse Frankie's, no, he was being strong for both of them.

"They were desperate, they want their fellow Death Eaters out of Azkaban, so they can begin their 'true goals' again, that and its probably what the Dark Lord is demanding." stated Severus. "Considering Alice and Frank are Order members, the Dark Lord would have been extremely pleased with whomssoever actually did the deed." with the loss of so many still incapacitated Death Eaters, the Dark Lord would be finding it difficult to take control of everything.

"Why not go after the Minister or something? I mean Frank and Alice were only Aurors," Harry pointed out curiously.

"Not just Aurors, and not just Order members but they were very good at their job, two of the
highest ranking ones at that." added Severus, reading yet another letter. Once he'd read everything, he put them into two different piles, one went into his cloak pocket the others were set on fire then their ashes banished. "Are you coming to Diagon Alley?"

"You can't, you have a meeting with Dumbledore in twenty minutes," Harry quickly said, remembering Severus talking about it yesterday.

"It won't take twenty minutes to get a book," Severus replied dryly.

"I suppose it can't hurt to go to Hogwarts, I'm going to miss it actually," said Harry, "It's not something I thought I would say..."

"I don't think there's a student in her halls who wouldn't miss Hogwarts when they leave." said Severus, he certainly had missed it, although not for long admittedly. He'd barely passed his Potions Mastery before being taken on as the Potions Professor and Head of Slytherin House upon Slughorn's retirement.

"Before my fourth year I wouldn't have," snorted Harry, clasping his cloak on and removing the dragon hide apron he'd had on. They had both brewed the alternative Wolfsbane potions, one crate of them it mattered little since they would all get used. They just needed a way to get word to the werewolf communities, ideally someone like Greyback but there was no way he would agree at least according to Severus. So Remus and the two others were their best bet.

"Perhaps," said Severus, neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

With that the door of the empty potions lab swung shut.

"Hello boys, finally finished?" asked Eileen, seeing how relaxed they were she knew they had. She knew them well, and despite being a Ravenclaw she was as sneaky as they came.

"Yes, I'm going to Diagon Alley, is there anything you'd like?" questioned Severus, grabbing his pouch from the fireplace.

"We are running low on slug repellent, I sent for it but they sent it to the post office, can you pick it up for me?" asked Eileen, moving towards the table and taking a seat. She had only just got up and she was rather hungry, especially with the smell of breakfast thick in the air.

"We are going there anyway, the Aconite plants I bought are there already." said Harry, he hadn't expected such a quick delivery but considering they had potions to brew they needed them and he was grateful.

"Thank you," said Eileen beaming at Harry.

Severus took a hold of Harry, despite the fact he could Apparate, and side-long Apparated him to Diagon Alley. Right outside of Flourish and Blotts, the Alley was quite quiet, it was rather odd. It was usually busy in the early morning, people out getting newspaper, maybe even breakfast and things like that. They were obviously still shaken about the attack on Hogsmeade, they both idly wondered if the students would even get to attend the village this year. He doubted many parents would give permission, not during the turbulent times that was suddenly gripping them after many years of peace.

"I'm here to collect a book that was ordered for me, names Severus Snape." stated Severus, as he walked towards the shop assistant thrusting the letter he'd received at her as well. He didn't bother looking at the other books on offer, Harry had already bought anything mind related in the shop, and there was no new books that interested him. Since he was a regular subscriber he would
receive notice if there were any new books due out.

"Hold on a second, please." said Tracy, taking the letter and moving towards the back, and begun to hunt for the book. She didn't need to look long, since the book had just come in this morning. Nodding at the tag, she removed it from its shelf and made her way back through. The room was filled with books people had ordered and never bothered to pick up. She placed the book on the counter, which was still wrapped up in the brown packaging and strung together.

Severus accepted it, before removing the string and opening the package, only then did he nod in satisfaction that it was the one he wanted. Knowing the price, he placed the gold coins on the counter before she could even ask for it. Taking his book now that it was paid for, he and Harry left the store and began the short walk from the shop to the Leaky Cauldron. Using the Floo Network to get from there to Hogsmade.

"How mature do you think the Aconite plants will be?" Harry wondered, as they ambled towards the Post Office.

"They're adult plants, but how mature is anyone's guess," stated Severus, as they finally approached the shop they wanted. When Severus opened the door he grimaced at the smell. It smelt of owls, and owl droppings, wet feathers and something else he couldn't put a name to it was awful. You would think with magic they'd take better care but some people even though they had magic - were completely idiotic at best.

"I'd like to pick up my post, it's Harry Peverell." Harry told the shopkeeper, holding his breath as much as he was able. Finding the place repugnant just like Severus - considering they both spent a lot of time surrounded by potion ingredients with questionable stenches…it truly was a testament to how atrocious the stink was.

"And Eileen Prince's as well," added Severus, not wanting to linger more than necessary.

"Yes sirs," said the elderly wizard, quickly making his way to the door to his left, leaving his two customers with the dozens of owls waiting patiently on spars. They were obviously well looked after, other than the fact they had to live with that smell, the elderly wizard mustn't have a strong sense of smell - that was putting it mildly.

"I doubt Dumbledore's going to be happy to see me there," said Harry, grinning wryly. Or maybe he would be just too relieved that Severus had finally answered his 'summons' to care. He'd been trying to get in touch with him for the past three weeks; Severus didn't seem in any rush to talk to him. Which was odd, since Harry knew Severus cared for Dumbledore, almost like a father figure.

"Then that is his problem," answered Severus, his own lips twitching as he stared at his lover. His gaze however, became heated, as he stared at him. It was hard for him to believe how submissive Harry was in the bedroom, especially when he was so independent and happy when he was in control. The sounds he'd been able to elicit from him could turn him on like nothing else could. Harry was always happy to try something even once; he'd yet to find something Harry wasn't amendable to. Why the teenager had taken to him he would never know, but he wouldn't disparage it, he would do his best by him.

"Harry!" squealed a very familiar voice, before he was accosted by her hug, almost being choked in the process.

"Fleur! What are you doing here?" cried Harry quite frankly shocked.

"We just arrived last night!" she explained. "The cottage we chose, you should see it its beautiful!"
Very cozy it reminds me of my family's first home. I start at Gringotts in two days, so I can get used to things. It's very cold, so I'm going to go to Gladrags and get some warmer clothes. Right now I have to send the letter to my parents and let them know we arrived safely."

"You'll have to give me the Floo address soon, I'll definitely visit." promised Harry, reminding himself to send her a gift, something homely although what - he did not know. "Where's Gary?"

"He's setting up a wand shop," said Fleur proudly.

"But he hasn't finished his apprenticeship," cried Harry shocked.

"He finished it early, he only has ten wands so far, but he's working so hard, I am proud of him." said Fleur.

"Wow, I'm shocked but happy for him, will he be alright with Ollivander's so near?" asked Harry, wondering if the competition would be too much for his friend.

"That is his main worry, but he thinks he will do well enough," said Fleur, they'd spoken about it for days when they finally took Harry's advice and truly decided what they wanted to do. They loved each other enough to compromise and decide on one country, Fleur had wanted to come to Gringotts, to better her English and be closer to Harry and her friends. Of course with the obvious exception of Viktor who was constantly on the move with his team. As Viktor had stated a lot of times, he wouldn't be a Quidditch player forever, there was a limited life span of a Quidditch Professional player, just like in all sports really, both Magical and Muggle. Gary realized it would hurt him more to lose Fleur and have a career elsewhere, than it would to come here and have one and be with her. He loved her more than anything else; it had been a bloody revelation long time in coming. It was for that reason Gary was looking into buying a ring, an engagement ring and follow her friend's example and propose to her. He would need Luna's help, and so had secretly written to her.

"He will," said Harry, full of confidence, confidence was a lot to do with mastering anything.

"You both must join us for dinner once we are properly settled." said Fleur sounding demanding yet hopeful at the same time.

"Nothing would give us greater pleasure, Miss. Delacour." stated Severus formally, as tradition dictates when offered dinner.

Fleur beamed at them, looking positively smitten. "Brilliant, I am pleased you wish to join us." she said nearly gushing. She didn't normally get to speak to Severus; it was mostly only Harry despite knowing they were a couple. With him being older it was understandable really, but she hoped in a more mature setting than sitting on a bed might have him join in the conversations.

"Thank you for the invitation," said Severus, his arms wrapping around Harry automatically in his first display of public affection - well on British soil anyway. Harry melted back into him, grinning like a cat that caught the canary, showing Fleur just how happy he was.

"It's my pleasure," said Fleur just as they were rejoined by the shopkeeper. Seeing Harry so smug wrapped in Severus Snape's arms had made her day, she truly was over the moon for him. He'd rarely been happy the first year she'd known him, at Hogwarts. Although it may have been to do with being the youngest participant in the Triwizard Tournament.

"Eileen Prince and Harry Peverell." stated the Shopkeeper, not even asking for proof since they were two of the most talked about individuals lately. Although it was beginning to die down a
little, but everything they'd done at the Ministry wouldn't be forgotten. They could have left the
people there and gotten out themselves, like everyone else, yet they hadn't. They'd stayed behind
along with a group of American wizards, getting the injured wizards and witches to safety. It was
thanks to them that the death toll was so low, no; he didn't need to letter to prove they were whom
they said they were.

"Thank you," said Harry taking the large parcel delicately, it had fragile written on it in bold fire
looking letters. He was about to shrink it and put it in his pocket, hoping it didn't get bashed around
too much when he realized the House-Elves could take it for him and prevent any accidents.

"Dobby?" called Harry, after a few seconds the House-Elf appeared.

"How can Dobby help Master Harry?" enquired the House-Elf.

"Take this home, if the plants are dry give them water, I'll sort them myself when I get back." stated Harry, not wanting Dobby to plant them, which he most certainly would if he wasn't told
otherwise.

"Yes Sir!" said Dobby accepting the large package, which was bigger than him.

"Take this also, it's for my mother, give it to her," said Severus shrinking it he placed it Dobby's
pocket. Nodding that this was all they needed, he disappeared from view once more.

"I'd like this sent to France, please," said Fleur handing over the thick letter, addressed to Monsieur
and Apolline Delacour, Delacour villa France. She didn't need to give the full address; there was no
need the owl would know where it was going.

"That will be three galleons please," said the shopkeeper without needing to look at anything.

"You should get yourself an owl, Fleur it will be much cheaper." said Harry absently.

"Indeed it would. Now you will have to excuse us, we have a meeting elsewhere," said Severus
curt as always.

"Of course! I'm sorry to have kept you," said Fleur, smiling softly at them before giving a big grin
to Harry when Severus wasn't looking. Harry sniggered as he waved at Fleur before he was led out
the smelly shop, both of them surprisingly hadn't thought about it until they stepped into the crisp
fresh air. Turning back to the counter, Fleur laid the three gold coins on it, intending on doing as
Harry suggested and investing in an owl.

Hogwarts was as it always is, a very welcoming sight, cosy, warm, yet very intimidating, for the
sheer size of her alone. A smirk slid onto his face, wondering what the students would think seeing
him again. No doubt fearful that he would return to Hogwarts and take the Potions position again.
That would never happen, not under any circumstances, he'd been an idiot to stay as long as he had.
Being there had kept him safe, but stifled his talents, he had loathed teaching, and between keeping
the hospital wing stocked up - he'd had no time for Potions and his desire to create any where
absent. Ironically enough, Harry seemed to inspire him in ways he hadn't felt since he was
eighteen. His love and passion for potions truly knew no bounds, he didn't consider anything
impossible and it fuelled his own passions for the subject.

"I wonder who the defence teacher will be this year," said Harry as they walked along the path,
Harry having to speed up to keep up with Severus' long strides. Having to stifle his amusement, he
knew Sev hated being late, hence why he was probably rushing. "Hopefully someone good, Luna
and Neville shouldn't have to learn from books."
"No, no they should not," said Severus, a troubled look crossing his face. Not all of his snakes were Death Eaters-to-be; they needed to be able to protect themselves. Without adequate training they were sitting ducks, it had always bothered him but what could he do? He wasn't responsible for the hiring of the Defence teachers. His frustration and anger at the teachers made the students and probably some of the teachers think he was jealous, that he wanted the defence position himself. He had said nothing against the rumours, finding them hilarious. He was a Potions Master not a Defence Master, if Defence was what he wanted to do - it was what he would have applied for. It wouldn't have been hard, after all the position was available each year. Although he had thoroughly enjoyed teaching Harry all he knew, but that was more out of necessity in the beginning.

Before long they were approaching the gargoyle, the entrance towards the Headmaster's office at the top of the tower. Severus didn't even hesitate before giving the password, which was once again 'Lemon drops' why he insisted on even having a password was anyone's guess. Just about anyone could gain access to the office and kill the bloody wizard, his arrogance thinking he was better than everyone else could end up being his downfall. Severus went first, and Harry began following him, the large ornate door was opened and both of them walked in. Harry stiffened immediately, wanting nothing more than to back out but he didn't. He wouldn't give them the satisfaction of knowing they still bothered him.

It seemed as though Dumbledore had decided to call an order meeting of all things.

"Ah, Severus," said Albus, clearly surprised as he stared between Severus and Harry. He had assumed the wizard would be alone, he hoped things weren't about to become...tense. Harry hadn't been in the same room with his parents for a long time, although from what he could gather things had calmed down at least with Nick and James, they'd accepted they were wrong. Lily however, was an unknown factor, not that it could be blamed she had tried to use an unforgivable on him. "Come in and have a seat, both of you!" he said eventually, relaxing, his features taking on a more cheerful disposition.

"Albus, he hasn't been sworn in," cautioned Doge, since the Betrayal of Peter Pettigrew sixteen years ago, they swore oaths - unable to reveal the names and what the Order is doing. It wasn't easy to trust, after losing so many friends and they couldn't help but think Pettigrew was to blame for them all. How else would You-Know-Who be able to kill so many of their members during the last war? The Bones family had been nearly wiped out, only two surviving by sheer luck.

"Right you are," said Albus nodding in understanding and acceptance. "How would you like to join the Order, Mr. Peverell?" his eyes twinkled brightly as he regarded the bright young man standing stiffly beside Severus, who had as of yet to sit down. All the while wondering if Severus had told him what was going on regarding the Horcruxes, which he was using all of his free time tracking down.

"I have no intention of joining," stated Harry sharply, "I'm sure you'll understand my reluctance to work with you, who lets people who tries to torture children join such an organization." his sneer was present making him look a lot like Severus.

Everyone turned to stare at Lily, who hunched down in her seat further trying to make herself disappear. Even James looked away his posture filled with shame at having such a wife. He wanted nothing more than a divorce, this was just...something he could never forgive. He was an Auror, he upheld the law strictly, yes he had permission to use the Unforgivables as an Auror, but he’d never used that particular one or the killing curse unless it had been fired at him first. The Imperius
had only been used a handful of times, only used against those that were about to self harm, kill
themselves to try and evade the law. Which shouldn't surprise anyone, Azkaban was hell on earth,
crawling with disgusting Dementors who would love nothing more than to suck out your soul.
Nobody sane would possibly want to even contemplate going there.

"I already know each and every members name, at least those who were in the original order
anyway. So my saying the oath wouldn't matter if I wanted to betray you." sneered Harry, his
contempt obvious.

Albus blinked at the young man, completely blown by his attitude, had his hatred of his family
truly caused him to turn so embittered? He didn't of course, think for a second Harry would
betrayal them as he said, or rather sneered. He had been tortured and nearly killed by the Dark side,
he was baffled by the however, by his disgust for the Order, after all they'd done to see Voldemort
destroyed. No anyone he asked to join would feel honoured, although admittedly only ten wizards
and witches so far had joined them. To some it was just too risky, it was one thing being powerful
but to join the Order they felt would paint a large target on their backs. It was those with families
that turned them down, this was the first of anyone being disgusted he'd had to deal with. "How
can that be?" enquired Albus, staring at the teenager how did he know those that were in the
Order? Should he be concerned?

"Ask HIM!" snorted Harry, his head jerking towards James Potter, who surprisingly didn't react to
both Harry's statement or to his apparent disgust.

"What does that mean? What does he mean James?" asked Doge alarmed, why would children
know the names of everyone in the Order? That was a frightening prospect.

"Oh please, stop your whining it's rather frightfully disgusting if you ask me." snapped Harry,
where had his dark mood come from all of a sudden? Why was he so worked up? Because of their
stupidness? Because James, Lily and Nick were there? He didn't but he didn't much like it.
"Especially for someone your age, I was tortured at the age of fourteen, and revealed nothing then,
so give up the squabbling a baby has more decorum than you."

Severus stood there, his face stoic but his lips were slightly pursed giving away that he was indeed
amused. Of course nobody looked close enough to see that he was, but that was nothing new. How
many times had he wanted to say pretty much the same thing as Harry had to them? Especially
when they were running around like headless chicken - as Harry had said it was disgusting. To
defeat an enemy you had to be able to keep your wits around you, otherwise you were dead before
the fight.

"You were questioned?" asked Shacklebolt, a look of understanding on his face. Not pity, not even
concern but they shared an experience that many others hadn't. He had been in their hands a lot
longer for sure, but he was a grown wizard, an Auror he could take more than a fourteen year old
could have. They'd both been tortured by Death Eaters, for none other than their enjoyment. Both
had survived and came out stronger, although he was still recovering. He had been given two
months paid absence from his Auror duties. He was seeing a mind healer, as standard otherwise he
would never be signed back onto active duty. Although it helped a lot going to her, he knew none
of what he'd done was his fault, but to have someone impartial to it telling him so, and making him
see it, really see it had the guilt evaporating.

Harry shook his head, "No, they just wanted to torture me, not just with spells, kill me and leave
me for dead probably at Hogwarts as a warning." 'Not just with spells' they would assume were the
knife wounds that the bastard had left on him. Seeing the look of understanding hadn't left he knew
they hadn't touched Shacklebolt the way they had wanted to use him. He was relieved, such actions
would have been soul destroying even to the hardest of wizards.

Severus however, stiffened; he hated knowing what he did. He'd known since Harry was rescued but truth be told it had been forgotten in everything that was revealed afterwards. They had intended on raping a fourteen year old boy, it sickened him to the core, and if he could have killed them he would have. Instead he would just have to be content with the knowledge that they were rotting in Azkaban for the rest of their miserable lives in a high security wing.

James cringed looking green around the gills; his own actions were horrifying him to the bone. He hated himself for it; he would try his best to make up for it though. He would try with his son, no, Harry, he didn't deserve this brilliant teenager as a son, since he had been a bad father in epic proportions. He had tried so many times to write a letter to him, in the end he'd succeeded in writing one, it was in the Potter vaults now. It would be sent to him when he died, which in war could be all too soon. He had to do it just in case; he wanted Harry to know he was proud of the man he became, against all odds. Even if Harry didn't want to hear it, it had eased his heart to know he had something to say should he die untimely. He'd also written a new will, Harry would receive a third of the vaults as well as two properties, equal to his other children.

"I think we've gotten a bit off topic," barked Moody, in his usual voice, nobody could ever tell if Alastor was in a good mood or not. He just had one of those voices that sounded like they were angry all the time. Considering all his missing body parts…he may very well be grumpy all the time.

"Indeed, I have other things that need seeing to, Albus, so please, do continue." stated Severus sharply, taking a hold of Harry, who blinked in surprise but nonetheless allowed himself be guided to a chair that was conjured for him by Shacklebolt. So both he and Severus could sit down. Before they did however, Severus had something he wanted to add, glaring at Doge all the while. "Unless of course someone else has something to say?"

The silence continued nobody had ever really had the guts to stand up to Severus Snape - with the exception of Albus Dumbledore obviously.

"I thought as much." he stated quite smugly, before both of them sat down. "Albus?" he questioned after a few seconds of silence, turning to the wizard in question to see his eyes twinkling brightly as they always did when he was amused.

"As I was saying, we must step up the protection on the students when they go to Hogsmeade during this school year," said Albus, continuing on with whatever he was saying before they came in. Just then an owl began pecking on the window, interrupting their meeting.

"That's Luna's owl!" exclaimed Harry, a worried frown working its way onto his face. Nick, who was next to the window, opened it and allowed the owl to hop onto his arm before he walked over to Harry. Giving him a small tentative smile, testing the waters so to speak. The owl in question, stepped onto Harry's arm, more familiar with him than he was with Nick who quite frankly looked like James but with slightly longer hair. Harry nodded curtly, showing his thanks as he took the letter from the owl, stroking its forehead, slightly bemused at its indignant hoot. No doubt disappointed not to be receiving any of his usual treats that Harry had around for them when they came.

"Sorry girl, I'll give you two next time, I promise." said Harry grinning widely. As if she understood him, she let him pet her for a few more seconds before spreading her wings and flying through the open window. Opening the letter still standing up, the meeting continued on but Harry wasn't listening. Instead he was trying to understand Luna's sudden cryptic messages, what the heck
did she mean? His brow furrowed as his mind ran a mile a minute but he couldn't think.

You are were you soulfully need to be, you'll find the artefact one of Hogwarts lost items, a founding item. Seek in the head of the one without a body. Knowledge is power; a treasured item is what you seek.

Luna

"Is everything alright?" enquired Severus, when Harry finally sat down again. Keeping half an ear out on the conversation going on around him, but more concerned and curious about Harry.

"I'm not sure," murmured Harry, "I'll show you later." he added shoving it in his pocket. Soulfully, could she actually mean that there was a Horcrux here at Hogwarts? It wouldn't be the first founder's item that he used. A treasured item…knowledge is power? Artefact of Hogwarts a founders item could she possibly be talking about the diadem? The lost diadem of Ravenclaw? Oh he was an idiot! Seek in the head of the one without a body! The bloody sorting hat. Oh he loved Luna right now! He'd put it in there after using it, it had helped him defeat the basilisk. It had made him feel so powerful, confident and very aware of his own magical powers. His lips twitched as he remembered the experience, then of course Dumbledore had Fawkes bring the basilisk up and give it to Severus. He'd had no right; by rights that basilisk had belonged to him. Oh if he'd found out before…he would have gone mental, struggling for money as he had been, only to find something that belonged to him had been taken by another. At least Severus was honourable enough to give him most of it, even if it had taken a year, but considering the amount that was there - it had probably taken that amount of time to sell it all.

"I still think you are making a mistake, Albus, they shouldn't be allowed to go its just tempting fate!" said Molly, sounding exasperated.

"It's up to the parents, Molly, and with the confirmed increase in security, most of the students have their permission slips." stated Albus calmly, "Those over the age of consent - we couldn't stop them even if we wanted to. Now surely you would rather have security measures in place when Ronald goes to Hogsmeade?" knowing very well that the stubborn child would go, if not to prove he wasn't a coward, he wouldn't want to miss out with the rest of his friends.

"I…well…very well," sighed Molly, deflating obviously losing the will to fight the Headmaster. He made a very good persuasive argument, so how could she possibly fight against that? It was her own son they were talking about, and she knew Ron would want to go; no amount of forbidding would work with him. As Albus had said, they were legally adults, the teachers and parents hands were tied, they could venture where they liked - war or no.

"So we are in agreement?" asked Albus, kindly.

"What I don't get is why you are discussing school matters, Headmaster. I mean surely there are going to be Auror's stationed at both Diagon Alley and Hogsmeade in light of the attack. Wards have been enacted as well to let the Aurors know of impending attacks, so why waste time discussing things that are happening with or without anyone's consent." said Harry, frowning in confusion, nobody else seemed the slightly bit surprised by the conversation. "It is always like this?" he asked Severus.

"Indeed," said Severus, his voice impassive revealing nothing of his thoughts.

"I see," said Harry, quietening down again, his brow once again furrowed. He had always thought the Order of the Phoenix was a more…active group. Yet all they were doing was sitting discussing the tightening of security in certain areas. What about the unprotected ones?
"We are but a small group; we don't have the resources to be everywhere at once. We just try and do what we can to prevent attacks when we can, fight them whenever we know they are going to appear. It was hard to understand in the beginning, I too thought I would be helping more but the truth is I do more as an Auror than I do in the group. We have no way of knowing the Dark Lords plans, we have to rely on Albus' knowledge and his previous dealings with Voldemort to try and guess. We've made a few accurate ones I'll admit, if we save even one person then in my book its been worth it." whispered Shacklebolt, solely for Harry's benefit but others who were nearby were smiling grimly as if they shared the exact same sentiments.

"We got a lot more action the last time, but that was thanks to the sacrificed Snape made to bring back information." said James, his posture and face relaxed and an indefinable sound in his voice. One that had never been associated when he was talking to or about Severus Snape.

Severus twitched, his eyes automatically going to James Potter before reversing back, had he just heard respect in James Potters voice? Honestly, how he prevented his mouth from falling open he had no idea, he was stunned. His part in the war had never really been brought up; nobody had cared about what he'd gone through to get that precious information for them. Nor the fact he could have been found out and killed on the spot.

"Having a spy would definitely have had a lot of benefits." agreed Shacklebolt, since he hadn't been a member the first time around he wouldn't know. Although he had heard mentions of a spy from time to time, it had been months before he realized Severus Snape had been the spy for them. He should have figured it out sooner, after all his trial had been no secret; it's what made his return to Voldemort's side impossible.

"The cost would be even higher," said Harry, he didn't know everything about his lover, but he did know the marks that spying had left on him. He slept with his wand under his pillow, he never let it out of his sight, and if he didn't have it on him he was constantly glancing at it as if waiting on an impending attack. It had been drummed into him, always be ready for the unexpected, knowing how badly the Death Eaters wanted to kill him probably didn't help. Although he'd been very relaxed on holiday, probably due to the fact nothing and nobody can Apparate onto a ship. He'd known he was safe, and Harry had loved that side of Sev. He did wonder briefly if it would change once the war was over, or if it would remain. He didn't really care either way, since he loved Severus, more than anything. He just wouldn't mind seeing him relax a little more…well other than after him being thoroughly fucked through the mattress by Sev.

"Yes, I agree." said Shacklebolt.

"Too high," agreed James, especially for a mistake in the folly of youth, he didn't even have that excuse for the way he'd treated his son. That was a disconcerting thought, had he really just thought that Snape's mistake was lesser than his own? Making Snape the better guy in all this? Jesus he was going to be sick, he needed to get out of this room fast. "Albus do we have anything important to talk about?"

"Not at the moment, James." said Albus, baffled by James' changing demeanour.

"Then I'd like my family to take their leave, Nick is due training anyway," said James, making his excuses, hosting Lily up by her upper arm. The only real touch she'd received since he hugged her when he first saw her. He'd seen the longing glances she constantly gave him, and he knew he couldn't give in or it would only fuel the fire. It would be wrong to do that to her, he might not love her anymore, and feel disgusted by her actions but she was still someone he had loved very dearly for over two decades.

"Of course," said Albus, watching them leave surprised. "As for the next topic I wanted to bring
"You'll need to distract the headmaster," whispered Harry, so lowly that Severus had trouble hearing him.

Quirking his eyebrow, he silently demanded why, why was he being asked to do such a thing.

Sighing he removed the letter from his pocket and handed it over, watching those black eyes gleam in pleasure at solving a puzzle. It shouldn't have surprised Harry, but it did. After all Severus had told him about the logic potions puzzle he'd created with smug satisfaction and slight confusion on how Nick Potter managed to get passed it. Most wizards didn't actually have much logic, so it was a difficult thing to pass. From what Severus had said about the tasks, they'd all been easy other than his. His eyes inevitably and noticeably shift towards the sorting hat lying on the shelf. Nodding imperceptibly Severus handed the letter back, keeping his eyes focused now on what Dumbledore was saying.

He was praying the meeting wouldn't last much longer - he could feel a headache brewing listening to this drivel already.

Nothing new there then he always did feel like this, but there was also elation, another Horcrux, right now he could have kissed Luna Lovegood for being the mystery she was! Then again neither her fiancé nor Harry would have been amendable to that idea. It would still have been amusing to say the least.

From her Transfiguration class, a small tinkering laugh left Luna Lovegood, but nobody spared her a glance used to her odd, weird ways.
Chapter 80

Invisible

Chapter 80

Distractions And Successes

The Order meeting thankfully didn’t last long; Harry didn’t understand why Dumbledore would risk their lives by having the meeting at Hogwarts. Surrounded by students, quite a few of them would have Death Eater parents and be writing home. That would mean they would be revealed as Order members, unless of course they would assume Dumbledore wouldn’t risk their lives like that. It wasn’t until they began to leave did Harry realize he hadn’t risked them at all. They have arrived and left by the Floo network, which meant they weren’t seen around Hogwarts at all. From what he had gathered they usually held meetings at Grimmauld Place. Sirius had given them permission to use it, maybe it was being watched? Who knew? He certainly didn’t - and to be truthful he had no desire to know. As long as Severus was safe, he didn’t mind. If anything happened to him though, he would bring hell itself down on Dumbledore in retribution. No, he couldn’t and wouldn’t think like that, Severus would survive. So would he.

Shacklebolt had revealed that Ollivander had been in the same cell as him, he’d been taken out a few times and been thrown in the cell hours later, nearly comatose. He was still alive, and that trouble Dumbledore to no end. Why keep him alive? What did they want with the older wizard? Just what was Voldemort up to? What did he want a wand-maker for? His eyes went to his wand, lying innocently on his forearm, could he truly be after the Elder wand? Why? There was no rhyme or reason to it, unless he felt with the Elder wand he would be invincible and rule the world with it. He needed to retrieve the wand-maker; he had to know what he did, what he had revealed to Voldemort. Shacklebolt had been ‘debriefed’ and told his bosses everything that happened. No doubt if they could get a location out of it, they would rescue Ollivander. After all he was the most prominent wand-maker, without him none of the students could get their wands. They’d had to get second hand wands from any shop they could, some even going abroad to get one. It was unacceptable; they needed him back to have the students getting the best wand suited to them.

“Excuse me, please, there is something I must do.” said Albus standing up abruptly, as soon as everyone other than Harry and Severus had left.

“I thought you wished to speak to me?” enquired Severus, surprised, it seemed as though they would have to wait another day or let Dumbledore know what was going on.

“I do, wait here I shall only be five minutes.” said Albus, hastily standing into the fireplace and grabbing a handful of the powder before yelling in ‘Ministry of magic, Auror division!’ and he was gone in a rush of green flames, leaving Severus and Harry alone in his office.

“He says five minutes, but he will be gone nearer to twenty.” stated Severus, sitting there calmly. That’s not to say Albus wasn’t punctual, he was, just not when he says he’d be a specific time. He had been his employee long enough to know most details about Albus, that others might not know - well other than Minerva of course, she had worked with him the longest. She had become the Transfiguration teacher when Albus was made Headmaster from what he had been able to garner from taking to both of them.

Harry stood up and ventured over to the sorting hat, placing it on his head feeling oddly like he was eleven years old again.
Well, well, hello Harry, your thirst for knowledge hasn’t diminished any. Rowena would have been proud, you have surpassed any student that’s walked Hogwarts hallowed halls.

Harry grinned in amusement thanks, you can read my mind you already know why I’m here, I need the Diadem, and your need to keep quiet about it. Dumbledore already knew about them, and possibly could take an educated guess as to who had what and where. So the point of keeping them secret seemed pretty stupid, if it wasn’t for the fact he was getting old, slipping, and had almost killed himself by touching a Horcrux. Or rather keeping them secret until they were destroyed, Dumbledore would try and take over. He might think he was a leader still, but Harry knew that wasn’t true, it was time for him to step down. He would do it in his own time, maybe about Voldemort was dead. He didn’t understand Dumbledore’s sense of duty to the entire world.

You wouldn’t, Albus Dumbledore has always been a man who saw the best of everyone and ignored their flaws even if they were blatantly waving in front of him. He learned the hard way that life isn’t simple; can you imagine the entire magical community begging for your help? Pleading with you to end Grindelwald’s rein of terror? His lover? Who he was forced to confront and imprison? Nothing is as simple as it seems, he is merely doing his best so that nobody ever feels that pressure again, not the way he did.

Harry was surprised by what the hat said, but a thump on his head had him removing the hat before they could finish their conversation. Not that he knew what the heck to say about it, he’d never really thought about it or what it was like to be Dumbledore. He was a Headmaster, and one that seemed inclined to ignore him or had done in the past at any rate. Closing his eyes, he felt the Horcrux on his head, the urge to keep wearing it was strong, very strong. In fact he never wanted to remove it -- “Hey!” cried Harry, standing up, before he shook his head abruptly. “Keep that thing away from me,” Harry couldn't help but shudder, there was something definitely dark about that Diadem - most assuredly a Horcrux as Luna said - not that he doubted her for a second of course.

“How did it feel?” enquired Severus cautiously, sliding the Diadem into his robes, intending on destroying it as soon as possible. He had become alarmed upon seeing the possessive dark look crossing Harry’s face, and quickly ripped the diadem from his head. Oh yes, he would be destroying it as soon as he got home, if it had affected Harry so quickly, he wasn’t taking any chances.

Harry shuddered, “I wanted to keep it on, it was as if I couldn’t contemplate the need to ever take it off.” admitted Harry, “It’s odd, it never affected me like that the first time.”

“Did it not?” stated Severus calmly; sitting down, very aware of the fact Dumbledore could be back any second. “What did you experience back then?” he added.

“No,” confessed Harry, swallowing thickly. “I felt confident, almost too confident, smarter, better than everyone else…smug.” a few of those feelings he hadn’t been familiar with when he’d put it on. He was much older now and more aware of himself and had experienced a lot more than just anger, loneliness, hatred and soul wrenching despair. Which was how he’d always felt for fourteen years of his life. Then things had changed, he’d been entered into the Tri-wizard Tournament and found friends of his own and a lover. A lover that had later became a good friend, a lover that was nearer his own age and able to go with him when he toured the world with the rest of his team.

“I think it did not affect you due to something similar already being there,” murmured Severus, so nobody other than Harry could overhear him. If they did they wouldn’t be able to connect that Harry had been a host to the Dark Lord’s soul. If anyone found out, it would be obvious who exactly had been cursed that night. It would come out in the end, but he was determined, if only for Harry’s sake that it happen only when there is no other alternative.
“You’d think it would make it worse…don’t you? That I wouldn’t be able to resist it at all.” Harry whispered back, his tone now thoughtful.

“Regardless it doesn’t matter, it will be destroyed so further temptation isn’t in your way.” said Severus soothingly, his hands twitched as though to physically comfort him. Yet he remembered where he was, and how those pesky portraits always had bad timing so refrained. He wasn’t ashamed of Harry, it was more to do with the fact Harry was still very young compared to him. He had just passed his Potions Mastery and he didn’t want to be the talk of the magical world. Didn’t want them to dare besmirch Harry’s name or imply he’d passed because of sexual favours and that he was a cradle snatcher. He also didn’t want Harry to think he was ashamed of him, due to his childhood he wouldn’t be surprised if Harry took it on himself to get the wrong idea implanted on his head.

“Tha---” Harry was cut of with the Floo flaring again, spitting out Albus Dumbledore, who exited gracefully, as everyone who had been in the magical world could do.

“Sorry about that, Severus, Harry, just a spot of trouble I had to clear up,” said Albus.

“When are you leaving?” asked Harry, staring at Dumbledore with a knowing look in his eye.

“Excuse me?” enquired Dumbledore, as if he hadn’t heard what Harry said properly.

“When are you leaving?” repeated Harry, green eyes glistening.

“For?” asked Albus giving Harry a quizzical look, not understand what he was referring to.

“You do plan on rescuing Ollivander don’t you?” stated Harry wryly, it wasn’t a question.

Albus stared at the teenager, just when had he gotten so observant? It was his biggest mistake ignoring Harry in favour of his brother, but unfortunately needs must. Nick had a duty to perform, and he knew how hard it was, how terrifying it was and all he had done was in a bid to make his life as normal as possible, as happy as possible knowing as soon as he was out there - it was a different world, harsher at times. The life he knew would be even more terrifying, people begging for his help, expecting it just because of what happened when he was a baby. Harry at least would always have a normal life, or as normal as one could get when they were at the top of their profession.

Of course if he had stopped for a single moment to enquire about Harry’s life he would have realized Harry’s life wasn’t exactly normal. He had a potion that one of his best friends wanted him to invent, the pressure was immense, much more intense than it was when he was trying to pass his mastery. Some would say even worse than trying to come up with the potion for Eileen, which had come along quite smoothly, if they didn’t think about the lack of sleep and stress that came with it.

Albus turned to stare at Severus, his lips twitching as if he wanted to ask him something but stopped himself in time. “I do plan on helping the Auror division perform the raid on the manor, they have a good idea which one it is and I will give a hand in freeing the prisoners.”

“They asked for your help?” asked Harry, no judgement in his voice, as he thought on what the sorting hat said. Did Dumbledore really think he had to help everyone and everything? Was that why he was a nosy old man? He used to be really good, top of the alchemy study, Master at transfiguration. He gave it all up after defeating Grindelwald and became Headmaster of Hogwarts. It was like him giving up his Mastery in potions and teaching the students at Hogwarts. Then again Severus had done the same exact thing, more out of necessity than desire to do it. He was back to inventing and brewing full time again; he’d regained his sense of purpose just before he left
Hogwarts for good. Severus had said to him, he just couldn’t put his life on hold indefinitely, not even for his snakes. He’d had to get back to his roots before he was too old, back to something he loved more than anything else in the world. Harry understood that, nothing could compare to brewing potions, well other than his feelings for Severus.

“No I offered it, and they were grateful for it, if I am there, Voldemort will flee rather than fight, it’s safer for everyone.” said Albus strongly, his blue eyes glinting with fire that one didn’t normally see. Especially not students, or those at a student age, they all considered him a gentle wizard, great but wouldn’t hurt a fly, too barmy for that. Then there were those who knew he wasn’t, usually the Dark Lord and the Death Eaters, as well as those fighting on his side, the Order.

“I assume you will be asking the Order as backup?” enquired Severus, as Harry continued to watch Albus curiously. He wondered what had gotten into his lover; it wasn’t his usual self - especially when it came to Dumbledore. From how Harry spoke, he hated yet respected him in equal measures. Probably respected his academic success and hated the wizard for his actions towards him or rather inactions. He knew how Harry felt; he’d been practically ignored during his Hogwarts years, while the Marauders got of with murder - nearly literally in his case. Yet when he became a spy, he finally had respect from the older wizard, and it had meant the world to him he freely admitted that. He’d come to rely on the wizard a lot, over the years - seeking his advice.

“I wouldn’t presume to ask,” replied Albus.

“But you wish it?” stated Severus, calmly.

“I do, we have no idea what we are facing, it may very well be Voldemort’s base of operations.” acknowledged Albus, slightly wary.

“I do hope you aren’t intending on letting Nick Potter into the fray?” Severus gave Dumbledore that steely look.

“Dear Merlin, no, not until I’m sure we have all the artefacts.” Albus said firmly. He didn’t want Nick to have to do anything he wasn’t ready for.

“I see,” replied Severus, giving a nod of approval.

“Speaking of Horcruxes, what did you do with the ring?” requested Albus, unable to prevent the hopeful tinge coming to his voice.

Severus arched an eyebrow, finding it curious that Albus was displaying such emotion over the soul piece. Unless there had been more to the ring that he originally thought, but that wasn’t possible was it? “It was destroyed and banished, I wasn’t about to leave it lying around.” he watched light dying out of Dumbledore’s eyes, more sure than ever that there was definitely something wrong.

Albus just stared at Severus, inwardly completely devastated by the news.

“What was it?” demanded Severus, sitting forward.

“It does not do to dwell on dreams, Severus and forget to live, I have said this numerous times, and I failed to act on it myself,” said Albus, gathering the strengths in his convictions. “It does not matter, its not important.” he couldn’t let it be, there would be a time when he went on his next great adventure to see his mother and sister…apologize for his folly, down right foolish actions that had resulted in the death of his sister. He would have very much liked to know true peace while he was alive, but perhaps this was his penance for what he did.
Severus didn’t try demanding an explanation any further, he knew that tone, and Albus wouldn’t reveal whatever it had been. He was curious himself now, damn the old coot, he would never get an answer. Not unless he was able to pry it out of Dumbledore’s stubborn mind. It must have been important to him; he had been trying to speak to him about it for weeks. Perhaps putting the memory of the ring into a pensive would provide answers that Albus refused to give.

Harry shifted uncomfortably; he’d never seen a more human look on the usually overly cheerful wizard before. He was always happy; his eyes twinkling like nobodies business. He like Severus was trying to think of what the hell the ring was other than being used as a Horcrux but he was coming up blank. It must have been important to Dumbledore, but there was honestly nothing they could do about it, like Severus said they banished them all - at least the ones they’d found so far. They had done well in finding them all, and he did wonder when Severus would tell him that most or all of them were destroyed. He didn’t seem in any hurry, although it was because he was still fuming mad at the fact Dumbledore had been so ‘senseless’ in touching Horcruxes without first checking them for curses.

“Well,” conceded Severus, looking at it as another mystery that could be solved, if there was something he was good at, it was getting information.

“I’m sorry to have held you both up,” said Albus, letting them know they were ‘free to leave’ without actually having to saying the words. He was still extremely disheartened by the news, and he just wanted a few moments to compose himself. Its all he would allow himself to grieve for what could have been, there was a war on right now.

“I’ll see you at the next meeting,” stated Severus, standing up, knowing when he was being dismissed. There would be an Order meeting before the Ministry or rather Scrimgeour gave the go ahead for the raid on whichever Manor the Dark Lord was currently using. Considering he’d lost the majority of his followers, there was only a few left that had manors. The Carrows were at the top of that list, he doubted very much Narcissa would let them in to use Malfoy Manor.

“Most assuredly.” said Albus; his tone suggested he wasn’t paying attention to the situation in front of him.

Severus frowned he did not like Dumbledore’s…absent tone of voice; he was like that more often than not these days. He wouldn’t talk to him either, so he had no idea what was wrong with him, other than what was always wrong with him - pressured into making the world a better place. Nonetheless he stood up and made his way out of the office. Since he had been seen going in, the most sensible thing to do was be seen leaving.

“Oh and Harry?” called Albus just as they were about to close the door.

“Yes?” asked Harry, peering at the Headmaster his gaze cautious.

“Congratulations on your N.E.W.T’s results, my boy, your results were most impressing, matching my own, in all but potions, that one I think people will find hard to beat.” Albus said to the teenager, smiling at him in pride.

“Thanks,” said Harry giving him an extremely rare (at least to Dumbledore) genuine smile before he hopped on the gargoyle steps and was swiftly taken away from the Headmaster’s office. They didn’t pass any students on the way down, presumably because the classes were still currently in session.

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Prince Manor - Severus and Harry - The Lab
“Wingardium Leviosa.” murmured Harry, levitating the cauldron, before he could get it too far a voice cut in.

“I do not think so,” said Severus smoothly, “That is a brand new cauldron; I am not using that to dispose of any Horcrux.”

“Oh yeah, so it is.” said Harry sheepishly, he’d forgotten they’d destroyed their other large cauldron. They really should have more than one big one, but they mostly used standard sized, or even the larger one for bigger orders. They didn’t use the large one often, it was too complicated trying to determine how much of each ingredient would have to go in, it was four or five times the size of a normal cauldron. He floated it back down to the floor, looking around, wondering which one to use.

“It’s not a large one we need, that’s potentially and needlessly wasting unicorn blood. The smaller the better I think, use one of our old standard cauldrons.” stated Severus entering the cupboard, to retrieve the half vial of unicorn blood. It had been placed there after they got back from their holiday, he wasn’t quite sure why Harry had decided to put it there - perhaps he didn’t want to make the same mistake twice.

“We still have one or two more to get, I have no idea where they could be, do you?” asked Harry, he’d gone through everything about Tom Riddle and information on ‘Lord Voldemort’ and he had to admit he was at a end of potential spots for Horcruxes.

“It’s one, his main soul piece he will consider his seventh.” stated Severus.

“Not really, I doubt he knew I was one,” said Harry thoughtfully. Hoisting a cauldron off the shelf, and placed it in the middle of the lab, why they were doing it in here was anyone’s guess.

“True, but that was his plan, it doesn’t mean to say he succeeded in splitting it into so many pieces.” conceded Severus. Popping the cork out, using a stopper to get the dregs on the cork before sucking a few more additional drops into it. Once the small stopper was one third full, he put the Diadem into the cauldron.

“Then he might not have any others, if we are going on that logic.” said Harry, “It’s not something we can afford to be wrong about, so what do we do?”

“If we are wrong, then we will have to search for them once the Dark Lord has been de-bodied. It is something I hope won’t happen but if we cannot find them all then there isn’t much else we can do.” stated Severus calmly, before he placed three drops of the precious liquid on each large sapphire adorned the beautiful tiara.

Harry silenced the area as soon as the first sound of a screech was heard, then just as it happened to Harry a ghostly spectre of Voldemort’s face appeared its mouth open in anguish. How soul pieces could feel anything was lost on Harry, but at least Voldemort didn’t know about them being destroyed, otherwise more would be made in its place. Just like that it was over; another Horcrux was destroyed without damaging the item. Quite an important item, something that had been long since lost or destroyed since the founder’s time.

“This deserves a prideful place in Ravenclaws common room, or maybe the Great hall, over the house point system.” said Harry touching it reverently. He hadn’t appreciated it much when he was twelve, but it was part of history, Hogwarts history.

Severus snorted, “It would never leave the Headmasters office.”
Harry nodded conceding the point, “Too bad.” not many students would get to see such a priceless artefact stuck in an office with a dozen other items strewn all over the place. “I wonder if the hat has anything else stuck up inside it, like something of Gryffindors or Hufflepuffs.”

“There is the potential that one or both are Horcruxes.” mused Severus, muttering a cleaning charm and banishing the cauldron. “Gryffindor if I am not wrong, had a sword, that was quite cryptically had a statement that ‘help would be available to Gryffindors as so long as they had a need for it’ -”

“Wait Gryffindor family or just Gryffindor students? Why only them and how would the sword know?” asked Harry curiously, soaking up the new information he didn’t know. It wasn’t in Hogwarts a history, well the information about Godric Gryffindor’s sword yes, but not the statement. Had he accidentally skipped over it?

“It’s written on a plaque in the Headmasters office, which incidentally used to be Godric Gryffindors office when he lived in the castle. It’s in the niche between the two book cases, hardly anyone sees it, its hand scribed but whether it was really Godric Gryffindor is anyone’s guess. I assume it is for any student that has a need for it, at the very least Gryffindor students. The founders were the ones who created the hat, it wouldn’t surprise me if a Gryffindor was needed to be able to summon the sword.” revealed Severus.

“I wonder if the other founders did similar things,” mused Harry, almost excited at the prospect.

“They did,” revealed Severus, “At least Salazar did, there is one in my private lab, and unfortunately I’ve never been able to translate it. It is to my understanding that it must be written in Parseltongue. I’ve never ventured to neither Ravenclaw nor Hufflepuff common rooms to know for sure…it may not have been where they had their main rooms.”

Harry shook his head; there was so much he didn’t know. It just reinforced his saying - you learnt something new every day.

“How soon do you think it will take to set up a rescue mission?” wondered Harry, as they left the lab, and wandered back, climbing up the few stairs and into the main house.

“Two days at least, Scrimgeour will send out a scout, who has an impeccable reputation, one that will be able to sense wards, get a layout of the surroundings. Once he reports back, they will set up an attack plan and then go.” replied Severus.

“What rescue mission?” asked Eileen, coming in through the kitchen door, having heard the conversation. She had a tray perched in her arms, filled with coffee, and it smelt absolutely wonderful.

“Ollivander,” stated Severus, taking the tray from his mother, and placing it on the table, before taking a seat.

“He’s still alive?” cried Eileen surprised, and it was unusual, the evil wizard didn’t have a tendency to leave people alive. People had been mourning the elder wizard as dead, in fact there was word in the paper this morning that someone was coming to take over the shop in less than a week. It was another Ollivander obviously, since they couldn’t just take someone's buisness away from them.

“Apparently,” Severus said sardonically.

“I wonder what he wants,” said Eileen, she was a smart woman, most of the time and it was an inevitable conclusion to lead to. That he must want Ollivander for something, something he obviously didn’t have yet otherwise the wizard wouldn’t still be alive right now.
“With a wand-maker? Maybe a wand?” suggested Harry, but it sounded stupid even to him, “Or maybe he just wanted to try and stop the students at Hogwarts getting their wands. It seems stupid, surely he would have realized they’d go somewhere else for their wands?”

“A wand…there’s a myth…a legend of wand so powerful that the wielder can accomplish miraculous feats with it. It changed hands so often, that it was named the Death Stick. As you know its only by rights of conquest the wands allegiance be won, and so the wand left nothing but death in its wake, thus presumably how the name came to be.” said Eileen, her brow furrowing as she tried to remember where she’d read it about. “The last thing ever mentioned about it, was it it was stolen, decades ago, by a German Wand-maker who was determined to replicate the wand."

“Interesting,” murmured Severus, it was probably the sort of rumours that the Dark Lord would play attention to. He was always after more power, doing rituals and the likes and it wasn’t just to obtain immortality. If he was busy looking for a wand, at least his concentration wasn’t in taking over the magical world or harming people. This was good, they really should try and get this Horcrux found, it was the last one. Perhaps he should write to Lupin and Black, go over everything they knew and hope they got lucky. Harry seemed to be at his best when surrounded by information, as did he oddly enough. The chances of finding a wand of unlimited power was slim to none, he didn’t believe a wand could make you more powerful.

“Not really, it’s stupid to believe that, the wand is only a tool to direct your magic, nothing you put into a wand makes you more powerful.” said Harry, “It was the first thing Gary learned from his Master King, I think his name is, he usually just called him a dictator.”

Severus snorted, some people just couldn’t hack it as an apprentice, and its why they only took on the people that showed the most promise. Not only the most promise of course, they had to be strong willed, capable of putting up with the demands doled out by a Master. Its why most students at Hogwarts, who had no discipline liked to head straight to the Ministry and work there. He’d never taken on an apprentice, despite the fact those who approached him must have had the guts to see the Apprenticeship through. Two of Harry’s friends were freshly new ‘Master’s’ of their own fields if he was correct, no Gary was the only one, the healer was still studying but he must be at the end of his apprenticeship since he was helping at the hospitals according to Harry, that was almost guaranteed pass, unless you screwed up badly. Neville would be doing something with plants, Herbology, it was his passion. Perhaps apprentice to Sprout? Luna was an unknown right now, as was Cho Chang - perhaps something about fashion? It was ridiculous how much he knew about Harry’s friends, he realized suddenly.

“Although the cores themselves can help it a little bit, its not really possible is it?” asked Harry curiously.

“It is as you said, it’s not possible for a wand to give you unlimited power, its like handing a wand to a squib and asking them to cast the Patronus Charm.” replied Severus sardonically, picking up his coffee he settled into the couch inwardly wondering some more about Dumbledore’s reaction.

“Letter for Master Severus,” said Dobby, appearing with it.

“Thank you, Dobby.” commented Severus, taking the letter curiously, looking at the back and double checking that it wasn’t cursed in any way shape or form. It wasn’t, as much as he trusted the House-Elves he was a cautious man and always double checked. Well it wasn’t from Dumbledore, since he never seemed to seal it using wax coat of arms. It wasn’t any he recognized, he was very curious about the contents of the letter, it was rather large.

“Everything alright, Severus?” asked Eileen watching her son stare at the back of the letter.
“Do you recognize the family that this belongs to?” asked Severus, handing the letter over to his mother, instead of just opening it to find out.

“Oh my!” exclaimed Eileen, her eyes widening suddenly. What on earth could this family want with her son? It made no sense whatsoever.

“What is it? Who is it should I say?” asked Harry, absently pointing his wand at the fireplace, and lightening it, he was despite having a coffee in his hand feeling the chill. It was such a big manor, that it was easy to feel cold, it was constantly draughty. Warming charms just made you really stuffy after a few minutes if you weren’t appropriately cold - like outside where the cold was constant.

“Selwyn-Warren,” stated Eileen, “One of the richest pureblood families in America, the two lines together made them more wealthy than any other. They own all the shops in the America Magical districts, there was a lot of controversy about it six years back.”

“Why is that?” asked Harry confused.

“You won’t remember, but both men openly declared they were lovers, engaged and had ever intention of marrying, it was an outrage to every pureblood.” said Severus.

“Just because they were men?” Harry frowned deeply, he knew some people were prejudice but was it going to be that way with nearly all pureblood families?

“No, because they are the last of their line,” answered Severus, “The line will die out with them.”

“But Selwyn is a name known here isn’t it?” Harry racked his brain to remember where he’d heard it from. “James went on about it all the time, how he’d been so sure that the Selwyns and Carrows were Death Eaters. They just didn’t have enough evidence to convict them, he hated the fact they were roaming free.” remembering now where he had heard that particular name from.

“They are indeed Death Eaters,” agreed Severus, “But they are from a…bastard line, they aren’t directly related, they did well for themselves despite it. Nowhere near as well as the Malfoy’s obviously, but given time they could have accumulated a lot of money. This family is the direct branch.”

“So the Selwyns in America are the ones considered one of the Sacred Twenty-Eight?” continued Harry.

“Yes, actually they are, the British ones only became Pureblood five decades ago,” said Eileen, doing the explaining this time. Which in reality wasn’t that long ago, they were younger than her to be fair, but not too much. Since to be considered pureblood you had to have magical grandparents on both sides of the family. She hated the whole pureblood propaganda, it was causing squibs, Eileen knew that since her parents hadn’t been at all very powerful, either was she come to that. Its why the Princes had stuck to brewing and inventing potions, since it didn’t require magic being cast. Yet look at her son! He was extremely powerful, and if she had to go back in time and do it all again, she would. Severus meant the world to her, was her world, she didn’t know what she’d be without him and didn’t want to find out. Mothers shouldn’t bury their sons, but unfortunately in this blasted war, it was happening all too often. It would break her if anything happened to Severus, and she would break every bone in Dumbledore’s body if anything did.

“Here, I wonder what they want with you,” said Eileen, handing the letter back to her son.

Severus accepted it back, and broke the seal and opened the letter, finding three pages of
meticulous writing, calligraphy writing and it was beautiful if he didn’t say so himself. A lot of
time and effort had gone into this, the paper itself was thick which explained the bulkiness of the
envelope. Potions Master Severus T. Snape, hmm curious, he hadn’t realized either of them were in
the business of Potions.
Potions Master Severus T Snape

While I acknowledge this kind of proposition really should be discussed in person, I’m afraid my
calendar is just too full to contemplate a trip to the United Kingdom, added to the fact that there is a
war currently brewing on your shores well it doesn’t bear thinking about. My Fiancé wouldn’t
even think about it, hence the reason for this rather large missive. I do apologize for taking up so
much of your time, but we feel thoroughly explaining out situation might help.

Severus had a grudging respect for them already, they weren’t assuming he knew who they were
which did earn them his appreciation. Still he would have preferred them to get straight to the
point, he wasn’t one for mindless chatter. Even in a letter, in all honesty, but his curiosity won out
and he continued to read - seeing what they had to say, or more likely what they wanted.

Both myself and my Fiancé are under a great amount of pressure from our families to produce an
heir, or in this case produce heirs. Quite arguably we are concerned ourselves, since we would like
a child, one to pass our fortunes on to. Adopting is not an option, since they wouldn’t be our blood,
as you are no doubt aware. The thought of having a child with a stranger quite frankly I find
repugnant.

Severus frowned, why the hell were they telling him their life story? What could they possibly
want from him?

We are aware that you and your former apprentice hold the titles as the youngest potions masters,
and quite frankly with grades that would be next to impossible to beat. My fiancé has told me about
the potions you both have invented lately, which has led me to quite a ludicrous thought, one that
might just come to life, if the right person was put in charge of overseeing it.

Severus flipped to the next page, feeling decidedly irritated by the vagueness of the letter.

If such a miracle could be created, well we will endeavour to put whatever is needed into the
project and see it through to the end. We would ask for nothing in turn other than the potion
actually completed. You may take all credit for it, and we won’t even ask for a percentage in the
potions sales.

Severus began to feel a sinking feeling in his stomach, suddenly the letter wasn’t so vague
anymore. He had a feeling he knew exactly what they were asking of him without stating it
outright - but there was still time for that. Completely forgetting that his mother and Harry were in
the room, he continued to read the letter at his own pace.

What we are trying to say is that we are making a formal appeal, we are more than willing to give
you unrestricted access to a vault of our choosing, which each hold give or take five million
galleons if you can create a potion that would enable one of us to have a child with both our blood,
even if there needs to be a woman surrogate to carry the child for us. We look forward to hearing
your decision, and urge you to do it at your earliest convenience.

We wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

Alec Selwyn-Warren & Daniel Fawley

Selwyn-Warren and the Fawley lines joined together? Well it was little wonder they were being
urged to have an heir. They were both extremely old pureblood lines, with so little of them left, they would be getting constantly pestered by their parents. They obviously didn’t have any brothers or sisters, hence they were put into extremely difficult positions. If Harry had been an only child, and his childhood different, the outcry would have been the same - the Potters were proud of their long and lustrous heritage. Well not all of them, thought Severus, Harry had been all too eager to leave behind.

His hand holding the letter dropped to his knee, as his left hand rubbed thoughtfully at his chin. Was he really going to buy into this madness? He wouldn’t even know where to start! Yet the prospect of a long difficult potion was positively exiting, he hadn’t received such a…puzzling opportunity in a long time. It would require a great deal of logic and he was so very good at that. “What did they want?” asked Eileen, unable to hold her question in any longer. It had quite literally been on the tip of her tongue for the past five minutes while he read. Irritatingly enough he seemed to take his time reading over whatever it was. She wasn’t normally that nosy, but she couldn’t deny being so now - although she suspected it had something to do with potions.

“They want me to commission a potion, create a potion for them.” mused Severus, hardly paying any attention to the others.

“Are you going to accept?” enquired Harry, standing up and going over to his desk, and swiping a few wads of parchment and a self inking quill. He preferred them to the normal ones, since they didn’t drip and blot the paper, which happened very often, since he was usually impatient to get it finished. He also grabbed his half eaten sugar quill, and sucked it between his teeth before sitting back down on the comfortable couch. It was time he wrote to his friends, he was hoping to meet up with them all soon. He had a feeling it would be at the dinner Fleur was hosting, which he found himself looking forward to. Their first dinner with friends, it meant a lot that Sev would go, he knew Severus would prefer just having dinner at the manor - he wasn’t a people person. He also had a few questions for Luna, see if she had any idea about the Horcruxes. Even if she could just tell him how many were left, or perhaps a rough idea of where they or it might be.

“I will certainly think about it,” answered Severus, a challenge was always welcomed. “And send my answer off, tomorrow morning.”

“What are they asking you to create?” asked Eileen, black eyes twinkling.

“By the sounds of it a male bearer potion, or at the very least one that would allow both men to be fathers to a single child, using a surrogate.” stated Severus, a sardonic smirk appearing on his face.

“They aren’t asking for much are they?” gaped Eileen, her mind completely blown, and her son was actually considering it? She honestly didn’t know what to say that information.

Severus’ eyes went to Harry, his mind conjuring up a child that looked like them both, and found himself understanding the wizards desire to have his partners child. “It will be a challenge I’ll admit, but it is something I’m interested in seeing if its possible.” said Severus, turning to meet his mothers gaze.

Eileen’s eyes had flared seeing Severus looking at Harry, and her lips twitched slightly, oh, Severus would create it…and perhaps she would get a grandchild after all. If this happened she would need to find a special way to repay that family for the gift they would give her. She had resigned herself to never being a grandmother. Until he was fifteen, she’d had high hopes, of him and Lily Evans having a relationship, but none had occurred. Then she found out he was gay, so the hopes went down, even if he was, he didn’t seem content with anyone, didn’t want a relationship at least none she knew about. Then Harry walked in, and she was happy her son was finally living life to the full. The hopes of more had renewed her faith.
Chapter 81

Invisible

Chapter 81

Operation Striker - Rescue mission

Severus and Harry checked their pockets out of habit, making sure they had their potions kit and incidentally their wands. Both of them Apparated straight into the Ministry of magic the Auror Division. The room was filled with wizards dressed in their Auror robes, Dumbledore of course stood out like a sore thumb. Not because he was old, or the white hair, no it was the gaudy robes he wore. Honesty, it could act as a beacon and alert people to the fact he was coming, maybe that’s why he used it. They had found out where Shacklebolt had been held, some couldn’t believe it, and others weren’t so surprised. The Carrows had managed to evade justice during the last war, but they wouldn’t this time. Even if they succeeded in getting out of the manor, their properties would be ceased cutting off yet another base of operations for Voldemort.

“What is an Under-age Wizard doing here?” asked a voice, moving towards Harry. “Get back to school kid! I’ll escort you.” thinking he had somehow managed to accidentally Apparate to the Ministry of Magic.

Harry grabbed the wizard’s wrist, causing him to scream out as Harry twisted it causing the wizard to moan more in agony as he dropped to his knees, his feet unable to securely keep his own weight upright. He was bloody outraged; did he look like someone that should be in school? Well, yes, but that wasn’t the point! He had done both his O.W.L.’s and his N.E.W.T’s and gained himself a Mastery in potions. He wasn’t a wizard who liked to gloat, but his accomplishments shouldn’t be dismissed so easily. Would it have been hard for the Auror to ask who he was first?

“Harry,” called Cedric, gaining his attention, fighting his way through the throng of Aurors to get to his friend - concerned. None of the Aurors went to Smith’s aid; there wasn’t one there who he hadn’t pissed off. They however, hadn’t done anything about it but did enjoy seeing him brought down.

“You’re allowed to come along?” asked Harry, abruptly letting go and forgetting the Auror. “You didn’t say anything!” he added as they embraced like brothers.

“I do this and I’ll be a Junior Auror,” said Cedric smugly, but his eyes were filled with apprehensive worry, and he had ever right to be, they didn’t know what they were facing. Other than general lay out of the wards and each room that was held within, they each had a room to penetrate as well as a partner. He’d gone from being in training, to probationary Auror, and then of course Junior Auror he hoped.

The only ones after that were experienced Auror and then senior experienced Auror who were in charge of the ranks. People like Alastor Moody, Minister Scrimgeour used to one too, there was a space for the job, so one of the older Aurors would be up for promotion, Moody favoured his own, so it would probably be Tonks or Shacklebolt.

“Good luck,” said Harry, knowing how much the job meant to Cedric. No more Probationary Auror for him, he would be a fully fledged Auror and finally worth notice. He’d even started taking lessons from Sirius to turn into an Animagus, hoping it would help elevate him to a better position.
“I want him arrested for assault.” snapped the Auror standing back up, clutching his arm as if it had been crushed.

“Shut up Smith. You are a disgrace to Hufflepuff house and the Auror corps how you’ve been kept on his anyone’s guess.” Cedric whispered dangerously. Zacharias Smith may have ended up in Hufflepuff but the hat he felt was wrong, he was a coward and selfish, all things they stood against. He would run if it saved his worthless hide rather than stay and fight, and the Aurors would realize that sooner or later. He had been the first one to leave during the attack on the Ministry; he’d left a woman who had gotten hurt just feet from him in his bid to get away. He knew the wizard wasn’t going to last, he would screw up - he always did. He’d never liked Smith though, nor did very many of his fellow Hufflepuffs, his attitude was just too unpleasant to keep up with him.

“What are you going here?” demanded Moody, thumping his way over, staring not at Harry but at Zacharias surprisingly.

“I assumed I was coming,” said Smith, putting his arms to the side, suddenly it wasn’t aching so much.

“You assumed wrong, we need our strongest,” said Moody.

Cedric twitched hearing that, so maybe he wasn’t the only one who noticed how Smith acted. Either that or the Auror’s were complaining, all complaints were anonymous unless it was something grievous, like actual bodily harm, or near death experience. So obviously he wouldn’t know if anyone was complaining about him unless they spoke about it. Harry said he had met the grandfather, if it was the same Smith family, and he was nothing like him. He’d seen Smith’s father, he looked very haughty-looking, quite possible where he had gotten his unpleasant attitude from.

Smith bit his tongue, preventing himself from talking back and being put on a worse duty, which would feel like forever. It didn’t seem like Moody was ever going to leave, and when he did, it was only for a few years then he came back. He had more experience than anyone else here, and when he’d tried to smarmy up, Moody wasn’t having any of it. He had been forced to work just as hard as everyone else, and nobody here liked the truth, they never wanted partnered with him, and they avoided sitting near him at lunch or dinner depending on their shifts. Sometimes they worked nightshifts, just a few of them unless they were all called in. While they did that others did their normal hours, and it switched around and a different set of Aurors did nightshift. He had once been on nightshift duty for five weeks, just because he had exclaimed that it wasn’t fair when he had to go out dressed as a Muggle to some woman’s door because she’s unknowingly bought a Magical artefact! And the fact he did not want to be seen with Arthur Weasley, who had been on duty that day.

“Man the network,” stated Moody, turning around and moving away, smirking in amusement. He could see three or four of the Aurors were trying to suppress their amusement at Smith’s predicament. He could barely believe the Auror thought he would be going anywhere, smith was an idiot, a puffed up wizard who believed he was better than anyone else. Even fellow Probationary Auror Diggory was more powerful than him, so he was definitely leaving him behind.

Smith gaped at the wizard, before growling under his breath and stomping out of the room. Man the network was sitting in a room waiting for a Floo Call, for someone that needed Aurors requested immediately, usually only used in an emergency but the Auror force and the public had two totally different meanings of ‘EMERGENCY’. Usually they had to direct the person or persons to the correct department and let them deal with it. The room was only next door making it
easy to summon the others in a timely fashion if it was required. Things were a lot different from they used to be in the old Ministry, it’s like it had been upgraded and ideas they’d had lounging around just waiting for an excuse finally use were used. There was certainly no paper aeroplanes flying around, they had newer ways to send out messages, to think they had started off using real owls.

Slumping down on the seat, jealousy and envy eating him up inside, as he listened to the hubbub next door. Listening to them all getting ready and geared up to go on an actual rescues mission. He’d never heard of that happening before, how could they? They hardly ever got confirmation about where someone was being held. They needed undeniable proof before they took down the wards of a manor and raided it, even during these harsh times. Scowling at nothing in particular, they were even letting outsiders go! That demented crackpot old fool and the teachers pet Harry Potter! It wasn’t a defence Mastery he’d taken it was a potions Mastery! And Snape! Snape! He hadn’t seen the greasy bastard since he was twelve. He’d celebrated like everyone else when it was announced that he wouldn’t be returning to Hogwarts. The door must have open since he could hear them more clearly, from down the hall than before.

“Ah, Mr. Poo--everell,” said Albus, trying to cover his slip, judging by the unimpressed look on Harry’s face he hadn’t succeeded. He wasn’t surprised to see him there, in all honestly, he seemed to go everywhere with Severus these days. Harry had developed a bit of a crush on Severus it seems, he wondered if the elder wizard knew. He knew better than to think for a second anything untoward went on, Severus was a man of a strict moral code. Harry was young, enthusiastic potion inventor, observant and Albus could think of no other more suited to Severus, who despite turbulent times still thought of Severus as a son he never had.

“All right, Headmaster.” said Harry softly, most of his attention not even on Dumbledore but the Aurors who were talking amongst themselves beside the map they’d memorised of the property.

“Please, now that you are no longer a student, I insist you call me Albus,” said the Headmaster, aware that when he asked it was always declined. They still called him Headmaster, even people in the Order who he trusted still referred to him as such. Only a few brave ones actually did call him anything other than ‘Headmaster’ from time to time. He had even given Nick permission but he still called him Headmaster too, although it might be to put distance between them. He had made things strained between them by forcing too much on the teenager. Unfortunately there wasn’t enough time, but it had been brought to his attention he wasn’t responsible for Nick. They had been kind enough to allow him train Nick in the end, but it was more than obvious James didn’t trust him. He wished he could do something, anything, to regain James’ trust, and Nick’s he hadn’t meant to hurt either of them. He didn’t really mean to hurt anyone, but somehow he always managed to screw up.

Moody gave a sharp whistle and every Auror immediately quietened out of habit more than anything else. Most of them had at one point been trained under the old Auror, or Scrimgeour for the younger ones when he’d went into retirement. “Alright, in…” Moody looked at his watch before starting back up. “Exactly five minutes we will be Apparating into Carrow manor, facing unknown conditions, be at the ready, have your partners back and we will get back here in one piece.”

“You didn’t assign me to anyone,” commented Cedric, from where he was still standing near Harry, but had been discussing the best way to approach the manor.

“You were a late edition, there is no other partner, stick with me.” said Moody, his magical eye looking at the list as he spoke, to confirm what he already knew.
“The rules are simple, don’t hurt anyone that doesn’t fight back, we have no idea how many innocent people are in there. They curse you then you curse them back. You show the magical world you can protect them that the Auror force doesn’t bow to pressure.” barked Moody.

“Yes SIR!” called the Auror’s excitedly.

“Three minutes left,” shouted Moody, stepping off the box he had used, he may be a fearsome Auror but he wasn’t as tall as some of the new Aurors they had these days. Even the boy he was taking with him was taller than him, and that was saying something. He trusted nobody else to Apparate him, so Diggory would be getting side-long Apparated by him. Right now there were curse breakers removing and disabling the wards, they would feel it when the last one came down in exactly three minutes give or take a few seconds. Too late to get away, since the Auror’s would be on the scene, and anti-Apparation spells cast, so nobody could get out. Which did also go for the Auror’s which was what made the situation a little grim.

“Two minutes!” called Moody absently, everyone was just standing still, waiting for the order to go. Wands out at the ready, held loosely in their hands, nobody Apparated into an unknown situation with their wands in their holsters after all. “Albus and I will be casting the Anti-Apparation wards five seconds after we’ve Apparated in - so do not dally.” he barked. If they didn’t Apparate straight away, then they wouldn’t get in, that would be it. Considering how important the mission was, he doubted anyone here would get distracted.

“Yes Sir!” called the Aurors. Even Tonks was being rather solemn, it might be because she had a new partner with Shacklebolt on leave, or it might be because she realised how serious she needed to be right now.

“One minute, be ready.” called Moody, his body tense not just with anticipation but a good dose of worry. It might not seem like it but he did care about those under his command. It was a leader’s duty to worry, and he did it in spades, but he and Scrimgeour had trained them all well. Grabbing hold of Cedric Diggory, who was remarkably calm, he would be a very good Auror, he certainly needed to keep an eye on him.

“Go!” ordered Moody Apparating both himself and Cedric immediately, not waiting to see if everyone did the same thing.

The wards had been broken down, and every Auror Apparated into the Grand Hall, or so it was always called in large manors. Almost immediately fighting broke out, as Albus and Alastor immediately cast Anti-Apparation wards meanwhile surrounded by five Aurors who were protecting them while they were defenceless, none more impressive than Tonks and Cedric who were letting off spells at a fast pace. They spread out as soon as they were done; many were leaving the Grand Hall in pairs.

“Stupefy!” cast Harry, not recognizing the wizard he was up against. He did look similar to twins he’d seen in Slytherin though, but what was their last name? No, he couldn’t remember, but it was annoying him something rotten. He couldn’t think about it right now though.

“Confringo!” snarled the unknown Death Eater and he was one, his arms were bare, and sleeves pushed up showing the mark for all to see.

Harry cursed and ducked the exploding flames the smell of smoke alarmed him, until he realized it had singed his arm. Patting at the flames, putting them out coughing at the smoke that he accidentally inhaled, hastily throwing up a shielding charm when another spell came at him. It deflected back, causing the wizard to duck to avoid it as well. It blasted into the large table which was still filed with breakfast foods.
“Conjunctivitis,” cast Harry in retaliation, hoping to blind his target. He swiftly had to duck as a shield charm was cast and deflected it back to him. He heard cursing behind him, but he didn’t dare look - he just hoped that it was a Death Eater not an Auror. Unfortunately in an enclosed area like this, there was always the chance of friendly fire.

“Cruciocito!” snarled the wizard obviously through playing.

“Defodio!” Harry cast, pointing at the wizard’s feet, hoping to make the wizard lose his footing by causing material to be dug out from the flooring. Seeing the wizard in a certain light, jumping to avoid his spell he realized who it reminded him off. The Carrow twins, this was either their father or uncle, both generations of Carrows were twins, a male and female and then two girls at the school, it was odd it didn’t usually happen, two generations of twins that is.

“Cruciocito!” was cast again by Amycus Carrow.

Harry ducked it, but someone must have cast it behind him, since pain suddenly exploded through his entire body. He fell down screaming in agony, at the familiar pain, whoever had cast it must have been distracted since the pain began to wear off, just as Amycus Carrow stalked towards him, his wand pointed at his face. His mouth opened in a smirking leer as he stared down at what he thought was a now defenceless wizard.

“Sectumsempra!” hissed Harry, grimacing as the blood spewed all over him.

Amycus fell to his knees, staring between his chest and Harry in shock as he bled out at an alarming rate. His eyes began to glaze over, and his body fell sideways, he had stopped breathing before his head touched the marble flooring. Harry scrambled to his feet, almost falling three times as the blood gathered all around him. Added to the fact his body was still shaking due to the after affects of the Crucius Curse. Looking around he saw everyone was busy; Severus was in a battle of his own with Alecto Carrow.

“Dear Merlin! Harry are you alright,” said Cedric grabbing hold of Harry, as he lurched slightly. His hands panicky as he tried to see where the blood was coming from, but he couldn’t find any wounds. He was a sight that could scare even Moody, half his face was covered in blood, other side was spattered in it, and his clothes were drenched in it. He couldn’t see any visible injuries, or feel any; his green eyes were filled with fear as he eyed Harry who was paler than he’d ever seen him.

“It’s not me, just sore, Crucius Curse,” said Harry wincing, as he walked funny, moving away from the blood.

“Lean on me,” said Cedric, helping Harry move, he as well as the rest of their group of friends knew what Harry had been through in Malfoy Manor, even intimate details that the press did not know. He sat Harry down on the bench, as he looked around at the fighting, which was tapering off, there was only nine Death Eaters in the hall and almost double the Auror’s so they were easily subdued. He had no idea how the others were fairing, they should be back from the Dungeons by this. “Will you be alright?” seeing a fellow Auror struggling to keep up with a Death Eater.

“I’m fine, go.” said Harry, standing back up, the pain was fading away. Grimacing at the dried in blood all over him, he needed a shower and desperately. He felt menacing magic in the air, as the Anti-Apparation wards were broken, considering it was Dumbledore and Moody who had cast them - it must mean someone more powerful than them had taken them down so quickly. There was a big possibility that Voldemort had been here or was breaking down the wards to help his followers - which was unlikely to say the least but considering he didn’t have many Death Eaters left - he might have no choice but to act out of character.
Suddenly there was an influx of Death Eaters, Apparating into the scene.

“Flipendo!” snapped Harry, causing a Death Eater to be knocked backwards, barrelling into the others.

“Avada Kedavra!” said the wizard, facing Harry furious at being made a fool off.

“Immobulus!” snapped Harry, casting it on the killing curse, before he cast “Wingardium Leviosa.” and flung it back at the Death Eater who ducked, it hit his fellow dark wizard in the back, his body fell to the floor with cement, he wasn’t even aware of his death.

“Crucio!” he uttered furiously.

“Locomotor Mortis! Levicorpus!” Harry cast in rapid succession, the Death Eater cast a shielding charm causing Harry to smirk. He knew Severus’ spell would just fly on through it. His first spell dissipated but the second caused the Death Eater to be yanked up by his feet in mid air. Wincing as the spell washed over him again, damn it why the hell was it always Cruciatus Curse spells they damn well liked casting?

“Avada Kedavra!” snarled the upside down wizard his humiliation complete.

“Expelliarmus!” shouted Harry after ducking the spell that crashed into the bench he’d been using five minutes prior. His heart was beating through the roof. He’d never had so many killing curses directed his way, it was a good job Severus had taught him how to best manoeuvre and that his first instinct should be to move from oncoming spells not cast shielding. For the simple reason that there were more spells that just shattered the shield than there was ones that bounced off or dissipated.

Harry stood there panting harshly, feeling his energy flagging, his muscled ached something fierce. Not only because of the Cruciatus Curse but because of him constantly dodging and weaving from spells. He was just glad he was able to keep his wand in his hand, despite the powerful shaking that was overtaking his body becoming more prominent each moment that passed.

“Serpensortia!” Rowle sensing weakness in Harry added to the fact he wanted to avenge his fellow wizards.

Harry stared at him in blatant amusement, really? Did he think he was scared? “Kill the wizard who conjured you and I’ll make sure you have enough food and warmth.” hissed Harry, watching Rowle gape in shock before squeaking as the snake turned on him, since it hadn’t gotten far from the wizard it didn’t take any time at all for the snake to wrap itself around the leg and be bitten by their vicious fangs. Considering it was deadly poisonous, he wasn’t surprised by the fact the wizard was taken down fast.

Looking around once again, his body was ready to collapse; he prayed that this was over otherwise they were going to find him passed out amongst the bodies of the Death Eaters. He noticed the snake faced wizard and realized Voldemort HAD made an appearance after all. He was fighting with Dumbledore, or had been, Voldemort had his blood red eyes on him, shock blooming in their depths. Then he abruptly disappeared, a few Death Eaters that were still free followed him.

Harry felt his heart sinking, the Aurors cheered but Albus had followed Voldemort’s gaze and he was staring at Harry curiously. Harry tried to stop himself gulping, and thankfully succeeded, he didn’t like the look either wizard had given him - at all. Stumbling slightly, itching at the dried caked blood that was causing the itch. His green eyes went past the Headmaster looking for two people in particular, Severus and Cedric, sighing in relief when he saw both of them were alive and
relatively well. Cedric had a large gash on his face and he was clutching his arm very closely.

“Sonorus,” muttered Moody, before barking in his usual demanding tone. “Head count, Grand Hall. NOW!” his voice was head in every nook and cranny of the building. “Finite Incantatem!” he muttered on himself removing the charm, as he clumped across the room checking out the injured Auror’s.

“Tonks!” demanded Moody, waiting on the witch to come to his side; it didn’t take long since she was closest to him.

“Take them to St. Mungo’s,” said Moody, levitating another injured unconscious Auror next to the other one.

“Yes Sir,” said Tonks, quickly holding onto both injured Aurors, crouched down next to them the Portkey was clutched in her hand and all three of them disappeared.

There was only the prisoners in the manor now, four of them in total, and they’d come out without losing anyone. At least not yet, it depended on how badly injured the two wizards were who had been sent to St. Mungo’s. Tonks would remain until there was news, before long the others would be going to see how they were.

“Garrick! How are you?” called Albus, seeing the wand-maker being escorted in using an Auror as a leaning post. Concerned by the state of him, Kingsley hadn’t been exaggerating the slightest about his state.

“He needs St. Mungo’s, Sir we have to get him there right now.” said Proudfoot, deeply concerned, the wizard weighed next to nothing.

“The others are coming,” grunted Moody, his magical eye looking through the side of his face and out at the hall.

Auror Savage came into the room with two wizards, they didn’t look hurt, but when one looked closer they saw the obvious effects of the Cruciatus Curse. They must have only been captured recently, they didn’t have a cloak on or a wand, and there was the possibility that they weren’t even magical.

“Take this, I’ll see you back at Headquarters when you are done.” stated Moody, thrusting a Portkey into Savage’s hands, and another into Proudfoot’s. Once they were all touching the Portkey’s Moody said the activation words and they disappeared.

Moody started looking around the room after they left, looking for someone in particular. He quickly found Harry and spoke to him. “You were very impressive laddie, you would make one hell of an Auror.” stated Moody, nodding in respect. His spell work was very remarkable for a seventeen year old. Especially considering it was a Potions Mastery he had not a Defence Mastery. Severus Snape had taught him well, and he knew it was Severus - his spells were always very inventive to say the least. As evidence by the bloodless corpse of Amycus Carrow. He knew it was Harry who cast the spell; he’d been watching and ready to intervene when the boy had surprised him.

“Thanks,” rasped Harry, unable to help himself but leaning against Severus as he came close.

“We’ll come to the Ministry this afternoon to be debriefed, I’m sure it will take that long to get everyone else’s statement anyway.” stated Severus, not asking but demanding, he was quite frankly alarmed, Harry looked like death warmed over. He had no idea how injured he was, and the fact he
was leaning into him practically falling asleep on him was saying a lot.

“Alright Laddie,” said Moody, nodding grimly, they were all injured in one way or another, between going to the infirmary at the Ministry and as Snape said getting all their statements and memories it would take them all day.

“I'm going to get Garrick's wife and son, I'll take them to St. Mungo's, I'll stay I wish to know how Garrick is.” said Albus, “I'll see you later Severus.” he'd had a son and daughter, regretfully his daughter had already passed on to the next great adventure.

Severus looked at Albus surprised, before blankly nodding, why would Albus want him or need him? He wouldn’t be surprised if it was to talk about the Horcruxes and locating them. Albus didn’t know they had located and destroyed nearly all of them. There was only one or two potential Horcruxes left, when he eventually told Albus he wasn’t going to be happy. Not that Severus cared, the bloody old fool had almost killed himself - he wasn’t taking the chance of him doing so again. He may not be happy with the way Albus destroyed his Snakes spirits six nearing seven years ago, or how he had dealt with many things, but he still owed the wizard for standing up for him during his trial and making sure he kept his freedom and fortune.

Shaking off his thoughts, he wrapped his magic around both himself and Harry before he Apparated them out of the battle zoned manor. It had been perfectly cleaned until they’d shown up, now it was in awful shape, not that it mattered since it would be locked up tighter than Gringotts so nobody could get inside. At least not until the Carrow twins came to their inheritance and turned seventeen and legally adults.

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“Where are you bleeding from?” asked Severus immediately, sitting Harry on the couch, he couldn’t care less if blood got all over it. It was easily replaceable, Harry however wasn’t, and he hoped he could heal it without leaving scars; Harry got very self conscious of anything that marked him. He viewed himself as ‘damaged goods’, and nothing he said helped, but Harry had cared less the more he said it but it had still been there. Harry had been too relieved beyond belief when Fawkes had healed him to feel otherwise.

“Harry,” said Severus, using his knuckle to rub along Harry’s chest causing him to groan. Severus then repeated his question, his black eyes filled with concern.

“It’s not mine,” whispered Harry, blinking his eyes trying to stay awake. “I used Sectumsempra on Carrow.” he felt guilty, but it was more to do with the fact he’d killed someone than who it is that he’d killed.

“You did what you had to, do not feel guilty, he certainly wouldn’t if the roles had been reversed.” stated Severus sharply, realizing immediately what was going on. He had killed before, but he hadn’t seen it or caused it really, he’d only locked Quirrell up to stop him getting the stone; it was Voldemort fleeing from him that actually caused his death. Carrow wouldn’t have felt much of anything for long, if anything had happened to Harry he would have gladly hunted him down and killed him in the slowest most painful way possible.

Harry nodded once, his eyes drooping he was utterly exhausted and in pain - he just wanted to close his eyes and sleep.

“Dobby?” called Severus, opening his potions bag, removing two vials of Anti-Cruciatus potion as well as a pain reliever.
“Yes Sir?” answered Dobby, his green eyes wide with concern.

“Bring a bowl of antiseptic water, quickly. I would also like some strong coffee in five minutes.” stated Severus, removing Harry’s robes and clothes with a spell, keeping his underwear and vest on. He saw that the vest had gotten soaked as well so removed it, it certainly wouldn’t be getting used again. Blood was impossible to get out of clothes, at least completely at least. He didn’t even wait to see if Dobby had left, simply begun running a diagnostic over him. Thank Merlin he hadn’t ended up injured, Harry would hate to have gone to St. Mungo’s and he would have had to if he was too injured to take care of him.

Reading the results he was pleased that he didn’t have to remove any curses or hexes on Harry, it just seemed to be the Cruciateus Curse that hit him. Just as if it made it better, it didn’t, he was quite frankly furious, damn the bloody Death Eaters to hell. At least more were taken off the streets and the Dark Lord had suffered another blow. He was also proud of Harry as well; he’d actually gotten the better of Amycus Carrow and killed him. He was up there next to Bellatrix Lestrange as the most unstable but deadly Death Eaters. They as well as he had been trained personally by the Dark Lord, not something he was so proud of anymore, but if Harry could take on Amycus he could take on the Dark Lord and hopefully win.

Dobby appeared and placed the large bowl on the small table next to the couch, it had a yellowish tint, letting Severus know Dobby had done as ordered and put an antiseptic into the water. Dobby handed him a face cloth and a small towel before leaving silently, knowing he would want privacy without needing told. Spend enough time with someone, or even spend enough time serving someone you got to know them and their routine.

“Drink these, you’ll feel better when you wake up,” said Severus, cupping the back of Harry’s neck to help him drink the three potions. “Harry, DRINK!” the three potions were quickly swallowed by an exhausted Harry, who just wanted to rest. He could in a few minutes, but until then he would just have to put up with his prodding.

Severus dunked the face cloth in the water, until it was completely wet before wringing it lightly. He ran it over Harry’s face, getting rid of the copious amounts of caked in and dried blood. Sometimes it took too swiped and scrubbing to get it off, he repeated the process until the blood was completely gone - even from his hair. He would need to take a shower later, but until then at least he was clean. “Accio Harry’s nightshirt!”

Once the clothing came into view, Severus spelled it onto the unconscious seventeen year old. Nodding in satisfaction, he grabbed the cover from the back of the couch and put it across him - keeping him warm just in case he was in any state of shock. He prayed that Harry wasn’t going to feel any sort of shame for what he had to do. It was going to be a busy day, not only did they now have to go to the Ministry this afternoon, but Black and Lupin were coming for an early dinner to talk. What about he didn’t know, but his curiosity won out and he had agreed to the meeting. Black had made it a formal inquiry, using the best paper, calligraphy writing and the Black coat of arms. He didn’t know what the hell Black was up to, but if he tried anything he would make sure he lived to regret it for a very long time.

Moving to sit at the leather back chair he liked so much, he turned it towards his desk and began a letter of his own. He had been putting it off for the past few days, but it was time to reply the request that had been asked of him. He honestly didn’t know how the hell he was going to go about doing this, but he was definitely going to enjoy the challenge it posed.

He had just finished penning his name when his mother Apparated back into the manor. Her arms full of plants and various other items wrapped in brown packaging and string. The relief on her
face said it all, he was genuinely surprised she hadn’t stayed in and paced the rug to shreds while they were gone. She had probably gotten used to worrying about him - she knew waiting anxiously didn’t change anything.

“Everything alright?” she asked, happily enough, although when she saw Harry as asleep she did frown slightly.

“Yes, it went off without a hitch.” replied Severus calmly, turning back he spelled the parchment dry, before folding it and burning some wax and pressing the ring he kept for official purposes only, into the wax and left it to dry. He was spell it sealed closed for the trip to America.

“Was he injured?” asked Eileen, who had dropped all her items onto the chair and caressing Harry’s hair.

“Minor Cruciatus damage,” said Severus, it wasn’t on long enough to cause any lasting damage. “He’s already had the potions, it’s mostly exhaustion.”

“Is Ollivander still alive?” questioned Eileen, grabbing one of the parcels.

“He is, his son and wife are with him at St. Mungo’s.” said Severus.

“He’s married?” asked Eileen quite frankly surprised.

“He is. Albus went to get them.” said Severus; he had been vaguely astonished as well.

“I see, here I got this for you while I was out.” said Eileen, handing the parcel she’d picked up, positively beaming at her son.

Turning it around curiously, he opened the strings wondering what his mother was up to now. She was grinning at him in a way that made him distinctly uncomfortable - when she had something planned or something was going her way. Which was more often than not these days, it was nice to see her so happy even if it irritated him. Moving the paper aside, he blinked in surprise and then stared drolly at his mother.

Hermaphrodite; And its History a collection of animals with such a condition was printed on the front. Mostly things people usually wouldn’t want to look at - as a Potions Master he’d seen worse. Worms, snails, fish, Molluscs and crustaceans.

Well that made her wishes clear, thought Severus wryly, “Thank you, mum, this definitely will be useful.”

“I’m glad you like it!” Eileen said as she beamed at him, “I saw it and just had to get in, just in case you decide to do it.”

“I have,” said Severus dryly, not surprised that his mother didn’t even blink. She knew him well enough to know he would want to at least try his hand at this.
Severus stepped out of the Floo Network, entering Albus Dumbledore’s office at Hogwarts. His mind shields were fully up and he was cautious. Albus wanting to see him immediately and out of the blue like this, was quite...out of character for him unless it was an Order meeting, which it wasn’t. He was surprised to find himself alone in the office, but he shouldn’t have been really, Albus seemed very concerned about Garrick - or was it the information he could potentially have? He would be sorely disappointed that he wouldn’t get near Garrick, not until the Aurors had all the information they could get once he was recovering. The Dark Lord obviously wanted something from Ollivander, it was just the question of what. He had obviously not given anything out, otherwise the Dark Lord would have killed him already. Ollivander’s happened to be one of the families who had natural Occlumency and Legilimency abilities added with the benefit of knowing instinctively how powerful someone was. That was how the old man knew exactly who was entering his shop, those that had occlumency barriers he just looked at the wand and knew who it was. Ollivander had as he said, remembered every wand he’d ever sold.

Unperturbed, Severus wandered over to the chair and sat himself down, his back was certainly grateful for the seat that’s for sure. He hadn’t rested like Harry had, but considering how many times he’d been hit with the Cruciatus Curse he deserved all the rest he could get. He wouldn’t be making potions today, that’s for sure, it would take a while for the shaking to disperse, even with the potion in his system. The book his mother had given him was quite informative to say the least, it certainly gave him some good ideas. Which of course, is why she had bought it for him in the first place.

Tapping his fingers against the carving in the seat as he waited, he was just beginning to feel the stirring of impatience when the Floo Network activated. From the corner of his eyes he observed bright coloured robes, his stance didn’t change any despite the fact he’d relaxed, he was always looking for exits and ways people entered - it was deeply ingrained into him. He may not have spied for over a decade, but one didn’t just forget things that had saved their lives quite a few times.

“Ah, Severus, I apologise for keeping you waiting,” said Albus, sighing tiredly, as he made for his own seat, his face visibly giving of relief at being able to sit again.

“How is he?” asked Severus, preventing the smirk from appearing, he already suspected the answer.

“I’m afraid I didn’t get to see him, if it weren’t for his wife I wouldn’t even know how he was.” Albus lamented sadly.

“I’m not surprised, you know how it is, if you aren’t family or a magical guardian then you don’t get to see them.” stated Severus, “The rules are there for a reason, even you aren’t immune to them.” the healers were stern about that, no exceptions were made. If anyone tried anything they were promptly thrown out by the guards, the embarrassment usually deterred them from trying again.

“Yes, so I’m coming to realize,” Albus said softly, his eyes filled with tiredness and a lingering
bone aching exhaustion. He was getting too old for this, he had been through three wars and he just wanted to rest, enjoy a retirement. Each day that passed, and the war got more severe he began to realize he might not survive to see Tom destroyed and the light victorious once more. He had cursed himself more than once for his stupidity, trying to touch a ring that could be cursed. Severus was right to be so furious with him, he could also sense the shift going on with his order members. They were looking for a new leader, a younger one, and it wasn’t Nick Potter. They were looking to Severus, the son he’d never had, and if there was anyone he would have chosen, it would definitely be him, if it hadn’t been Nick who would be next to lead the magical world into a new era.

“You wished to speak to me? Not the other way around, I have other places I need to be today, Albus. So I must insist you make this quick.” Severus said, glancing at the time on his watch.

“I see,” said Albus, his eyes dimming slightly, he missed talking to Severus. They’d at one point, spoken for hours even if it was about his potions. This war was not just keeping them all busy, but severing ties that had bind them for years. He only hoped Severus knew just how proud he was of him, of the man he had become.

Severus arched an eyebrow, wondering at Albus’ constant change in emotions, despite being a Occlumens and Legilimens of course, his eyes showed when he was happy and when he was disappointed. They say the eyes were the windows to the soul, and it was true. It was partly due to how powerful Albus was, the constant twinkle wasn’t a spell, or a charm it was just who he was.

“Severus, I need you to be honest with me, why have you trained Harry so rigorously?” asked Albus, the look he’d seen Tom giving Harry had astounded him. He hadn’t seen that fear and astonishment on his face before, and he was running through every explanation in his mind. He couldn’t think of anything that fitted at all, other than the fact Harry was a parslemouth but everyone knew that. He had after Harry’s second year asked James for a copy of his family tree, temporarily of course. He’d learned something that the family obviously liked to keep quiet about, Slytherin blood ran in their veins, the Potters were cousins to the Gaunts, or the last living descendant Tom very distant cousins of course, many times removed now but still cousins. It explained where Harry’s ability came from, he was however, genuinely surprised Nick wasn’t able to understand or speak Parseltongue as well. Harry seemed to be the first one in many a generation to receive the ability so it wasn’t completely unusual.

“Having this conversation again are we?” Severus asked dryly, refraining from rolling his eyes. Even if he were to tell Albus that Harry was the boy-who-lived, not that he would, his word was his law, he would never do that to Harry. Not even if he wasn’t his partner, if someone couldn’t see the obviousness in front of them - well he wasn’t about to let them in on it. Albus would never believe him, he’d invested too much time and effort in Nick Potter to conceive that he’d been training the wrong one all along. He was curious as to how Albus could have made such a bad judgement, or misconstrued the situation. He’d never seen the man wrong about anything, until a few years ago when he himself found out about Harry.

“He is as Alastor said, a very good fighter, better than some of the Aurors that were there!” Albus said, praising Harry - and rightfully so. He would make one hell of an Auror, better than his father and godfather, and that was putting it lightly. Becoming an Auror was one of the most difficult jobs, nearly impossible, its why there was until lately only a small amount. The expectation barrier had been lowered, they needed all the help they could get to safe the wizarding world from Tom and his Death Eaters.

“So he should be, I trained him after all.” stated Severus smugly. He had every right to feel smug, after all the boy he’d trained in both Defence and Potions had outsmarted Amycus Carrow and
come out on top. They had remained undefeated until this morning, in the duelling world you were only as good as your next kill or triumph. Words that Filius was all too familiar with, since he had been the duelling champion for seven years running, he hadn’t participated for a few years now.

“Why?” asked Albus, desperate to know why Severus had gone into all that effort, Harry had asked for a Potions Mastery after all, not a Defence Mastery. Yet he wouldn’t train Nick for what was to come? He just did not understand it. Surely Severus understood how important Nick was? And it was him he should be training. He was doing his best, of course, with Sirius at the helm, but with everything going on he couldn’t train him as much as he could be trained.

Severus pinched the bridge of his nose, “I’ve told you before, Albus, my explanation wont change, he was a Potter. He’s in as much danger as the rest of his so-called family, more so, I bet for having successfully foiled the Dark Lord’s plans. He was fourteen Albus, when he was tortured, hurt beyond any younger teenagers endurance. When I asked if he would like to learn a few spells, he jumped at the chance desperate to learn how to defend himself. It went on from there, despite the training his primary subject at being taught has always been potions.” he was lying a little, it had been a stipulation when he first took Harry on and realized the truth. It was good job, it may very well save Harry’s life in the upcoming battle.

“You know how important Nick is, yet you train Harry…I honestly do not understand you anymore, Severus!” cried Albus exasperated, staring wildly at the young wizard. He knew things about Severus nobody else got to see, knew the real man under the sardonic armour he carried around.

“Nick is currently receiving training is he not?” it wasn’t a question it was a statement.

“Yes, but that’s besides the point,” said Albus tiredly. “We need someone of your calibre.” he admitted.

“Hardly,” replied Severus dryly, “If anyone it is you who can train him for what is needed of him.”

“Severus,” whispered Albus, feeling deeply disgruntled.

“I am busy making sure that when he finally defeats him that he remains dead.” said Severus, quite sneakily not stating who the ‘he’ was all the while remaining completely truthful. “You concentrate on Nick Potter, like you’ve been doing all along.”

“Voldemort...had a very curious reaction to Harry earlier today,” commented Albus, offhandedly, which put Severus on immediate edge, Albus Dumbledore did not do offhandedly - he was fishing.

“And what was that?” asked Severus, cautiously, but nonetheless curious, this was the first he’d heard of any look.

“He gave him a look that I can only discern as fear and astonishment Severus, right after Harry spoke Parseltongue then he disappeared. I’ve seen that look directed at anyone other than myself in all the time I’ve had the misfortune of knowing him.” said Albus.

“Perhaps nobody thought to tell the Dark Lord that he wasn’t the only Parseltongue in the world.” Severus told him, smirking deviously. “I have no doubt a few of the Death Eaters are going to be in severe pain tonight - lets just hope he has someone who can brew Anti-Cruciatus potions.”

“Why would it alarm him so?” Albus said thoughtfully, perhaps Severus could shed some light on an angle he hadn’t thought about yet.

“With the Dark Lord? Even if I was still a Death Eater I wouldn’t know, Albus, he’s insane,
nothing he does has logic attached to it. Unless you count his pureblood supremacy speeches the Death Eaters believe.” Severus said thoughtfully. Something he had bought into, but back then as a teen, it had made a lot of sense to him - he had gone down a path that people rarely could deviate from. He had been lucky enough that Lily’s life had been threatened forcing him to take drastic steps in the long run - it had been the best decision he’d ever made.

“I just find the entire thing disconcerting, please keep Harry out of the spotlight if you can, out of the public I believe Voldemort might make an attempt on his life. It is the only thing I can come up with why he was so astonished, perhaps he had forgotten about Harry?” he knew as he spoke he was clutching at straws, Voldemort wouldn’t just forget anyone never mind someone who got the better of him.

“Don’t worry, I’m not about to let anything happen to him.” reassured Severus honestly. “He will need a few days R and R after this anyway.”

“Yes, I think everybody will, Cedric Diggory especially, he took a bone shattering curse to the arm, but considering where it was aimed he did the right thing.” said Albus, he had seen Cedric raise his arm once his shield was shattered. So instead of his chest and heart getting hit, it was his arm which was perfectly healable unlike the heart. Hit that vital organ and there is no going back, even for them unfortunately.

“Yes, it was fast thinking, he definitely picked the correct career in the end.” stated Severus, aware of Diggory’s aspirations to be a Quidditch star. At least as an Auror the shelf life was much longer if you did it cautiously, but of course it could be even more life threatening. It was definitely a career choice much better suited, than flying on a broomstick - he couldn’t stand the game. He had of course bet with Minerva, on his Slytherins winning, but other than that it was his only enjoyment about the games.

“He’s a tough young man, no doubt his parents are extremely proud of him. With a father like Amos its only natural that he go into the Ministry business.” mused Albus.

“Yes because its inconceivable that a child goes down his own path.” stated Severus sharply, “Not every child turns out like their parents.” thank Merlin for that, or he would have been screwed years ago. All Potters had been Auror’s for generations, it was expected of them now.

“Your mother had the potential to be the great Potions Mistress the magical world has ever seen. In that regard you are like your mother, but you did something about it.” said Albus, smiling proudly.

Severus gritted his teeth - loudly his black eyes flashing vengefully.

The smile vanished as he stared at Severus solemnly as it dawned on what he had said. “I didn’t mean it like that Severus, as you well know.” steel entering his voice just a bit, not liking that Severus would think for a second his existence was regretted especially by him. If his mother had worked on her career, the likely hood of Severus being there was slim to nothing since Eileen wouldn’t have met Tobias Snape. Eileen could have done so much more, it was just a pity she hadn’t had the guts to leave Tobias and afford Severus a better life. Part of him thought she had been afraid of facing her parents, acknowledging her failures.

“Are we done?” Severus asked, coolly.

“No, how does the hunt for the Horcruxes?” asked Albus, sitting forward, his eyes full of hope.

“It goes,” stated Severus firmly.
“How many have you gotten?” enquired Albus more urgently.

“I’ll let you know when they are all destroyed.” replied Severus standing up, letting him know the conversation was over without saying anything.

“You know how many?” Albus rasped, gaping slightly. Even he hadn’t been able to figure that one out. He didn’t know if he should feel indignant or shocked to the bloody core. How had Severus succeeded in getting that information? Perhaps the Order was right to be looking to him for leadership after all thought Albus dourly.

“Roughly.” said Severus, his tone clipped. “Goodbye, Albus.” he added before making his way to the Floo - he wasn’t interested in this conversation anymore.

“Prince Manor!” shouted Severus, and he was whirling through the network before being spat out at his home. He noticed Harry was awake, looking a little bit better, drinking a coffee which he hoped Harry had the forethought to drink with a pepper up potion.

“Are you ready for a long afternoon?” asked Severus sitting down, joining him in a quick cup before going to the Ministry. He certainly wouldn’t drink anything offered to him there, not only was the coffee disgusting, despite the overhauls, the Dark Lord probably had people on the inside. So he wasn’t going to trust it, he didn’t care if it made him sound paranoid, he would rather be paranoid and survive than a trusting fool and die.

“I’d rather not go, if that’s what your asking,” said Harry, gulping the brew down as his shaky fingers refused to hold the cup properly. The quicker the cup was out of his hands, the better it would be for his self control which was seconds away from collapsing - he hated weakness. To him the shaking hands was exactly that - it left him helpless, he couldn’t control it.

“No I didn’t think you would, but we shouldn’t be too long. Everyone else will have already been and gone by this time.” said Severus honestly.

“Hopefully,” murmured Harry, yawning tiredly. “Oh shit, what happens to animals they find in manors?” he asked his eyes wide.

“Depends on what it is,” replied Severus, “If its dangerous it goes down to the dangerous creatures department, if its an owl or such they would just let it go leave it to fend for itself.”

“So they wouldn’t…you know…banish it?” said Harry feeling relieved.

“It?” enquired Severus, so it wasn’t just a random question, there was obviously a reason behind it.

“Yeah, I promised the snake Rowle conjured that I would take care of it if it…you know, bit him.” said Harry, “It would get on well with my Asp.” snakes were too independent, as long as they had somewhere warm to come to and food to hunt you’d barely see them. Which was exactly what happened to the one Sev had gotten him last year. He rarely saw the snake in his tank, but strangely enough from time to time he would talk to him. He obviously desired company, maybe this was the way to go about it.

“Of course,” said Severus dryly, his lips twitching in amusement, wondering again why Harry wasn’t in Slytherin. He seriously should have been, perhaps if he was to be sorted now it would make the decision towards Slytherin instead of Ravenclaw. Although he had to admit, it was a good job Harry hadn’t been sorted into Slytherin as a young child, otherwise the Potters would have disowned him Immediately, and he wouldn’t have been able to accomplish all he had. “The snake will definitely be in the dangerous creatures department, we can go down and visit on our
“Good, if anything happened I won’t be happy.” said Harry, putting the cup down, which clattered noisily in his shaky hands.
"I suggest we get this over with so you can rest," said Severus, seeing the building irritation behind his lover’s eyes.
Harry nodded, agreeing with him.
I'm not sure whether snakes that have been conjured disappear but in this story it isn’t going to be the case. When they are conjured they are conjured from somewhere, so it’s a real snake I guess we can say. It won’t fade away given time, although it’s not important for the story I like when Harry uses his gift without caring what others think about it.

Ministry and Helpful Information

True to Severus’ word, they took a quick detour down to the dangerous creature department before their appointment with Moody. Severus had sent a patronus message ahead, letting him know they would be there as soon as possible. It was only a few floors belong the Auror office so it wouldn’t take them very long at all. At least both of them hoped that was the case, since they didn’t want to linger too long. Harry was still recovering from what happened, and Severus wanted to make sure he received some rest after Black and Lupin came. He was undeniably curious about what they wanted, and why they’d made it an official meeting. The niggling feeling that he knew the only reason they’d made it official was because they knew he wouldn’t have agreed any other way. Which of course took the mystery out of it, much to his consternation.

“Can I help you?” asked a helpful voice, staring at Harry expectantly from behind the desk.

“Was there a snake brought down here from Carrow Manor earlier this morning?” enquired Harry, not reacting when she blanched; some people just didn’t like snakes. He himself couldn’t understand that fear, but he could understand them when others could not.

“I’m sorry I cannot say,” said Amy.

“Look I don’t have all day, I was there, I know there was a snake in Carrow Manor, now please just get someone that can tell me the relevant information.” said Harry firmly, “I have to be up in the Auror department to speak to Alastor Moody in less than ten minutes, so anything to speed this up would be appreciated.”

“Unless you want Alastor Moody coming down here?” added Severus coldly, his lips twitching as she paled even further, it seemed as though Alastor Moody’s reputation preceded him.

“Wait here please,” said Amy, standing up and hurrying over to the door to her right. She knocked twice before entering, leaving her desk unattended.

“It’s a lot different from it used to be isn’t it?” said Harry, looking around curiously. This was the level they had been at, to attend the party, but nothing was familiar especially not the layout from his memories of trying to help everyone who had been injured.

“It is, much simpler as well.” stated Severus in agreement. It was as though the original had been built one bit at a time, putting a name on the area and that was it done. This design made much more sense, and the layout was much more simplistic, the Law enforcement offices were right next to the Auror’s office instead of three floors down. It truly didn’t look anything like the old building, the attack had been good for something at least…but the loss of life would never, could never be worth it. There was a fountain, with an inscription for those who had died, the money placed in it were given to the families who had lost a love one in the tragic attack. Since it was mostly adults,
the money was going to wives, husbands, orphaned children.

“Mr. Shaw will see you now.” said Amy exiting the office, and sitting back down at her allotted seat.

“Go on, I’ll wait here.” said Severus, sitting down on the chairs scattered along the wall for people to wait.

Harry nodded his head, before he ambled over to the office and entered it.

“Thank you for taking the time to see me, Mr. Shaw.” said Harry, shutting the door but not closing it completely. Harry’s wand as always, close to his hands just in case he found himself in sudden need of it. During times of war you couldn’t trust people you didn’t know, no matter how nice and accommodating they were.

“My assistant tells me you were at Carrow Manor and that a snake which was retrieved there belongs to you?” questioned Shaw getting straight to the point.

“Yes,” said Harry in agreement, nodding his head in respect for the fact he didn’t mess around.

“Do you have proof that the snake belongs to you? Pictures of the snake? A receipt? Or perhaps where you bought it?” enquired Shaw.

“No, nothing like that, it was conjured during the fight, I promised the snake that I would take care of it,” stated Harry sharply, not liking the fact Shaw was practically accusing him of trying to steal things that didn’t belong to him.

“How did you manage that?” asked Shaw, staring at the teenager in disbelief.

“I am a parslemouth, sir, I can communicate with snakes.” said Harry, not at all ashamed of his gift.

“Y-you’re Harry Peverell?” gasped the wizard staring at him in awe.

“Yes Sir, I am.” replied Harry, shifting slightly at the look, no matter how often he got stared at this way - he found it disconcerting.

“Were you the one that conjured it?” asked Shaw, becoming professional once again, ignoring his slip-up.

“No,” replied Harry, shaking his head negatively.

“By rights it belongs to whoever did,” said Shaw.

“The wizard who conjured it is dead, the snake killed him on my orders, which is why I want to take care of it.” stated Harry sharply, the time was going fast, he hadn’t expected all this trouble for one little snake.

“Very well,” said Shaw, before removing paperwork on his desk, rummaging through them until he found the appropriate papers. “Sign these three documents, and then we can go and retrieve him for you.”

“May I borrow a quill?” asked Harry, accepting the item when Shaw passed one over. His name was quickly scribbled on three documents, after Harry had read them to make sure they were just about getting possession of the snake. His parents might have told Nick about signing things, but
they hadn’t warned him but he’d overheard and took them to heart.

“You may keep this copy for your records,” said Shaw, handing one over but two of them were stamped with a flick of their wand and placed back in a tray for filing later that day. “Follow me.” he added, standing up, together both of them made their way down the corridor until they got to a door listed ‘S’ which Harry presumed was for all dangerous creatures that began with an ‘S’ Harry wasn’t the slightest bit surprised that only Snakes were there. The amount though was staggering, the only saving grace was they were being properly looked after, clean tanks; plenty of food by the looks of things and the room was set at the prefect temperature for them.

“Why aren’t they sent to a shop to be re-sold?” asked Harry, “This isn’t exactly a good life for them, stuck in here.”

“They cannot be removed until their owners are dead, or we have verified there is nobody else in the family that can take them.” said Shaw, “Eventually most animals are adopted again, but snakes are the worst to re-home, none of the reptile shops will take on older snakes, since its nearly impossible for them to sell the ones they have - at least here.”

“Why don’t you release them into the wild?” Harry asked, looking around listening to them talk.

“Because they belong to people, whether they are good or bad, it’s the law.” said Shaw. “The one in tank twenty-two is the one removed from Carrow Manor this morning.”

“Hello,” hissed Harry approaching the tank, ignoring the fact every single snake head had raised in shock and awe at having a human speaker amongst them.

“You came back,” hissed the snake surprised.

“I did promise,” Harry told it, still hissing and feeling very amused, as he lifted the lid the lid from its enclosure, and placing his hand inside, allowing it to wind itself around his arm and slide up. It continued until it wrapped loosely around Harry’s neck hissing in contentment, happy that Harry was keeping his promise.

“I assume you know your way out?” asked Shaw, keeping his distance from the very venomous snake.

“I do, thank you for all your help.” said Harry, before he walked out of the room, finding it difficult to ignore all of them calling for him to take them too. He couldn’t save the whole world, it was impossible.

“I see you were successful,” said Severus smirking in amusement, not at all intimidated by the great big snake wrapped around his lovers neck. He did get a great deal of amusement at the thought of everyone’s terror; they had to walk towards the Auror office after all. He wondered with hardened Aurors would squeal like little girls, oh he was looking forward to this - hopefully he wouldn’t be let down.

“He’s bloody heavy.” muttered Harry, as he began walking side by side with Severus towards the ‘Law enforcement’ level.

“Then give him to Dobby to take back home,” suggested Severus, opening the door so both of them could climb the stairs, evidently Harry wasn’t going to ask for Dobby since they continued their short journey in silence. Harry was beginning to wheeze quietly though, he wouldn’t have noticed if they weren’t in a stairwell, which even the slightest noise echoes of the walls making everything seem louder than it actually was.
“I think the pepper-up potion I took is wearing off,” said Harry, breathing deeply, smiling gratefully when Severus opened the door. Which meant he couldn’t take another one for at least an hour, since he’d had the potion watered down. It would have been longer if he’d taken an entire vial full.

“Perhaps we should have Apparated,” said Severus, deeply concerned, finding no amusement as he had wished just a few minutes earlier when people recoiled when they saw the snake wrapped around Harry. “Are you sure you are up for this? I can ask Moody to reschedule the appointment while you go back and get some more rest.”

“I’d rather get this over with,” admitted Harry, yawning tiredly. He would definitely be going to sleep very early tonight, no potion brewing for him. He had learned his lesson the hard way not to brew tired. The last time he had, he’d caused a massive explosion and almost killed himself in the process. Instead he’d found out he was a bloody Horcrux as it was removed, he was glad he found out after rather than before…he honestly couldn’t imagine how he would have felt learning that piece of information with it in him.

“Kingsley will see you, Severus, he’s over there.” said Moody, pointing to the wizard, who had come back against his superiors wishes, but he was on desk duty for now - taking it easy so he didn’t become overwhelmed. Sometimes a job was all people had, so they just wanted to get back to it, try and get on with their lives as normal. He was keeping a close eye on him, looking for any signs of an addition to sleeping potions especially. If that happened he didn’t know what he would do, it would devastate Shack to lose his job, but as his superior he had to report it if it happened. He certainly wouldn’t be able to be on the field if he did take up an addition to sleeping draughts. He was strong though, one of the strongest wizards besides himself that he knew.

“How’s Cedric?” asked Harry, gratefully taking a seat, relaxing against it with a sigh of contentment.

“He’s taking the rest of the day off, he’s perfectly fine, St. Mungo’s healed his injury and his bones are re-growing.” stated Moody; the stubborn boy had not wanted to stay in the hospital. Instead he had come in just an hour after getting the potions, given his statement and only gone home when he told the boy to leave and get rest. He wouldn’t be the slightest bit surprised if the boy was back tomorrow morning. The only reason he was telling Harry this was because he knew Harry and he were friends, good friends from what he’d heard.

“Good,” said Harry, giving a small smile of relief, in twenty-four hours he would be healed and perfectly fine. Although the arm would be a little tender for a few days, the best thing for that was to take nutrition potions and drink plenty of milk and dairy products. St. Mungo’s will have hopefully told him that, so his new bones could get stronger. From what he could remember it had been his left arm, so his wand arm was perfectly fine.

“Right, down to official business, tell me what happened from when you Apparated into Carrow Manor, from every spell you cast to everything you saw around you.” stated Moody, the quill and paper poised ready to begin writing down everything Harry said. It began writing statement of Harry James Peverell - seventeen years old before stilling once more.

“I started with stupefy at a wizard I didn’t know, I later realized it was Carrow, Amycus Carrow. He cast a Confringo spell, before I cast conjunctivitis, after that he continued casting Cruciatus Curses at me. In between them I cast a Defodio, a Cruciatius hit me in the back before I cast Sectumsempra, and it hit him and brought him down. Cedric helped me up after that; I spent a few seconds recovering before more Death Eaters flooded in along with Voldemort. Then I began fighting another Death Eater, I still don’t know who he is, I cast Levicorpus and an Expelliarmus at him, he cast two Unforgivables at me before I disarmed him…just as another Death Eater engaged
me in a duel, Rowle, he made the mistake of casting a Serpensortia spell at me, I told the snake to
bite him and I’d take care of it. That’s exactly what the snake did, and he went down.” said Harry,
it sounded so simple when he said it, but the entire thing had lasted over forty-five minutes.
“Voldemort must have sensed he was losing, since he Apparated out and the Death Eaters who
were free followed him. After that you got everything sorted, injured to St. Mungo’s and those that
had been kidnapped taken there as well.”

Alastor plucked the quill out of the air once it finished writing, and signed his name at the bottom
before passing it over to Harry, not even needing to instruct him to sign it, since he did so straight
away.

“Were those who were injured in Carrow manor alright? Did they survive?” asked Harry.

“No, one did not survive, two weren’t even wizards, they were Obliviated and sent to a Muggle
hospital to recover.” said Moody, in a way they were lucky, they wouldn’t need to remember
everything that happened. To them they were simply suffering from amnesia and they certainly
wouldn’t regain their memories. Only Ollivander had been a wizard, he was on his way to
recovery, it would take a while, and he was so emaciated. It certainly wouldn’t just be a one day
visit to St. Mungo’s and back home; no Ollivander would be there for two weeks at least. He had
no trouble telling Harry about this since it would be in the newspaper tomorrow, the press were all
over this - just like everything else that happened.

Harry nodded his head.

“You sure you don’t want a career in the Ministry? You would make one hell of an Auror, laddie.”
said Moody honestly.

Harry grinned, “No, I prefer brewing potions.” he replied.

“Aye, you’ve made some good potions,” agreed Moody, he had tried Eileen’s potions, and it had
helped all his aches and pains, especially the arthritis he had in his hands and leg. It had yet to
return, it was definitely a potion he liked that’s for certain.

“Thank you,” said Harry, knowing coming from Moody, it was well deserved and not an empty
platitude.

“That’s the statement done, you are free to go,” said Moody, the boy looked exhausted,
considering he’d had two rounds of Cruciatus Curse cast on him, he wasn’t surprised. He was
strong, resilient, but considering everything he’d had done to him, he wasn’t surprised Harry would
never consider a job as an Auror. Some people just saw too much violence as a teenager to consider
wanting it to be all they knew in life.

“Thanks,” murmured Harry gratefully, looking over at Shacklebolt and Severus, to see him signing
the paperwork. Standing up, he hoisted the snake across his shoulders more equally, so his left
shoulder wasn’t taking all the weight. Ignoring the grumbling it was doing, honestly, he had just
saved its neck and now it was grumbling about being moved a bit? Harry smirked wryly, shaking
his head - snakes honestly.

“You can use the Floo in here if you wish,” Moody said, noticing the strain in Harry’s shoulders.
Normally civilians weren’t allowed to use the Floo network in here, but there was the occasional
exception. Nobody could call him up on it anyway, not only was he head of the department, his no
nonsense attitude made sure nobody complained to or about him. Since it would take just one word
from him to see them either demoted, sacked or back to training or put on the crappiest duty that all
Auror’s hated doing.
“I’ll take you up on that offer if it wasn’t for the snake,” Severus said immediately, “We’ll Apparate from here.”

“I’ll be seeing you later,” Moody said, giving a nod as Severus wrapped his arms around Harry’s midsection, and Apparated them away.

“Impressive aren’t they?” said Shacklebolt, staring at the space where the two had just stood.

“Aye, we will see a lot of good things from the pair of them, mark my words.” said Moody. “Do you think anyone knows?”

“That they’re in love? No, the news would have gotten wind of it before this.” whispered Shacklebolt, breaking himself from his reverie.

“True,” mused Moody, before he too got to work, doing the paperwork while he had a chance - you never knew when an emergency Floo might come in. which was becoming more and more frequent, Voldemort was stopping full out attacks and just attacking families one at a time.

“I’ve found a common denominator in all the attacks,” said Sirius, rushing in, his hands full of paperwork. He had been working non stop trying to figure it out, and felt extremely stupid when he realized it. He moved over to the large desk at the back of the room and spread all the paperwork around.

“What is it?” asked Moody, moving around, looking at the paperwork, trying to find out whatever Black had.

“I’m an idiot that it took me so long!” cried Sirius; each section with a name was circled five times. “The last five attacks are seemingly random but they all have one thing in common. A child aged eleven, marked to go to Hogwarts, Muggle-Born; they’re killed in the attack.”

“What about the other two?” asked Moody, pointing towards two smoked ruins. “There weren’t any children eleven years old.”

“Yes, there was. One just happened to be staying at friends for the night, the other has been missing ever since…now in all the commotion we found an uncommon magical signature, and I think the eleven year old managed to Apparate from the house. If we can get our hands on it and track it, we will find him. He’s bound to be scared out of his mind, not only was his family attacked with magic, but he doesn’t even know about the magical world but probably realizes he is magical too.” Sirius said, giving over the statement from the child’s friends from the first house that was attacked, and the missing child report the Muggles had filed on the child from the second property.

“Could they have gotten their hands on the magic book?” asked Shacklebolt paler than normal.

“That’s impossible,” denied Moody, “Albus has it under lock and key.”

“If it’s conceivable we need to ask him,” said Sirius, “If not…then we have a traitor in the Ministry.”

Moody grumbled under his breath, he didn’t like either thought if he was honest. “Alright, I’ll ask him, but if its still there…we need to find out who it is and quickly.”

“Especially since we don’t have the resources to cover every Muggle-Born that’s due to attend Hogwarts.” agreed Shacklebolt, as Moody moved over to the fireplace.
“Accio accidental magic records of Muggle-Born children in the last five months!” shouted Sirius, moving the paperwork to one side, keeping the most relevant documents on top.

“Alright, let’s see if we can figure this out,” said Shacklebolt, sitting down waiting on the relevant documents to come. He picked up the paperwork with the families names on them, looking particularly for the children aged eleven years old. It didn’t take much longer for a huge wave of documents to appear before them, landing one at a time in front of Sirius neatly on the table.

“Hopefully soon, I have to get off in half an hour.” said Sirius, “What’s the name of the family in the first attack?”

“Samantha Brown,” said Shacklebolt, after he had looked over the documents for the dates of the first attack.

“Alright,” said Sirius, flicking through the documents looking for one in particular, “There, Samantha Brown, quite a few instances of accidental magic…” he said looking down the list, the Ministry had to be dispatched, so the family had already known about her abilities before the attack.

Sirius took the document from Shacklebolt and placed both together at the top of the desk.

“The boy who’s missing?” he asked.

“Aaron Hank.” said Shacklebolt.

“Another one with high uses of magic, but harmless ones the Ministry was never dispatched to the home.” said Sirius, accepting the paperwork from Shacklebolt and putting them next to the first one.

“The book is still there, perfectly guarded hasn’t been accessed by anyone.” said Moody, coming back towards the desk. Picking up the two they had so far, finding Archibald Carter had been sent to deal with their accidental magic. He had lost his parents and younger siblings to Voldemort; he doubted the wizard would join Voldemort. “Accio log book and magical signature recorder for room two-zero-three.” they might need that.

“The third is a boy named Jason Smith.” added Shacklebolt.

“Got him, are accidental magic records always this high?” asked Sirius, staring at yet another long list; he passed it over to Moody.

“No, but it’s not usual.” grunted Moody, handing it back. Watching as Sirius and Shacklebolt got through all the paperwork quite quickly. It was true enough; each home that had been attacked seemed to have a child with quite intense accidental magic track records.

“All of them were overseen by Archibald or Rachel,” said Shacklebolt, they were members of the AMRS, accidental magic reversal squad. Their department was the largest in the Ministry next to the Law Enforcement Department, so it would be next to impossible to pinpoint an actual perpetrator.

“I have to go,” said Sirius, looking at the time, he was going to clock off now, which he hated to do now that he had a full lead in front of him.

“I’ve got it,” said Shacklebolt, grabbing all the paperwork, including the log books from Moody, and wandering over to his desk, determined to work it out.
Just as Sirius Apparated out an Unspeakable made his way into the Auror office (which was extremely rare in itself).

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Prince Manor

“Is he alright?” asked Sirius, looking over at Harry concerned, he was asleep on the sofa, a cover thrown over him. He looked so young and innocent asleep. Yet awake he had an intense presence around him, sort of like how Dumbledore had been. He was extremely passionate about everything he did, and determined to better himself. He was grateful every day for the second chance Harry had given him. Considering he would never forgive James, Lily or Nick, he knew forgiveness would be a rarity when it came from Harry.

“Just tired,” replied Severus, “Now what do you want?” he asked both wizards, who were standing suddenly awkward at the question.

“We want to see if we can help, with the Horcruxes and whatnot.” said Sirius, edging towards the seat and sitting down directly across from Harry.

“May I?” asked Remus, gesturing towards the seat, having the sense to ask - so not to irritate Severus further.

“Very well,” sighed Severus, it was obvious he wasn’t going to get rid of them any time soon.

“How is the hunt going?” asked Sirius.

“Harry, wake up, they’re here.” said Severus, shaking the tired wizard awake, he didn’t like it but Harry had made it clear he wanted to be woken up when they came.

“This better be good,” murmured Harry, his voice filled with exhaustion as he blinked open his tired eyes and reluctantly sat up. He kept the cover over him, too comfortable to move.

“They want to know about the Horcruxes,” Severus told him, rolling his eyes as he sat down next to him, there was no pretence needed with Remus or Sirius, since they knew about his relationship with Harry. They had both been there when Harry was at his sickest, and when he had been more worried than anyone else. From his understanding Remus and Sirius had also been there when Harry had told his friends about them being together.

“What about them?” asked Harry, staring at the pair of them, arching an eyebrow.

“Well we need to destroy them all…I thought maybe we could help,” said Remus, his amber eyes alight with passion. He was good at research; he could find things and sense magic if they even just had a rough idea on the area.

“We have no idea if there are any more out there,” said Severus honestly, “We suspect there might be one or two others, the Dark Lord spoke about the possibility of creating seven.”

“How many have you destroyed so far?” asked Remus, sitting forward.

“Six, but we summarised that one of those six might have been accidental.” Severus told them.

“What were they all? I know about one, Slytherin’s locket.” said Sirius; he had found that one with Remus while they were on holiday. Hidden in plain sight for years, without anyone the wiser to what it really was, he couldn’t believe it really.
“A diary, Ravenclaw’s Diadem, Slytherin Locket, Nagini and Gaunts Ring.” said Severus.

“That’s only five,” said Remus, pointing out an inconsistency.

“The other is quite frankly none of your business,” said Severus grimly. “Just know another was destroyed, no questions.”

“Alright, so he seemed to favour personal items or Founders items, how he found Ravenclaw’s Diadem is curious…” admitted Sirius; it had been missing since the founder’s time after all.

“He was smart, charming and dangerous, a lethal combination.” Severus said he should know he’d fallen for it, hook line and sinker.

“So what other founder’s items are there? Gryffindor Sword right?” wondered Sirius out loud.

“And Hufflepuff’s cup, the chalice is said to heal those that were even gravely injured but other accounts say the nature of the cups magical properties isn’t known. Helga was also the one to perfect the charm to bring the food from the kitchen to the Great Hall, so it might just be something that she chose to drink from.” Harry added, “I traced the main Hufflepuff line to the Smith’s, Hepzibah Smith was the last person to have it, she was murdered supposedly by her House-Elf. Her family realized the two items were missing; there was a big reward for anyone to come forward with the precious heirlooms. Hufflepuff Cup and Slytherin’s locket, they were never returned to the family or found.”

“Since he had the locket at one point…he obviously has the cup.” said Sirius.

“Not necessarily, the locket was his, he was Slytherin’s descendant, the cup might have just been discarded.” suggested Harry.

“I doubt it, he was obsessed with anything to do with the founders, and he would have kept it.” Severus told him.

“So we have a possible Horcrux then? Hufflepuff’s cup,” said Remus, “Where were the locations of the others?” asked Remus, bringing paper out of his pocket and scribbling information down.

“Don’t bother, I already have everything written down,” said Harry, standing up and moving over towards his desk. Plucking out a red journal that was used solely for the Horcruxes before sitting back down and throwing the book onto the table lightly. Thankfully there was nothing in there about him, not that he was in a hurry to put what he had been anywhere. Remus opened it and found old Daily Prophet clippings and each of the founder’s lines as far as Harry was able to get them. Which was quite far, it was impressive, considering everything else he had going on. All of this was available from public record, but to go through all of them years and years’ worth of history and find what you were looking for was more than impressive. It was determination, he’d never seen anyone like it, and although he was sure Severus had helped a great deal. The location of them he found, and they were scattered all over the place, from Hogwarts: Scotland to London to Little Hangleton. All had some importance to Voldemort, he knew nothing about him - at least nothing in Voldemort’s past to help aid the search.

“Sorry to disturb you Sir, but there is a letter at the edge of the wards, it won’t let me remove it from its leg, it’s for Sirius Black.” said Dobby, appearing before them.

“Me?” asked Sirius surprised, he wondered who wanted him.

“Bring the owl in,” said Severus; it had to be official for the owl not to allow even the House-Elf to
“Yes Sir.” said Dobby, disappearing as quickly as he came.

“You have quite a lot of information on Voldemort,” said Remus, still flipping through all the information. He realized if they couldn’t think on any locations the possibility was - they wouldn’t either.

“Everything I could find,” said Harry, “Most of it is information Sev already had.”

“Hardly,” said Severus dryly, “I merely contributed.”

“So where do you think Gryffindor Sword is?” wondered Sirius, “I wouldn’t be surprised if he was using all four of them.”

“It’s possible, I mean he found Ravenclaw’s Diadem.” agreed Remus, “But there’s no mention of it in Hogwarts a history, maybe it stayed in the family.”

“It didn’t,” said Harry abruptly.

“How do you know?” asked Sirius, staring at Harry pensively.

“Look at the family tree, Gryffindor became Peverell before changing to Potter further down the line.” said Harry, “There’s been no mention of a sword in any of my inventory. I ordered a backlog to see, and there was never a Gryffindor or sword removed from the vaults.”

Sirius and Remus gaped in shock, “Oh,” squeaked Sirius, that was definitely a surprise.

“Stupid bird!” said Dobby reappearing, his finger was bleeding steadily from a bite, no doubt courtesy of the owl. Once he’d done his job he left immediately, hopefully to get something on that finger before it got infected.

“Oh no,” said Remus, it was a black bird, official Ministry seal, in other words it wasn’t good news at all.

Sirius untied the string around the owl’s leg, a little weary, not wanting to lose a finger himself. There were two letters, one from Gringotts and another from the Ministry both obviously from the same place. Sirius’ mind whirled wondering what the hell was going on, this only happened when you received an inheritance. It had happened when his father and mother died, with Regulus dead he had been the main heir. Reading the contents his eyebrows slowly but surely began to climb higher and higher.

“What’s happening?” asked Remus, not able to see what Sirius was reading.

“Bellatrix, Rodolphus and Rabastan Lestrange are dead, they attempted to flee Azkaban Prison they drowned trying to reach dry land.” said Sirius, they wouldn’t have gotten anywhere even if they managed to get to dry land. The Fidelius charm would have prevented them from getting away, the Unspeakables had worked it that way, according to rumours which he was inclined to believe.

“Why now?” Severus said narrowing his eyes suspiciously.

“Some of the new inmates must have told them that Voldemort was back,” Remus said, but it was more of a suggestion.

“Most likely.” agreed Severus thoughtfully, what made them think they were in any shape to swim
to shore? It was pure madness, Bellatrix must have been the one to convince them, the others wouldn’t have suggested it, and he was surprised they’d even agreed to it. They had been the more sane ones compared to Barty and Bellatrix at the very least.

“HOLY MERLIN’S BALLS!” shouted Sirius, causing Remus and Harry to jump, Remus more noticeably.

“What the hell…” grumbled Remus. “What is it?” he asked Sirius.

“The cup…look it’s in the inventory for the Lestrange’s vaults.”

“Why did you get them? Shouldn’t they have gone to Narcissa or Andromeda? They’re closer relatives than you.” asked Remus, confused.

“They’re married with vaults of their own, and female, they won’t get anything other than what Bellatrix gives them…in a will if she even has one.” said Harry, before Sirius or Severus could answer. He knew this by reading everything he could get his hands on, before he emancipated himself. “You should get the cup before the will reading, just in case she plans on giving it to her sister, which would be what I would do.”

Severus and Harry looked at each other unable to believe their good luck. It seemed like Black knowing about the Horcruxes had been a good thing after all. They wouldn't have found the two if it weren't for him, well they may have just found the last one. They wouldn't know until he landed the killing blow on Voldemort, if the mark disappeared they were home free...if it remained they had one hell of a search on their hands.
Four days had gone by since Sirius and Remus had gone to Gringotts and Harry and Severus had cleansed the Horcrux from Helga Hufflepuff’s chalice. The end of the war was approaching, Harry could feel it in his bones, and he was terrified. He’d never envisioned himself as a hero, and never wanted to be. It was why he’d been so adamant about nobody finding out he had been the one to survive the killing curse that night. He never wanted to be like Nick, his own brother had left him to die at the hands of evil wizards. Just seconds after he had saved both their necks by getting them down. Nick was a coward, and Harry had never been like that, hell he could have gotten just himself down and ran - left him there but he hadn’t. He may not be a hero but he wasn’t a coward.

Harry entered his bedroom, the one that had been unused since he had began dating Severus properly, and sleeping in his bed, their bed now he supposed. Closing the door behind him, he moved over to his desk, and took a seat as he removed a sheet of parchment. Flipping up a wooden box lid, he plucked a black inkpot out and a quill as he absently opened it. Official documents always had to be done in black clear eligible writing. This was exactly what he was doing, writing the most official document he would ever write in his life.

**Last Will And Testament of**

**Harry J. Peverell**

I, Harry J. Peverell, of Prince Manor, England, sound in body and mind, do declare that this is my Last Will and Testament.

Harry stared at it, unsurely, he didn’t know if he was doing it right, but he had looked for an example but hadn’t been able to find one. Writing this made his thoughts and feelings more pronounced, he was seventeen years old, he didn’t want to die, but if he did he didn’t want everything to revert back to the Potters if anything happened to him. It would make everything he’d done redundant; he had more than doubled his income, not just with potions but investments in various Muggle companies. He’d even gotten a large percentage in the company Weasley Wizarding Wheezes he’d helped start up, and lately, he’d helped Gary open a shop in Hogsmeade, where he would be making and selling wands. He wasn’t sure how good the investment would work out yet, since it had only just literally opened.

No, the fortune he built up would go to the people he loved, and he prayed to Merlin that they would survive. He’s sacrifice himself in a second to ensure it, but life didn’t work out like that. He would just have to hope that someone up there was listening to him, and would protect them if he wasn’t able. It was the only reason he was contemplating going out there, putting himself in harms way to end this damn war before he did lose someone. Especially with Fleur and Gary having moved here as well.

I give my properties and entirety of my vaults unless stated otherwise, to my partner, Severus T. Snape specifically including my research journals. If he fails to survive me, then I herby give it all to Eileen Prince-Snape.

Closing his eyes, he stopped himself from squashing the quill and splattering it all over the
document; he really didn’t want to start it all over again. Breathing shakily, he didn’t even want to think about Sev not surviving, he wouldn’t be able to live if anything happened to him. People might think he was being overly dramatic, but the truth was, without Sev he wouldn’t have had a life; he would have holed himself up in the Muggle world, attended school, and never achieved his dreams. It had been his plans for so long, get enough money and live in the Muggle world away from his so called family. He’s been such a fool really, to think he would have been able to buy property at thirteen years old. Shaking off his thoughts, he had to get this finished and sent off, make sure it was legal so his estate wouldn’t end up in James and Lily’s hands.

To Fleur Delacour and Gary Dubios I hereby declare all interest agreed in the terms of the contact for the shop at number 4 Hogsmeade be null and void, and all interest in said shop go to Gary Dubios on the event of my death. To Fleur Delacour I leave the jewellery in the trunk of vault 216 and four thousand galleons and an additional three thousand on the condition they show Gringotts a copy of their marriage certificate.

If he wasn’t there when they married, he wanted to know he had left them something at least. If they didn’t marry, he knew the money would just revert back to the estate and whoever had it, hopefully Sev. The jewellery was no good to him anyway, since he was a man, and the contents of the trunk was intricately designed pendants and such for women. He had given a beautiful piece to Eileen already, and she loved it, he had yet to see her without it on. She deserved the world, especially after what she’d endured in life, it wasn’t fair but at least she was happy now.

To Cedric Diggory and Cho Chang, I give four thousand galleons and an additional three thousand upon Cedric Diggory being married.

Unlike Fleur and Gary he didn’t know if Cho and Cedric would last, she had changed a great deal since they began dating. From what he’d observed from her, she had been extremely bitchy at school. Now she was growing up, but he wasn’t at Hogwarts all the time to know for sure. He wouldn’t say he liked her as much as Fleur and Luna, but they had both been there for him during the hardest time in his life. They were special to him, Cho as of right now was just his best friends girlfriend. He’d never made her feel left out though, and Fleur and Luna seemed to like her well enough.

To Luna Lovegood and Neville Longbottom, I give the jewellery in vault 217, and four thousand galleons and an additional three upon the event of their marriage.

They would marry, they were already engaged, and he could see how much Neville loved her, there was little doubt they would have a long and loving relationship. Luna had been there for him at a time when he needed it most, been his pillar of strength and in doing so helped Neville overcome his despair and helped make himself stronger. He hoped he would be able to perfect the potion before the battle, so he would know he’d not let him down.

To Viktor Krum and Lukas Alekseev I give four thousand galleons an additional three whereupon Viktor Krum marries. I also gift Viktor the shares of the ‘Quality Quidditch Supplies’ in ‘Angelov Alley’ Bulgaria (magical district).

Unfortunately he couldn’t think of anything else that would mean anything to Viktor. The Quality Quidditch Supplies he had a very major share in had belonged to Viktor’s grandparents, who had both died during Grindelwald’s reign. He would be very happy to have it back in the family, the Potter family had taken the majority share sometime after the grandparent’s death, and he now had it of course. Money certainly wasn’t going to be a thing Viktor would ever need to worry about, not for a long, long time. He had vaults full of gold, even sharing it with his family hadn’t put a dent in it and he was eighteen years old, he had many years of being a professional player before he
became ‘too old’ to play. Unless he became injured but Viktor was actually quite a safe player, but it only took one bludger to do irreparable damage.

I have intentionally omitted making provisions for those of my blood in birth only, who have not specifically been mentioned and included herein. I generally and specifically disinherit each, any and all persons who ever claim to be, or who may lawfully be determined to be, my blood by law. If any such person shall contest in any such court any provisions in this will, then each and all such persons shall not be entitled to any devises, legacies, bequests or benefits under this will or any codicil hereto. To each such person or persons who are successful in claiming under this Will or to a portion or all of my Estate, I hereby give one Knut.

Harry took a deep breath; this would prevent the Potters from successfully taking anything now belonging to him - other than the Knut. They could fight all they like, but they wouldn’t get much, he had made sure of it. This was the part he’d successfully managed to read upon, Sev might not need the money, but he sure as hell didn’t want the Potters getting it. It was too bad that if they contested he wouldn’t get to see their faces when they thought they won only to realize they were getting nothing.

He would sign it at Gringotts, with two Goblins acting as his witnesses, making it irrefutable. In fact that’s exactly where he was going to go now; he wanted it dealt with as soon as possible. Grabbing the Peverell ring, he stamped the will with it, before sliding both the ring and the will into his cloak pocket before Apparating from the manor directly to the steps of Gringotts.

“I’d like to speak to Griphook please,” said Harry, walking up to the teller, speaking firmly but respectively. He had a great deal of respect for the Goblins, they had helped him, and kept it a secret otherwise he would have been found out and disowned before he could push his plans forward.

“Take a seat, Mr. Peverell, I will get Griphook for you,” said the teller, he was a priority customer, so unsurprisingly Griphook would see to him very quickly.

“Thank you,” said Harry, taking a seat in the reception area, most people didn’t wait at the reception. It was empty bar him, and it wasn’t because of how early it was either. Most people simply went to the other side of Gringotts to get into their vaults. Unfortunately it wasn’t such a simple thing for him right now, in fact it was probably one the most important documents he’d drawn up, even more so than his emancipation papers.

“Mr. Peverell?” questioned Griphook, his small legs walking quickly down the corridor, gazing at Harry in confusion. He hadn’t expected him, and there had been no notice of his impending visit, which was something he had always done until now.

“I need to file my Will,” Harry stated, his voice quite low but Griphook heard him nonetheless.

“Do you require witnesses?” asked Griphook professionally.

“Two,” confirmed Harry, as he followed Griphook, who began leading him to his office. He had been there a few times previously, mostly to talk about his accounts. His heart jumped through his mouth when Griphook suddenly barked out in Gobbledegook, looking around he saw to his confusion absolutely nobody there.

“Would you like any refreshments?” enquired Griphook, gesturing for Harry to sit as he walked around the table and sat on his own.

“No thank you, I don’t have much time,” replied Harry, he wanted to get started on the Potion for
the Longbottoms; it might be the last chance he got to create anything. His ideas would be passed onto Severus, who was much better than him at Potions, at least in his opinion, and he would be able to finish them and have them published.

“Of course,” said Griphook nodded grimly, he was seventeen years old and had already created many potions. They were selling very well, that they were even buying them to re-sell, they did get a profit from it, albeit a small one but in the end it did accumulate to a good amount. “Rieng and Smoot will be here momentarily to aid us in getting the Will finalised.”

“Good,” said Harry, unrolling the parchment and handing it over to Griphook, “If you don’t mind, I’d like to know that this is airtight and will pass any scrutiny forced upon it.”

Griphook took the document and his black eyes quickly but thoroughly read it. It wasn’t as big as some of their wealthy customers, which is what Harry was. Yet it was cut and dry, especially in terms for what Harry wanted to give to his friends and to ensure people wouldn’t be able to contest it even if they tried. He had to suppress the feral smirk at the thought of the Potters dragging the will, contesting it, in front of the Wizengamot. It would greatly amuse him to turn around and give them a single Knut each. He was good, he’d obviously did his research, and despite its shortness, it would work very effectively.

“It is perfect,” said Griphook, placing it on the desk. “Nobody will be able to demand anything from your estate Mr. Peverell.”

Harry nodded curtly just as two additional goblins entered the room, they could only be Rieng and Smoot, he’d never dealt with them before so he had no idea who was who - and yes, he was able to tell the Goblins apart. Unlike a lot of people, he paid attention, and there were differences in each of them.

“Just to confirm, you did not write this will out under any duress?” asked Griphook, if someone did; the Will would be null and void. Magically speaking, it would go blank, and it also meant whoever had done the ‘coercing’ wouldn’t get a single sickle of the money.

“I did not, no.” said Harry.

“Very well, just sign it and date it, then we will get it filed for you, Mr. Peverell.” said Griphook, handing the Will back over along with a self filling quill.

“Okay,” said Harry sitting forward he swiftly added the date, his name and signature at the bottom.

“Rieng?” barked Griphook, before speaking in gobbledegook and Harry couldn’t even begin to translate what was being said.

Reing replied in Gobbledegook before taking the quill and signing his name, as soon as he stepped back Smoot repeated the process with practised efficiency. They bowed to Harry, without saying a word and left the room, the door closing with a click behind them. Harry turned back to Griphook to see him rolling it up, using his wand to heat wax and press the Gringotts seal into it. It would not be broken again until his death. Harry didn’t understand why he felt much calmer with this dealt with, but he did. He was still terrified he would die, who wouldn’t be at seventeen years of age?

“I will place it in the records now, Mr. Peverell.” said Griphook standing up. “Is there anything else you require?”

“Nothing, thank you, Griphook.” said Harry, nodding his respect as he followed the diminutive creature out of his office. “Goodbye.” he added as they parted ways, Griphook going in a complete different direction from Harry - who was exiting Gringotts, not going to a vault underground.
Sirius sat at his desk in the Ministry, a mountain of paperwork on it, it was the worst part of being an Auror, and no matter how many years went by he still couldn’t get used to it. Sighing softly, he pulled yet another bundle of paperwork towards him, and began to trudge through it; signing it when he had to before it would roll itself up and disappear to yet another department to be filed away. It was early in the morning, and hardly anyone was in yet, other than Alastor, James and Kingsley. Their shifts had been changed, at least James’ had at least. This time he hadn’t been given a choice, work or be let go, and being an Auror meant too much to James for him to pack up now. James was manning the Floo Network this morning. James had just changed Nick’s routine; he would begin training at six o’clock, after dinner when James got off duty. Nick didn’t require such intense training anymore, since he was well up to Auror style training. He had changed a great deal, he was no longer the reluctant boy who had allowed his father, Remus and him train him back when he was fourteen years old. Added to the fact he was picking up spells much faster, ever since his core had stabilised he’d been much more respectful of magic.

Things were unfortunately, no less awkward when he visited the Manor. Nick treated his mother as if she wasn’t there, barely spoke to her unless he had no choice and it was always curtly. Sirius felt he was being a little bit of a hypocrite, after all what Lily had done was no worse than what he had done which was leaving his brother to die at the hands of Voldemort. At least Nick had been a child; Lily had been an adult and definitely should have known better.

“Did you get any closer to who it could be?” asked Sirius, trying to get rid of the mind-numbing silence in the office. At the same time he signed his name at the bottom of the statement and sent it off.

“No. whoever it was didn’t sign in, but we couldn’t expect them to sign it if they were up to no good.” admitted Shacklebolt.

“What about the magical signature records?” Sirius enquired, his mind only half on the conversation as he focused on getting all the paperwork finished. He didn’t want to have to stay longer than necessary, although he might have to with Voldemort getting more active. He didn’t have as many Death Eaters as he had during the last war, but that didn’t stop him terrorising everyone, in fact it just gave them more paperwork to do since he was placing people under the Imperious Curse. The wall behind him was filled with missing witches and wizards who have all disappeared. Considering one had been spotted at a raid, it was the general consensus that Imperious was to be blamed.

“Nothing, they knew what they were doing,” grumbled Shacklebolt. “I’ve got Sturgis and Smith keeping an eye on the corridor under the Invisibility cloaks. They’re putting a list of time and dates whenever someone goes in. It should only be a matter of time before we figure it out with a bit of luck.” they were more desperate than ever to find out who was doing it. There had been more attacks since the night Sirius had figured it out, two each night now instead of one spread out, it was obvious he was just furious that he’d lost the battle of Carrow Manor.

“Damn it,” said Sirius, and there was no rhyme to his attacks, it wasn’t as if they could just sit one property out, sit and wait until he attacked. He had though informed the parents to take a rather long holiday, since a spate of attacks had occurred in the ‘area’ and the group were evading justice. They could only hope that they would do it, since there was literally nothing else they could do. It might come to it that they would need to actually sit in wait, hoping he’d attack the property sooner or later.
“I know,” barked Moody, just as furious as the others were, but it had never been simple in figuring out who the bad guys were in the Ministry. If it had been that easy, then they wouldn’t have had to put up with the invasion during the last war.

“How is Nick? He seemed really quiet during the Order meeting? Was he sick?” asked Shacklebolt, changing the subject.

“Sick? No, he’s not sick, he’s actually quite quiet nowadays,” answered Sirius bemused.

“Does he even have a single friend?” asked Shacklebolt, it wasn’t natural for children to change their personality so quickly.

“Yes, he writes with Susan Bones every day, they both seem to have hit it off, they understand each other a bit.” Sirius told him, both had expectations on their shoulders, although not by Amelia, she was very supportive of whatever Susan wanted to do. Losing your family like that would do it to anyone, he guessed. Nick’s was a big more severe than Susan’s expectations but he liked Susan, and Sirius was just glad he had someone to talk to that wasn’t himself or his father. In fact Sirius was sure there was a bit of a crush for Susan in Nick, he was seventeen - it was about time really. Even Roxy was dating someone; he’d had to stop James from going to the school and warning the ‘little snot’ as James had called him. Sirius had gotten a good laugh about it later; things had changed, but none more than James. He was taking a very active interest in his children’s lives, not just giving them whatever they wanted and playing Quidditch as though they were friends. He guessed everyone had to grow up at some point.

“She definitely needs someone,” said Shacklebolt, and he hoped Nick didn’t hurt her, she’d been through enough. She’d lost the last of her family, Amelia had been a good friend and colleague for years, despite the fact she was older than him.

“I agree,” murmured Sirius, he couldn’t imagine how much pain she was going through. Losing her parents at a young age and then her aunt, she was a strong teen, and that fact was a good thing. Neville was probably the only one that could even remotely understand, but at least he still had his grandmother and his parents were still there, just…not completely. They couldn’t communicate with people, but there was something still there that wasn’t coming through. Or couldn’t, he didn’t like dwelling or thinking on it at all, Frank and Alice had been close friends, almost as close as James over the years.

“Call of an attack at Zabini Manor, kind is unknown.” said James hurrying in, if they didn’t know what kind of attack it was, they had to go in a group.

“Looks like I just got here in time.” said Cedric, walking through the door amused, wand already at the ready.

“Let’s go!” barked Moody, as they all stood up, Shacklebolt watched them go mournfully, and he couldn’t wait to get back into the field. He would have to wait for his Mind-Healer to approve of it though; they were making good progress so he was very hopeful that it would be soon.

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“Where have you been?” demanded Severus, his black eyes roaming over Harry, making sure that he wasn’t hurt. Once he saw that Harry wasn’t harmed, he relaxed slightly, still giving Harry a glower. He had been terrified when he’d woken up and Harry was gone not just from his bed but the manor itself.

“I had to get a few things done,” said Harry, “I’m sorry if I worried you.” he added feeling bad
seeing the worry plainly showing across Severus’ face. Maybe he should have woken him up, but Sev had been up late last night, same with him, so he’d been reluctant to do so. He couldn’t stay cooped up in the manor, just in case Voldemort attacked, that just wouldn’t be living a life. If his was going to be or always had intended to be a short one - he would make sure he went out without regrets. There would always be regrets though, regret not having more time with Sev, regret leaving behind people he loved immensely. But if those were the only regrets he could come up with, then his list was pretty damn short.

“Have you eaten?” enquired Severus, letting the matter drop, he could tell there was something bothering Harry, and knowing his lover he wouldn’t share until he was good and ready.

“No, did I miss breakfast?” asked Harry confused; he hadn’t realized he’d been gone so long. He’d gone to Gringotts then Hogsmeade to see Gary at the new shop. Which had been surprisingly lively, with a good few customers, evidently there had been a dire need for wands, which there shouldn’t have been. After all Ollivander’s shop had still been open, despite the fact Garrick Ollivander had been dragged from his shop. He was safe now, but it would take a while for the elder wizard to recover and get better, he’d been missing for months after all. He hadn’t hung around for long, just said hello to Gary and spoke to him for a few minutes before leaving after wishing him well with his new shop.

“No, it will be through momentarily,” replied Severus, sitting down feeling much better that he knew exactly where Harry was. He was still undeniably curious about where Harry had gone.

“Good, I could use something to eat, I’m starving,” said Harry sitting down next to him, suppressing a yawn, his sleep hadn’t been easy last night, he’d tossed and turned the entire time. Hopefully he would get some decent sleep tonight having dealt with the thing causing most of his anxiety. If he survived the oncoming battle, he vowed to himself that he would crawl into his bed and sleep for a day. The thought of him being able to successfully defeat Voldemort though was laughable. He’d learned all he could, and all he could do was hope for the best.

“Here,” said Severus, handing over a cup of coffee, just the way Harry liked it.

“Thanks,” murmured Harry, smiling at Severus in gratitude.

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Lily, James and Nick - Potter Manor - Later that day.

James stumbled out of the Floo, rubbing his tired eyes, he had ended up staying one hour later than he usually did - getting all his paperwork finished. He didn’t know how much longer he could keep this rigorous schedule going, he wasn’t getting enough sleep, and it would soon begin to affect him. He couldn’t allow that to happen, if someone happened to him because he was tired, he would be letting his kids down.

“Hello, James.” said Lily quietly, watching her husband with tired eyes, the loss of magic was weighing heavily upon her. Even being able to cast basic spells wasn’t a comfort; it made her feel just as useless. She couldn’t help train her son, not that he seemed inclined to talk to her never mind allow her to help him. Instead she just watched Nick duelling with his father, godfather and Headmaster, and what a sight that was. He was so good, he had a real chance of winning against Voldemort, he would win, and he would be adored again like before. She may as well have lost all her magic for the good it was. She had read over the documents ‘Merlin’s Law’ and found no way to get her magic back. Apparently the Law itself would decide when she had ‘repented’ and ‘deserved magic’ again. Each morning she would wake up and try casting spells, hoping that this day would be the day she got it back only to be bitterly disappointed. Not to mention being cooped up all day in a manor, without company, it was driving her up the wall.
“Hello,” said James quietly, when he saw the House-Elf bringing through a steaming hot plate of food and a Butterbeer, he couldn’t help but smile in gratitude. That’s exactly what he needed, moving over towards the dining table, he sat down. “Has Nick eaten?” he asked.

“Yes, Sir, young Master has eaten.” replied the House-Elf, “Can I be getting you anything else Master James?”

“No, I’m fine thank you,” said James dismissing the House-Elf, ignoring the indignant look on Lily’s face. Why had he agreed to let her stay here? He should have just had her remain in one of the Potter cottages or something, it would have been better for everyone. Roxy was avoiding coming home, Nick didn’t want to be near her, and to be frank he didn’t want to either. He wasn’t a total dickhead; he wouldn’t throw her out and leave her homeless. Not homeless, she would end up back in Azkaban, unless he pulled some strings with Scrimgeour to have her moved to one of his other properties. Looking over at her he felt sorry for her, he was no longer plagued with old feelings. Did that mean he didn’t even love her a little anymore? Not that he would ever move on, he’d never do that to his children or Lily when they were still married - even if only in name.

“Have you eaten?” asked James, staring over at Lily as he dug into the food, which was as always, delicious. He’d forgotten how great it was having food at the table right away, never having to wait for it. Even now he was constantly surprised that as soon as he got in the food was there for him. He had missed how useful House-Elves were, and he certainly wouldn’t be getting rid of them again.

“Yes,” said Lily after a brief pause, not much, she couldn’t stomach a lot after being in Azkaban and eating bland food. Even after all this time she’d been free, of course it might have something to do with her stomach constantly churning due to having no magic or little of it at least. What kind of use was she when she couldn’t cast spells? She was practically a squib, she couldn’t help but shudder.

“NICK!” yelled James; as he grasped the bottle of Butterbeer and grateful drank half the bottle in one go.

“Hi, dad, when did you get back?” asked Nick appearing at the doorway, giving a small genuine smile. It had taken a long time, but he finally actually had parents…not people giving him everything he wanted just because he asked. If asked a few years ago, he would have said he loved them, but he certainly had no respect for them. To respect parents, there had to be boundaries that weren’t broken over time, and he certainly had boundaries now.

“A few moments ago, are you feeling up to duelling tonight?” James asked him, staring at his son; he’d lost a lot of weight going through the training. He was starting to look a lot more like Harry, especially with the fact he hadn’t cut his hair in a while. If Nick wanted he would need to get out for a while and maybe get his hair cut.

“Is Sirius coming over?” asked Nick, he hadn’t been able to make it yesterday or the day before.

“Yes, he will be over in an hour after he’s had something to eat.” replied James, finishing off his own dinner.

“Great,” said Nick, at least with Sirius the duel would feel more real, his dad was always to afraid to hurt him to really send anything dangerous at him. Which did defeat the purpose of duelling although he did learn some really awesome spells, so it wasn’t a total loss. Even Headmaster Dumbledore hadn’t been by the last week, which didn’t bother him, just made him curious. He’d constantly told him how important it was for him to learn. “About Dumbledore?”
“Headmaster Dumbledore,” said Lily scolding him, “He’s been taking his time out of his busy schedule to help you, Nick, at least be respectful.”
Invisible
Chapter 85
Late Night Worries

To say Severus was confused would be putting it mildly; Harry had been extremely quiet throughout the day. Disappearing into the dungeons for hours, coming out for dinner, barely saying more than a few words before going back down. He was honestly baffled by what could be wrong with him. He knew regardless of any action he took, Harry would tell him when he was ready. Severus was trying desperately to give Harry the space he needed. Nothing had happened in the past few days, in fact Harry should be able to relax that they’d gotten the last of the Horcruxes (or so they were assuming at the very least). He’d just gone to bed; letting Harry come out of what peculiar mood he was in, all the while trying to ignore the churning of worry in his stomach. Eileen wasn’t helping matters either, with her silent concern for both of them; he knew she was worried she would lose both of them to this damn war.

He heard the bedroom door open; bringing him out of his thoughts as he opened his eyes, his eyes met troubled green ones. The trouble seemed to ease when he stared at Severus, leaving behind a small smile just for him. It made Severus’ heart clench, in a way it never had before, he opened his mouth, but to say what he didn’t know. He didn’t get the chance to say anything, as Harry began to strip, revealing inch by inch of his pale flesh that caused Severus’ mind to forget everything and concentrate on the sight in front of him. He didn’t know what it was about Harry that could turn his mind to mush, but he could.

Harry was determined that if anything happened to him, that it wouldn’t be awkward silence, stilted conversations that he would remember as their last. No he would make sure there were plenty of good memories; Sev would always know he’d loved him. He would never doubt that he loved him, ever. Moving towards the bed, his fingers trailed along Severus’ foot, which twitched but remained still. Severus liked to make him think he wasn’t ticklish but he knew better. He wasn’t interested in tickling him though, no, far from it. His fingers instead continued to trail up, his thigh, knee, and further still, brushing over the burgeoning cock under the underwear he had on. Up his chest, and Harry threw the covers aside when they got in the way of his prize.

Harry climbed onto the bed, and straddled Severus, his knees taking most of his weight so he didn’t end up crushing him. Groaning quietly at the feel of Severus’ erection still swelling beneath him. It made him feel so very powerful, that he could make this man feel alive, feel this, and nobody else got the chance. Suddenly he lurched forward, his lips viciously duelling with Severus’ pouring all his emotions, his desires and worries into that breathtaking kiss. His fingers raking with Severus’ as he moaned around the bruising kiss, squirming lightly enjoying the feel of both of their aching members.

“Severus,” whispered Harry breathlessly, drawing back, closing his eyes as he leaned forehead to forehead against him. He could feel Severus’ breath panting next to his own; he could taste the wine he had drunk earlier.

“My own,” murmured Severus, removing his hand from Harry’s as he yanked the back of his neck back down, reclaiming those cherry red lips with even more urgency. Mapping out every inch of his lovers’ mouth, already familiar with it, but doing so again, inhaling sharply Harry ground down sharply, easing and at the same time causing a bigger ache in him. He could never get enough of
Harry, not even if they spent one hundred years together, it was as if this bundle of desire had been made specifically to drive him insane.

“Fuck,” murmured Harry, how could he be so affected with so little touching? It was just kissing, albeit powerful, breathtaking and dear Merlin he was harder than he’d ever been in his life. Harry automatically raised his hands when Severus removed his t-shirt, his cloak was already discarded. A pleasurable shudder wracked his trembling frame as Severus’ calloused hands raked up and down his chest; nails causing titillating pleasure sparks to shoot off inside him. How could slightest bit of pain cause such pleasure to go through him?

“Indeed,” grunted Severus, enjoying the sweet look of rapture on Harry’s face, it was all so easy to have Harry writhing beneath him, or this instant on top of him. He had been so starved of touch during his childhood. Touches children took for granted, that even the smallest of touches could ignite his very soul. “That’s the idea,” he added, knowing how much his voice could affect him as well. He’d always been proud of his voice; it was the one thing he had that wasn’t ugly in his book. Although Harry could make him feel as though he wasn’t, and he would treasure Harry forever because of it.

Severus felt around for his wand, without breaking the kiss, he’d just curled his fingers around it when they drew apart for air. A quick flick of his wand had their remaining articles of clothing off and folded neatly on the chair in the corner of the room along with Harry’s wand and holster perched on top. Severus hissed out in exhilaration when Harry’s fingers wrapped around both their cocks, rocking back and forth steadily, as he glided effortlessly back and forth with their pre-emission easing the way. The wand dropped back onto the table as Severus grasped onto Harry’s shoulders, one hand grasping his neck as he pulled him forward and devoured his mouth as pleasure built up to unbearable proportions, neither were going to last long.

“Harder,” growled Severus, breathlessly as he nibbled at Harry’s earlobe.

Harry hissed at the sudden pain, and did as he was asked, making sure to put more pressure than necessarily to get Severus back. Severus must be a secret masochist since he didn’t react other than to arch up slightly, unable to put much into it since he was currently straddling him. Moaning he pressed his face into Severus’ neck, as he felt his orgasm approaching rapidly, judging by the stiffening of Severus he was on the precipice as well. His jerks became sporadic as he lost himself in the feeling, their breathing and grunting was the only thing that could be heard in the room. For that brief shining moment, there was nothing but the both of them and the pleasure they were seeking. No worries, no fears, and definitely no thinking about the war brewing on the horizon.

Then they couldn’t think at all, as pleasure exploded between them, as both of them came with desperate moans, Severus’ more subdued than Harry of course. Harry kept his face where it had been, buried in Severus’ sweat soaked neck. Severus had his chin on his head as they basked in the feeling of weightlessness, happiness, and a lot of other emotions rolled into one small feeling of release.

“Oh, no, I don’t think even you could be up to that so soon,” said Severus, grasping a hold of his rocking hips, stilling him before he could continue.

“Want to bet?” murmured Harry, swiping his tongue along Severus’ Adam’s apple before he sucked and bit down teasingly.

“Against you?” replied Severus dryly, his sarcasm of course was slightly off, and due to the fact his voice was a little breathless still. Gasping onto his wand once again, and cleaned the mess that was drying between them. The longer it was left, the crustier it became, and it was impossible to get out completely if it dried, even with magic. Oh no he would never bet against Harry, since he
had a tendency to prove him wrong, blast all expectations whether they were conceivable or not.

“Why not?” taunted Harry, enjoying the feel of Severus and his scent surrounding him, holding
him close, chasing away the fear and coldness. He never had to pretend with Sev, ever, he always
knew when he needed him, when he needed space, time or even a holiday.

“I’m not an idiot.” snorted Severus, his eyes widening slightly when he felt the truth of that
statement becoming clear, the beauty of youth, they couldn’t half recover with speed that could
surprise even the best of people. It had been quite a few years since he’d been able to do that, and
he definitely wasn’t taking anything to help him along. He wouldn’t need it, especially if Harry
kept provocatively rocking his hips against him in that fashion, rutting against him like a possessed
demon.

“No, you’re definitely not that.” whispered Harry, enjoying the feel of Severus against his hands.

“Beautiful,” murmured Severus reverently, as he rearranged them to his liking, one of Harry’s legs
thrown over his shoulder, allowing him to see his puckered entrance that seemed to throb as if it
knew he was staring at it. Harry lay against the pillows, legs sprayed out relaxing trusting Severus
completely. Raising Harry’s hips, his tongue laved at the entrance causing Harry to exclaim
loudly, and grasp a hold of his shoulders to keep himself in the right position.

“More please,” rumbled Harry, arching up further, squirming desperately, eager for more. Not even
caring when his body strained, as he tried to keep himself up in the air, not a natural position at all.

Then Harry was overwhelmed with desire, only Severus and sheer stubbornness keeping him up,
his erection was standing up at attention, neglected for something much more…intensely hot.
Harry was shocked by how good…how great it felt, he’d never considered that part of himself
pleasurable. Then suddenly as if Severus knew he wouldn’t be able to take it anymore, he was
lowered back down, his joints protesting sharply after holding that way for a while.

“Thought you wouldn’t be up to it,” teased Harry, his entire face flushed with pleasure and wanton
desire. It was cut off by the feeling of Severus sliding a finger in, well oiled and finding his
prostate first time, for what felt like punishment for teasing him. He felt as though electric was
spreading out across his body, desire squirming behind his stomach, enhancing the feeling until it
was almost too much. “Severus!” he gasped, arching up, a tight grip on one of his arms, the other
was clutching at his own leg.

“You were saying?” murmured Severus stopping all activity.

“Nothing, nothing!” yelped Harry, moving almost incoherently, trying to have that finger hit his
sweet spot again and failing. He whined despondently, for half a second before he moaned half
way though when another finger was added.

Severus chuckled softly, before scissoring gently, causing Harry to grumble again, oh he knew
Harry better than he sometimes knew himself, especially when it came to matters like this. Harry
had thought he’d known sex just because he’d been with one person, Severus had taken it up on his
own shoulders to show just how wrong Harry was. Set about owning him in every way there was
possible, so he would never forget.

“Sev!” grouched Harry, he wanted more, no he needed more - desperatley. He couldn’t take this
slow torture anymore, it was driving him insane.

“Hush my own, soon.” murmured Severus, he wasn’t going to only half prepare him, and delicate
care was always needed when they did this. Unless he was too impatient and used a spell, that in
many ways worked better than fingers, but not as intimate. He loved seeing the flush glazing Harry’s entire body, his writhing, and his impatient cries of his name when he grew too impatient for more it was delicious. The clenching of that tight channel around his three fingers spelled the end of his restraint, as in one swift movement he lined himself up and sank in as deeply as possible until he was as far as he could possibly go without being attached to him.

“Yes, yes,” murmured Harry, clenching around Severus, trying to keep him there, so he could remain full, he’d never tire of his feeling - not now, not ever.

“Such impatience,” chided Severus, hissing as Harry tightened around him repeatedly.

“Oh for you,” said Harry, his green eyes full of fire. He would leave the British magical world to its fate and go elsewhere if he was so much as asked. Taking with him the people he cared about, he wouldn’t leave without them. He knew he would never be asked, neither of them were selfish or cowards, they would do what they had to - to keep themselves safe - their friends safe. Hell he would give the entire world to Severus if he asked it of him, in a heartbeat.

Severus leaned down bringing their lips together their passion and desires saying for them what they couldn’t put to words. Harry’s greedy gasp was muffled as Severus thrust deeply into him. He arched up rocking tightly, giving his neglected erection some needed friction, as his world exploded in pleasure. His mind was focused solely on bringing them both off and sleep, he was exhausted but a good exhausted a magical tired.

Merlin he loved how tight Harry was around him, how he clenched down around him as he thrust in fully, how he gazed at him never letting it falter as he plundered him. The green eyes, glazing with irresistible pleasure, as Severus sped up, taking his fill that was being so willingly given to him. He did not let the thought that this might be the last night they were together linger long. He refused to believe that this might be the last night they were together. Harry had trained long and hard for over four years, he could do this, he just had to. He wasn’t sure he could live without his lover now, he’d been a part of his life for four years too, living with him, training with him, brewing with him, watching him grow into a kind hearted but unforgiving young and powerful wizard he was today. He would never find another like Harry, not if he lived another hundred years, which he would, hopefully, with Harry by his side.

Harry orgasmed between their sweat soaked body, with a silent grunt, which caused Severus to follow, the velvety walls, rippling and milking at him until he’d emptied his load. Breathing heavily, he moved to the side, the one where Harry’s leg wasn’t occupying his shoulder, which it wasn’t for long. Breathing heavily he grabbed his wand yet again and cast a spell to get rid of the evidence of their recent activities.

Harry immediately curled up beside him, as he always preferred. Severus wouldn’t have let anyone other than Harry treat him as though he was a cuddly toy or pillow. It had taken a while to get used to when they started sharing a bed; he had been a solitary man after all. An amused smirk sprayed across his face, as he wrapped his arms around Harry pressing him tightly to him, and getting comfortable. It was still a bit early, but they’d gone to bed really late last night and gotten up early.

“Are you feeling better now?” enquired Severus, rubbing his calloused hand up and down Harry’s arm, which was on top of the covers and quickly becoming goose bumpy. The rest of him, which was pressed against him was warm, Severus cocked his head to the side, he hadn’t replied, was he already asleep?

Harry sighed softly, tightening his arm around his lover, wondering whether he should say anything or not. He trusted Severus completely, it was just part of him wasn’t used to revealing things. How could he tell Sev that he was terrified of what was coming? He was going to have to
kill Voldemort, no matter what he had done; he was going to have to kill someone in cold blood. That’s if he got the chance, he could he killed before he struck a fatal blow to the evil wizard.

“I’m…scared,” Harry finally murmured after a few moments of silence, and the soothing strokes to his arm never once faltered.

“I would be concerned if you weren’t, Harry.” replied Severus soothingly, “Anyone going into battle and saying they aren’t scared is a fool or a liar. Being overconfident is just as dangerous as being in denial at the end of the day, it could very well cost you your life.” he wanted nothing more than to tell Harry everything was going to be alright, but the truth was he couldn’t, he hadn’t lied to Harry, and he wasn’t going to start now.

“I don’t know which one is worst, it’s easy to say it…kill or be killed but…” Harry couldn’t find the words to say.

“I know, believe me, I know.” said Severus quietly, his eyes closed. He didn’t even want think about it, he’d marked his own soul young, but at least he hadn’t been as young as Harry. He liked to pretend he was strong, but Harry was just the same as everyone else, he’d just gotten good at masking his own feelings through self preservation so the Potters didn’t know how badly they were hurting him. He would rather Harry kill Voldemort than be killed by him, he would be there for him every step of the way, make sure he knew he didn’t have a choice. This was assuming he survived, but he knew if he died at least Harry would have his mother to talk sense into him. Oh, his mother liked getting her own way, thankfully he got most of his personality from her - he shuddered at the thought of being like his father.

“Night, Sev, love you,” murmured Harry, exhaustion carrying him off to Morpheus’ arms, he didn’t feel Severus stiffening or tightening his arms around him.

Severus closed his eyes and exhaled sharply at the unexpected words, how the hell was he going to be able to let Harry go and do what he needed to when he turned around and said things like that? Cursing under his breath, cursing the war, the potters, every damn thing he could. He prayed to Merlin nothing happened to him, not for his own sake, but for Harry’s. He honestly didn’t know what Harry would do if he lost someone close, he wasn’t stupid he could see how…much Harry needed him, his mother and his friends. Harry needed them like everyone needed water to survive. Hell the only reason he was doing anything was because of his mother, him, and of course his friends. If Harry hadn’t had them he would have probably gladly just sat back and watch the world collapse, he would have been hardened, extremely bitter, disgusted with the world, but it was thanks to his mum that Harry had softened, accepted people could be good and kind without asking for anything in return. He’d seen it in his eyes after the tournament, but he had just been kidnapped so he could be mistaken.

Unfortunately Severus didn’t really believe that, his hunches and thoughts were nearly always correct.

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“I’m not going to beat HIM am I?” said Nick, sitting on the grounds on Potter Manor, feeling the grass under his fingers as he tried to regain his breathing. Only Sirius could make him feel as though he had a fighting chance, his dad just tried to ignore the thought of him not winning and Dumbledore just went on about how he would win that he was destined to do so. He wondered if Dumbledore was deluding himself, just like everyone else, how on earth could he beat a wizard with about sixty years magical training? It just seemed so…impossible. He rarely got to sleep for hours after going to bed, thinking the same thing over and over again. He was no closer to feeling confident in his abilities, he doubted he ever would.
James stared down at his son, his brown eyes filled with worry barely concealed. Sighing softly, he sat down across from his son, realizing that none of his conversations were helping. He would need to try a different approach with him, he hated talking about it. This was his bloody son, he didn’t want him fighting Voldemort, but it would come, and he would make sure Nick knew enough to give him a fighting chance. “You won’t be fighting him alone, Nick; nobody is asking you to do that. I will be helping you all the way.” James said firmly.

“I’m not good enough,” said Nick, shaking his head.

“Yes, yes you are,” replied James firmly. What had happened to his confident young boy? Had he ever felt this worried about anything at the age of seventeen? No he’d been recklessly overconfident, and it had served him well, it only tampered off when he became a father. Somewhere along the lines he’d forgotten who he truly was, and became a monster. There would have been no saviour for him, if Harry, his son, hadn’t forced his eyes open in the most painful horrific manner.

Only then had he been able to salvage his family from the wreckage, well, the most important people at least. James thought thinking of Roxy and Nick, Lily on the other hand was…so far in denial apparently.

“Dad I can’t just…kill someone!” protested Nick, the thought turned his stomach. He was terrified; he wanted to run away from all the pressure. It was worse than the Triwizard Tournament, the whole Order watched his every move, waiting on him saving them and he didn’t know how to handle that. He wished he was better, smarter, less scared but he wasn’t, and there was no point to wishing things were different.

“I don’t like it either, Nick, but if you don’t he will kill you, and everyone else.” James told him, sighing tiredly. “I would do it myself to save you the pain of it, and who knows maybe I will be able to, but we don’t know how it will end son.”

“See! You’re just like everyone else expecting me to kill!” cried Nick, wide eyed.

“Calm down, getting hysterical won’t help you,” said James, grabbing onto his knees, squeezing tightly as he tried to hold onto his own terror. “Do you think you’re the only one scared? You aren’t I’m bloody terrified for you Nick; this isn’t the life I wanted for you either. The fact is, we cannot change that, just make the most of it. Once he’s gone Nick, you can do whatever you want, and I’ll help you I promise. I’ll support you if you find you don’t want to be an Auror, anything, I love you son.”

Nick moved to his knees and hugged his father close, his heart pounding erratically, in sync with his father. He was telling the truth he was just as scared of him. He was just better at hiding it, how he envied his father’s composure, he wished he knew how to do it. He wanted to be more like him, him and Sirius, maybe one day he would be, a hero the people thought he was.

“We’ll get through this, I promise, just be strong, Nick, just be strong.” said James, his throat choked up.

Nick held on tighter, be strong, the words were so easy to say but how could he be strong? He’d fought Death Eaters yes, apprehended them yes, but kill? No he’d never killed and the thought was horrifying him. He would do it though, to make his dad proud, to protect his family, even Harry… his twin who he owed everything to.

Their moment was broken by the hooting of an owl, James turned to find Roxy’s barn owl flying towards them and falling to the grass gracefully. Reaching out he plucked the letter from it, giving
it a small stroke, knowing she would go to the house for a rest before making her way back to Scotland.

“Let me guess - she doesn’t want to come home for the holidays?” Nick asked resignedly, Roxy had been hurt the worst by what their mum had done. He’d been a father’s boy; Roxy had been a mummy’s girl, even though she’d adored everyone, even Harry when they were younger. He used to read her stories, he could remember that, and when Lily had found out she’d put a stop to it. At the time he’d felt smug and happy when she did, he’d been slightly jealous of how close they were…then after a while it transferred to him, they’d done Harry wrong in more ways than one. He just wished he could go back and change everything. Then the saying learning from your mistakes would be made redundant, he had to make amends and make Harry realize he was sorry.

James just sighed, not having to answer, he couldn’t blame her really, if he could get out of there and stay away he would. Lily’s presence in the manor was straining everything, every conversation they had was stifled when she was there. She constantly tried to correct Nick as if she still had that right, she didn’t, he had full custody of their kids, had done since she ended up in Azkaban. Just before their training session she’d to correct him on how he was talking about Dumbledore. The truth of it was he wasn’t Nick’s headmaster anymore; he had no reason to call him that.

“Come on, let’s head back in.” James said, standing up, before taking his sons hand and hoisting him up.

“I’m going straight to bed,” said Nick, a yawn leaving his lips as if agreeing with him.

“Nick, you can’t avoid your mum forever,” said James, as they walked towards the manor.

“I’ll try,” Nick told him seriously, “I know what I did was wrong, Dad, but she isn’t even sorry, what if she had done that to me? Would you still be letting her stay here?”

“No,” James told him definitively, “Absolutely not.”

“Why is it different because she did it to Harry?” questioned Nick, giving him a penetrating look before he jogged away, opening the door and leaving it ajar for his dad before running up the stairs two at a time. Hopefully tonight he would get a decent sleep. If he survived the war, he swore he’d get a property of his own with what’s left of the vault his dad gave him after Harry returned most of their money. His sister would want to stay with him, anything to remain away from their mum.

James watched his sons retreating form, even as he entered the manor and watched him flee up the stairs. Turning around he ambled towards the living room, deep in thought. He suspected there was something going on between Nick and Susan as well as his daughter’s new boyfriend. She hadn’t told him yet, which did irk him something rotten - it didn’t help that he understood. He hadn’t told his parents when he was dating, but before Lily it had been a new girl every month. None of them had interested him; they were all the same, clingy, stupid, laughed at everything he said. He hadn’t cared much back then, it made him feel smug, until he saw Lily as a woman, and her constant put downs. He’d never had to work for anything before, and he wanted her, so he had to have her. Along the way he’d fallen hard, he never expected his life would turn out like this…they’d been so in love. He was just glad his parents were not around to see this; they’d always wanted him to settle down with a woman who…understood the pureblood ways. That’s not to say they hadn’t approved or liked Lily. They had, very much, but she hadn’t been raised in the magical world, and didn’t know much about how pureblood women were. The first time he’d understood what his parents were referring to was when Lily had demanded the House-Elves be freed. Despite telling her they liked it, needed it even, and that freeing them they were making the House-Elves homeless. Not wanting to start their marriage with fighting he’d done it with a heavy heart.
“Is it from Roxy?” asked Lily, perking up noticing the letter in James hand as he entered the living room. If she couldn’t get through to Nick yet, she might have better luck with Roxy. Hopefully it would only be a matter of time before her family became whole again. She honestly didn’t understand their anger, yes she’d gotten too angry at the boy, but it shouldn’t have bothered them. They had never once shown care about him, hell even when Nick left him and saved himself, the family had stuck together. The boy had taken away her magic, if anything they should be angry on her behalf. She wanted to yell that at them, but given their new attitudes regarding the boy she knew she had just best keep her mouth shut.

“Yes,” said James, giving her a passing glance as he moved over to the table and began rummaging for some writing materials and paper. He was beyond tired; neither Dumbledore nor Sirius had made an appearance leaving him alone to duel with Nick. Which they had finished just an hour ago, it was too dark and they were both too tired to continue. Too emotional as well, Nick was beginning to doubt himself and his abilities.

“What did she say?” asked Lily, “She’s my daughter too, and I have a right to read it.”

“You gave up that right when you ended up in Azkaban.” said James coolly, giving her a glare. He was tired of her constantly hounding him and Nick. She only remembered Roxy once in a blue moon, two or maybe three times she’d actually mentioned her daughter in all the time she’d been released from prison. Why was she so uncaring towards two of her kids? Why only Nick? Had she always been this way and he hadn’t seen it? No, Lily had been over the moon when she learned she’d had a little girl.

“James this has to stop,” said Lily, a tremble starting on her lips.

James sighed physically exhausted; he had enough to worry about without Lily’s problems added to his own, and his sons and the work as an Auror. “I think it’s best if you moved back to Godric’s Hollow or one of the other cottages.” he stated tiredly. He knew what was coming without being a seer. Maybe if she set foot in Godric’s Hollow it would bring back the past, where they had loved both their sons equally, maybe then that would get through to wife, who was still in this big wall of denial she refuses to get out of. “I’ll speak to Scrimgeour, he will help.”

“What? Why? Please don’t do this James! Please! You don’t want me anymore that’s it isn’t it? You can’t James, my son…my daughter I can’t lose you all…please!” pleaded Lily, green eyes wide with fear and terror at the thought of being alone. In Godric’s Hollow of all places, her entire family could have been killed there.

“Lily,” murmured James, pinching the bridge of his nose, he was trying to do what was best for everyone. The thought on his mind was what Nick had said. Would she be there if she had tried to use that spell on Nick? “This can’t continue, and because Nick wouldn’t listen to you…you’ve started getting on at him for every single thing you think he’s doing wrong! This is for the best, my daughter…no, our daughter won’t come home because she doesn’t want to see you.”

“Why?” cried Lily, “Why isn’t she giving me a chance? What did you say to them?” looking for someone to blame now. Unbeknown to her, this was the snapping point for James.

“What did I say to them?” roared James, his patience evaporating completely. “How about the fact you tried to fucking curse out son! You could have turned him into a vegetable! Just like Alice and Frank! You have no idea how long to keep the curse on without causing damage! Damn you!” Lily flinched as if James had just struck her.

James stomped over to the fireplace, his decision made, he was getting her moved - he couldn’t even stand to be in the same room with her anymore. “Ministry of magic, Ministers office!” and he
was gone.

Lily’s face was paler than Nearly-Headless-Nick’s as she stared at the empty space where her husband had been five seconds ago.
Chapter 86

James was spat out in the Auror Department, only the Minister of Magic could use the Floo in his office. It was a closed connection, nobody could accidentally use it. Which meant it had a password that changed every three days, and Scrimgeour was the only one that knew it. The security surrounding the new Ministry building was brilliant, if anything had come of the attack during Harry’s Order of Merlin ceremony it would that. The security had been more than tripled, Voldemort would find it next to impossible to break into it and try and take over. No doubt he was furious about that, hence his attacks on Muggle-Born children. At least that was their assumption but they didn’t know for sure - nobody did.

James said nothing to his fellow Auror’s, they in turn said nothing to him sensing the anger brewing in the wizard. It helped by the fact they were just in for their nightshirt, and they were still tired. Their shifts were longer than normal due to the war, so sleep was something they didn’t get much off. James left the door open as he made his way towards the Minister’s office, as a senior Auror officer he was able to come and go as he pleased. Although even he couldn’t just walk into the Minister’s office without announcing himself - unless he wanted to be out of a job - which he most certainly didn’t want.

“Is the Minister in?” asked James, staring at the Minister’s current undersecretary, she was outside his office, at her desk where they always were situated.

“Yes,” she replied, staring at him in enquiry.

“I need to speak to him if he has a moment, please.” said James, praying he wasn’t in a meeting, but with the state of the world he wouldn’t be overly surprised.

“Is it important?” Debra asked, making a note in her book without looking up at him.

“Yes,” ‘to me’ thought James, he couldn’t continue living as he was, it was causing his entire family upheaval, and he should never have allowed it in the first place. He just hadn’t expected it to be so hard, well he’d learned his lesson. He just prayed Scrimgeour would take pity on him and help him.

“Give me a moment,” Debra said, standing up and making her way into the office and closing the door behind her.

“Auror Potter wishes to see you, he says it’s important.” Debra told the Ministry, waiting for his orders, unlike her predecessors she didn’t kiss ass. She did her job professional without sucking up to anyone, not under the illusion it would get her anywhere any time soon. Its perhaps why the twenty-four-year-old had gotten so far so soon, she was the youngest undersecretary who’d received the job, and ironically enough the most qualified.

“Send him in,” said Scrimgeour without looking up, signing his name on a document which rolled itself up and disappeared presumably to the correct department.

“Yes sir,” said Debra, opening the door and silently gesturing for the Auror to go through, before reclaiming her seat.
“Thank you,” commented James as he walked into the Ministers office, praying that it would work out.

“What can I do for you Auror Potter?” asked Scrimgeour, looking up from his work his eyes penetrating James’.

“I need you to change the property in which Lily Potter serves her parole,” said James, the strain he was under showing through momentarily.

“You are aware that she needs checked upon?” stated Scrimgeour, staring curiously now.

“Yes, I’ll do it,” said James, “I’ll continue to bring her in for her appointments to get her wand checked and to see the Mind-Healer,” not that it seemed to be working, she didn’t seem to realize the extent of her heinous crimes. It should be the first thing the Mind-Healer was helping her with. Unless Lily was…twisting the Healers mind by agreeing with everything just to pacify them. Cursing under his breath, he knew he couldn’t ask either, since it would be breaking the confidentiality clause. Which all Mind-Healers swore on their magic, so it wasn’t just a clause to them - they couldn’t speak of it unless they wanted to lose their magic.

“You are aware that she needs checked upon?” stated Scrimgeour, staring curiously now.

“Which property do you wish for her to use?” aware that the Potter’s had lost everything at one point, but according to the papers Harry Peverell had given it back - but how much was anyone’s guess. It wasn’t for the lack of trying to wheedle it out either.

“Godric’s Hollow,” murmured James, feeling a little guilty about it. Neither of them had been back to the property since the attack, although it had been repaired, in fact it looked like new. Just because the property held bad memories for them, it didn’t mean it would for their children or children’s children and so on. It had been in the family for generations and he hadn’t wanted it to be discarded. Godric’s Hollow and Potter Manor were the only properties he had at the moment, and he didn’t have enough money to be buying properties he didn’t need. Without investments, they didn’t have money coming in. He had to make what they had last them, especially for his children’s sake since it would be split into three equal shares, minus the properties of course but Harry had no need for either of them. Lily wouldn’t be alone there, she would have neighbours hopefully they’d talk to her and she’d get on with her life. He just couldn’t stay with her anymore, it was driving his family mental. It was driving him mad as well, he couldn’t cope with it any longer.

“Very well, I’ll have someone go over and place the necessary charms on the property, I’ll let you know when she can move.” said Scrimgeour, “Is it under any protections?”

“Yes, um, I’ll need to let whoever does it through the wards,” said James, he’d also hired someone to place wards on the property, even stronger than the ones before. Although all the charms had been taken down for the Fidelius Charm, which had been useless when Pettigrew betrayed them all. The thought of being there made his stomach flip unpleasantly, but needs a must, he was determined he wouldn’t be spending any of the Potter money on himself or Lily come to that.

“I assumed as much,” replied Scrimgeour, rubbing at his leg, where the persistent limp bothered him from time to time. “Debra!” he shouted loud enough for her to hear.

“Yes sir?” she asked coming in promptly.

“I want to speak to Morgan Young immediately.” said Scrimgeour curtly.

“I’ll let him know.” said Debra, before she left, using the Floo Network to get to him, if he was in the building that was. It was night time, most of the night shifters were already here, although there
were those doing overtime, and perhaps Morgan was one of them.

“Thank you,” said James honestly, rubbing at his eyes tiredly. He just wanted his bed and would have already been in it if Lily had kept her mouth shut. He couldn’t believe she’d had the gall to blame him for their children not talking to her. She refused to take the blame for what she’d done. She was the only one in the family who seemed to be still in denial.

“I expected it to happen eventually,” stated Scrimgeour, grunting as he moved his leg sitting down all the time wasn’t good for it. He’d seen it all before, Auror’s having to arrest family members, then letting them stay - the strain of it got to them. It didn’t help their reputation by aiding someone who had broken the law either. Potter had survived it since he was already quite far up in the ranks, he probably wouldn’t get any further or be Minister due to…past history. Nobody would want to elect him Minister after everything he’d done to his son - regretful and repentant or not. James didn’t seem interested in running for the office anyway, he was quite happy being an Auror. “Take a seat.” he added eventually before going back to his work, reading through documents and signing them or placing them aside if they needed further reading or confirmation.

James silently did as he was ordered, Scrimgeour was his boss - and he was doing him a favour so it was best not to antagonise him. Not that he had any plans to do that, but he sometimes did without meaning to.

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Eileen sighed softly, closing the book and placing it on her nightstand. She had been learning defensive spells for weeks now, she wasn’t about to let her boys go to war themselves. She had stood inside as they faced battle after battle, and her ragged nerves could no longer take it. She had to protect them, and to do that she needed to be there - with them. She hadn’t told them because she knew they would protest vehemently against it, but she loved them too much to sit back. She had never been good with spells, but she refused to let that get her down. She was better now than she’d ever been, shields and protective magic as well as defensive spells came a little easier. She was determined that she would be able to do it by the time it came to blows - the final battle that was.

It had been easy to take the books from the library, much easier than she thought. Severus could notice a single Knut missing out of a pile of coins he had lying in a jar, he was very observant. However, they were both distracted by their potions, Harry trying to cure Alice and Frank Longbottom and Severus trying to come up with a potion that allowed men to give birth. As much as she was sure of their abilities, she knew Harry would complete his potion first, then again he had been working on it a lot longer than Severus had his.

She was worried about Harry, he was under immense strain, she hoped he would speak to Severus and that they would calm down - but until the war was over she doubted they would relax. She wanted this war over with, almost as much as she didn’t want to see it finished for fear that her boys wouldn’t survive. They were both excellent duellers, but Voldemort had many wizards willing or otherwise willing to do his dirty work. As much as she loathed James and Lily Potter she felt sorry for them. If this was how she felt…how did they feel about Nick Potter? They’d always favored the boy, the thought of him dying was surely pulling them down? Not that they had anything to worry about - Nick wasn’t the one destined to defeat Voldemort no it was her son.

Eileen cuddled up under the duvet, her mind continuing to spin, sleep wasn’t coming easy these days. She spent hours just telling herself they were here, in the manor, both safe right now. Nothing could hurt them here, her parents had made sure the wards were the strongest, using powerful wizards from abroad to ensure their longevity. As much as she hated her parents, and used to hate the manor for all the memories it held, she was glad they’d secured the manor in such
a way they would be safe from attack. It helped that it was Unplottable, she didn’t think there was anyone alive today that remembered Prince Manor or its location perhaps with the exception of Dumbledore and those that had been invited in by Severus or Harry. None of these people would reveal its location, they would die first.

Eventually Morpheus seemed to take pity on her and she drifted off, but even in sleep her face was filled with worry lines that nothing would help - except the end of the war.

"You wished to see me, Minister?" asked Morgan Young, appearing at the office entrance, observing James Potter and Scrimgeour waiting to find out what was going on and why he was needed.

"Go with James Potter and set up wards on Godric’s Hollow, for Lily Potter’s house arrest," stated Scrimgeour, Young would know what to do - he’d been doing this job now for two decades now. If she left after curfew they would know and she would end up back in Azkaban serving the remainder of her sentence. They didn’t have to worry about her using spells, he knew about James Potter searching the achieve and going into the room where the copy of Merlin’s Law, the real thing was located. It hadn’t been harmed when the old Ministry had fallen, the spells on it had held much to everyone’s relief. It was one of the oldest relics in their world, to lose it would be just devastating. Lily Potter was paying for her crimes in a way that Azkaban couldn’t, and she wouldn’t get her magic back until she truly repented.

"Of course," said Morgan in agreement. “Ready to go?” he queried to James.

James nodded grimly, thankful that this was getting sorted now, he should have done it ages ago. Standing up, both of them left the Minister’s office and made their way out off the building. “Sorry if I’m keeping you longer.” murmured James, he was just as exhausted as Morgan looked.

“It’s fine, I put in for some overtime anyway,” admitted Morgan, he hadn’t interacted with James Potter before, but he knew of his reputation. Before and after all the shit that had happened three years ago, one thing that couldn’t be denied was Potter was good at his job. Although Black and Moody were better, they’d brought in more Death Eaters than anyone else.

“Aren’t we all?” admitted James, shaking his head wryly, as both of them Apparated to Godric’s Hollow, sticking to somewhere that was relatively secluded. There were many Wizards and Witches living at Godric’s Hollow but it wasn’t a purely Wizarding society, the only one that housed a wizarding community was the village of Hogsmeade. Looking at the house he paused… he’d known it was rebuilt but to see it…like his family hadn’t been devastated was daunting.

"You haven’t been back here since…have you?" said Morgan staring at James surprised.

“No,” admitted the battle hardened Auror, “I never thought I would be either.”

“Why didn’t you sell it?” asked Morgan curiously.

“It’s been in my family for generations, it’s the birth place of Godric Gryffindor, its not easy to let go of something like that.” said James honestly. Ignous Peverell was buried here in the cemetery, who would have thought the name would have been resurrected after all this time? It would pass on to any children Harry had in future, and it would be the main family, not the Potter family…not Nick’s family. He wasn’t sure how he felt about that, but considering everything they’d done to Harry perhaps it was what they deserved.

Morgan said nothing, waiting patiently for Potter to gather his scattered wits and lead him into the property.
“Let’s get this over with,” said James grimacing, he shouldn’t be willing to bring Lily here if he could barely stand the sight of it. Stalking forward, he grabbed onto Morgan until they were passed the wards, and then let him go. Breathing out, before he opened the door. His eyes were drawn to the place where he and Voldemort had fought, it had been a short battle, he remembered one of twins toys had caused him to lose his footing shortly after Lily had ran to the twins. His eyes were ripped from the place where he’d been stunned and he looked around. Pictures of him, Lily and the twins hung on the walls still, walking forward towards the fireplace he stared at the picture of Harry, it had been his first birthday party. Just months before the attack, how could it have changed his family so much?

“That’s it done,” said Morgan, watching James Potter pensively. “I’m going to head back now.”

“That’s it done,” said Morgan, watching James Potter pensively. “I’m going to head back now.”

“Thank you, I appreciate it.” said James whirling around, he really had been out of it - he hadn’t even heard the spells being cast.

Morgan said nothing as he turned around and made his own way off the property. A property famous for having been the place where Voldemort had died...or rather been defeated albeit temporarily. It certainly seemed to hold a lot of ghosts for James Potter, you wouldn’t have been able to tell they’d hurt their son by the amount of pictures adorned the walls, and how happy they all were. Maybe they had been at one point, but it couldn’t be said now.

Breathing deeply James walked up the stairs, heading straight for his old bedroom. Everything was as it had been, moving over he unlatched the chest at the bottom of the queen sized bed he and his wife had used from they got married until they left Godric’s Hollow sixteen years ago. Inside the giant trunk was smaller chests and papers. Smiling bitterly, he removed the one with ‘HJP’ in gold letters. Opening it up, he began to look through it, Harry’s birth certificate, which had change to Peverell due to magic. Casts of his feet when he was born, hand prints from when he was three months old, then again at six and nine months. His first tooth, a noted record of his accomplishments including his first bout of accidental magic. There were heaps of pictures in it, there was an identical one for Nick with the initials NSP (Nick Sirius Potter). He took one of the pictures of just him and Harry, and another with him and the twins, before he closed Harry’s chest. He shrunk both chests planning on taking them home, Roxy was the only one whose chest was at Potter Manor. In fact mused James, he would take everything of his out of here. It wasn’t as if he would ever live here again.

James summoned everything of his, from the house, and placed it in the chest, he would be taking that back home. It held his medals, school grades, Auror certificate and everything important to him. James closed the bedroom door and just three feet was all it took steeped with trepidation towards the twins room. He opened the door the cribs were still there...still demolished, the twins toys strewn across the room. Moving forward he crouched down picking up the small toy unicorn, a frown on his face, Harry had never slept without that thing. It was in the broken crib (Nick’s crib) closest to the door...where Voldemort’s body had been found. It must have gotten thrown in the chaos or something.

Oh, if he could only turn back time. He thought miserably, before standing up the small unicorn still clutched in his hand as he exited the bedroom. Hoping that there was still Floo powder in the pot, he wanted to get back to Potter Manor quickly, then get Lily back here before returning and getting some much deserved sleep.

Sighing in relief, he grasped a handful of the powder, climbing in hastily he flung the powder at the grate and yelled his destination.

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“James can’t we just talk about this?” cried Lily, watching as James packed all her belongings
using a single spell as if he was wiping her from his life completely. “I didn’t mean what I said, I was just angry…frustrated!” ever since she’d ended up in Azkaban her life had gone down the pan.

“The time for talking has passed,” sighed James in irritation. “I’ve tried since you got out to make this easy for you…despite the fact people are disgusted by the fact I’m sticking up for you after you tried to use the Cruciatux Curse on a child - your own child.”

“James I can’t use magic! And you’re leaving me there?” her voice piteous.

“The wards are strong, and there are only a few people who know where you are. I’ll give you an emergency Portkey from the Ministry,” said James, looking around the guest room satisfied that the spell had made everything of Lily’s go into her trunk. Turning to stare at her, surprised by the fact he didn’t feel guilty about this.

“What about Nick and Roxy? How can I get them to forgive me if you won’t let me be part of their lives?” whined Lily, her green eyes wide and filled with betrayal.

“You cant get them to forgive you, they must wish to forgive you. It’s not something either want at this time, but we don’t know what the future holds.” said James. “This is better for everyone, it’s as though being here is making you forget what you almost did. I’ll be taking you to your appointments at the Ministry and to the Mind-Healer.”

“James, I love you, I can’t live without you…I mean you and the kids were all I thought about in Azkaban. I was terrified that something would happen you all and I wouldn’t know.” said Lily, moving towards him grasping his arms. “Please forgive me, I’m sorry for what I did, I just don’t like admitting it.”

“Let’s go,” said James, shrugging her hands off, grabbing the trunk and moving out of the room, not even looking back to see if she was following him or not. He was so tired that he felt as if he was going to pass out due to severe exhaustion.

“Please don’t send me there,” begged Lily.

“It’s either Godric’s Hollow, you buy your own property or back to Azkaban - you can’t stay here - I’m sorry Lily.” said James. Stepping into the fireplace for the second time in many minutes, waiting for Lily to make a decision. He wasn’t surprised when she stepped into the fire, throwing the powder down, shouting his location, then both of them were falling through the network and being spat out at their destination.

Lily inhaled sharply, looking around the property she hadn’t been inside for years.

“I’ll be here at two o’clock in time for you to see your Mind-Healer,” said James.

“Can’t we just work this out?” cried Lily desperately.

James mutely shook his head before he climbed back into the fire and he was gone. He couldn’t put his family through it anymore. He was going to apply for a divorce, she could continue using Godric’s Hollow as long as she wanted - but she wouldn’t get the property or anything from him. The most she would get is a vault, since they had kids at the very least. If they hadn’t had any, and he died she would have gotten it all.

James slumped onto the couch and fell asleep not even having the strength to get up the stairs.

Come tomorrow all their lives would be changed…most for the worst and only a small select few for the better.
For now they all slept unaware of their fate.

Life would never be the same.
Chapter 87

Invisible

Chapter 87

Uncertain Futures

Harry scrubbed the table, getting into every little crevice to make sure that any residue of the potion ingredients was thoroughly washed out. Magic was good, but there were just some things better done by hand to make sure, or both just to be doubly certain. Smug satisfaction rolled off Harry in waves, and he deserved to feel extremely satisfied, he had finally come up with the right combination of potions to help Neville’s parents. Three of the ingredients had cost him an arm and a leg; or rather it had cost Neville a lot of money, since he had paid for it. Either was it wasn’t going to be a potion that could be brewed for those with budgets in their life, at least not right away, they would definitely need to save up for months to be able to afford it. The plants were only available by three different sellers and all abroad, that’s how rare they were. He contemplated getting seeds to grow his own, perhaps even giving one to Neville so they weren’t so difficult to acquire in future. The potions had to be given in a particular order, and on a timeline, for it to have its full affects. In fact that’s exactly what he was going to do, it would be much better than having to pay if he was asked to brew it again.

Once every part of the tabletop had been done, he stepped back in satisfaction and then cast a spell to cleanse it again before drying it. It was better than leaving it then having to do it before brewing another potion. Throwing the brush into the cleaning supply box, which would be cleaned by the House-Elves, he wandered over to the sinks and began to wash his hands and arms with antibacterial soap out of habit. He would go to St. Mungo’s today at some point, and hand them to one of the Longbottom’s healers. They were well aware of him and what he was trying to accomplish, and that Neville had agreed to ‘alternative methods/potions’ than what were already invented. Which means they didn’t need the boards approval to use it, like they had with Eileen’s potion when they were first affected.

Still they would probably know about the potion before the night was out, and stay close by to watch and wait and see what happened. Of course nothing was full proof, theoretically the potion should work, and there was nothing to indicate it shouldn’t. They had no way of testing it on animals, so Alice and Frank were…quite frankly the guinea pigs in this instance. He was pretty confident it would work, potions and his feelings for Severus were the two things he was the most assured of in life. He had every right to be, since he’d been able to brew sixth year potions at the age of eleven, and thank Merlin he had, he’d saved a unicorn and been given a precious gift in turn - a vial of unicorn blood willingly given. He doubted that would ever happen again in his lifetime, he was still amazed it had happened once.

Drying his hands off, he left the towel were it was and made his way back to the side table. Harry picked up the vials and placed them in the box, the box itself only had three individual slots, exactly the amount needed for the potion. It was velvet lined and both the vials and box had been made indestructible, just in case anyone with clumsy fingers handled them. Breathing deeply, he’d done it, he’d finally done it. He didn’t ask Dobby to do it, since he would have to explain what was to happen thoroughly to the healer to make sure it was understood.

Sliding the box into his pocket he left the lab in search for Severus and Eileen. He had gotten up really early, when inspiration had stuck him. He was just grateful he’d had the ingredients necessary, their penchant for buying all sorts of ingredients had paid off. They hadn’t bought much
of it, but that would hopefully soon change when he bought a plant, he’d give a cutting to Neville and see if he could make it grow - if anyone could it was Neville. He had an affinity towards plants, and he wouldn’t be surprised if he took a job with something related to Herbology. He hadn’t spoken about what he wanted to do after school, neither had Luna come to that, but they probably just wanted to graduate first - everyone wasn’t like him - not everyone decided after their first potions class that this was what they wanted to do with their lives.

“Everything alright sweetie?” asked Eileen as Harry made his way into the sitting room. She wasn’t concerned Harry looked extremely…happy about something. She was just curious about what had put such a look on his face when everyone had been so worried and down as of late.

“I did it,” explained Harry, “I finally did it!” he added as if the first time just hadn’t been enough to emphasise his point.

“Did what?” asked Eileen, there was so much Harry and Severus were doing - that she honestly couldn’t keep track of everything. She had a feeling she knew what it was about but didn’t want to assume anything.

“The potion for Frank and Alice, I thought about letting Neville know…but I’m not sure anymore what if he ends up disappointed and it doesn’t work?” stated Harry, not that he doubted his work - far from it but there was always the possibility unfortunately.

“If you created it, it will work.” said Eileen firmly, “However, it might be a nice thing to wait and let Neville find out on his own…it would certainly be a surprise he isn’t expecting. Now come here and show me how it was done!” gushed Eileen excitedly, her first love had been potions, much like her father and of course the love she’d passed onto her son. Everyone in the Prince family had an affinity towards Potions; it was just the way things were.

Harry grinned before he joined her on the couch, sitting down he handed over the journal, trusting Eileen with his life - so giving her his precious potions book was nothing. He waited patiently for her to read through it, it was five pages long, for the three different potions and how it interacted and things like that.

A House-Elf popped in with the mail and the newspapers, they were usually brought in with breakfast but it wasn’t time for it yet. They were all up early, so Dobby must have just assumed they would like it early. Harry accepted them giving Dobby a small smile, showing his thanks and keeping quiet so Eileen could continue to concentrate on the book.

“Will Dobby begin breakfast?” enquired the House-Elf quietly.

“Yes, thank you, Dobby.” replied Harry, nodding firmly.

Dobby bowed before he was gone, to do his Masters bidding. He often thought about the time Harry had been down in the dungeons of Malfoy Manor. He was so different from the little boy he’d ensured had food - unable to do anything to help him. He had been stuck due to the fact he served the Malfoy’s, and he wasn’t able to remove him from the Dungeons. When he’d been sold into services of the Malfoy’s the rules had been made very clear and he hadn’t been able to circumvent them. He had been secretly very pleased when he’d gotten away from nasty master and the evil Dark wizard. He had never expected to survive when he heard about the memories being used, only to be saved from death (and decapitation) by Narcissa Malfoy and employed by the wizard who had saved him. Not only that but he got lots of money which he spent on materials to make his own clothes, all because he helped Master Harry with the potion to help Mistress Eileen.

“Harry this is amazing!” said Eileen, beaming with pride, he was amazing with potions. “You’ve done really well!” she closed the book and placed it back beside Harry mesmerised. After all this
time he’d finally succeeded and she had no doubt he would. Seeing this made her regret a lot of decisions, she could have had a career in potions of her own. Unfortunately she didn’t have the smarts to create her own, but she did love potions and brewing them.

Harry blushed “Thanks, Eileen.” grinned Harry sheepishly, he’d never get used to her praise - no matter how many years went by.

“When are you sending it over?” asked Eileen, curiously.

“Probably some time today,” murmured Harry slightly distracted as he went through his mail, opening and reading it before either putting it beside his book or scrunching it up for fire fodder. He kept his statements for his investments, all of them were doing really well, up 10% in the last month. The start up business the Weasley’s had was actually up 19% which was brilliant for a newly started shop, it was unusual but doable, and it definitely looked good for the future at any rate.

“Good,” said Eileen satisfied.

“Hmm,” grunted Harry, cocking his head to the side, why would Ollivander’s wife be getting in touch with him? Unrolling the parchment he began to read it, his eyebrow arching as he did so. The wife was basically telling him that Ollivander wasn’t speaking to anyone, other than to tell them he wanted to speak to him, Harry. The Aurors were getting exasperated with her husband. So she was hoping that he would spare time to come in, that it was obviously important to Garrick. It trailed off with her practically begging for him to come in, telling him what ward and room Ollivander was in. “That’s weird.” he admitted.

“What is?” asked Severus, upon hearing the statement as he entered the sitting room, fully dressed but looking a little tired.

“This letter from Ollivander…do you think it’s genuine?” asked Harry, passing it over without a second thought.

Severus accepted the letter and much like Harry his brow began to arch as he read the missive. His black eyes roaming over the words quickly as if it could somehow reveal itself to be true or not. He could Floo St. Mungo’s but unfortunately they wouldn’t be able to tell him since he wasn’t family. “It is in Ollivander’s nature to be mysterious and…dispassionate, I can see him refusing to speak to anyone if he has something he wants to say.” Severus said his voice slow and cautious. He was very worried actually; Ollivander wouldn’t be requesting them for anything other than something quite big. Harry probably wouldn’t want to hear what the wizard had to say…he just had that feeling in his bones.

“To me?” asked Harry sceptically, baffled.

“Evidently.” stated Severus sharply, “But you do not have to go if you do not wish to.”

“I would just end up dying with curiosity!” exclaimed Harry, shaking his head wryly. He was by no means a nosy person, he didn’t care about other peoples lives (with the exception of his friends and those he considered family) but to be called upon? By Ollivander? A wizard he hadn’t seen since he was what…eleven years old? Seven years ago now? Nobody could fault him for being curious.

Severus slowly smirked, “You would.” he agreed, knowing Harry all too well. It would do his head in trying to figure out what the wizard wanted. He would give in, in the end, but perhaps it would be for the best to go while visiting St. Mungo’s later on today. He knew Harry had completed the potion for the Longbottoms, he had been excitedly told at five o’clock this morning.
Thankfully he’d already been up to go to the toilet - he wouldn’t have thanked Harry for wakening him - but his lover already knew that.

“Ugh, damn it, I’ll go.” grumbled Harry, beaten by his curiosity. “Should I write to her and let her know I’ll be by this afternoon?”

“You should,” declared Severus immediately, it was rude to show up unannounced especially if it wasn’t family or a friend.

“Alright,” said Harry standing up, he moved over to the desk and hastily scribbled that he would be by some point this afternoon between one and three. He refrained from explaining he was visiting St. Mungo’s anyway, since quite frankly it was none of their business. “I’ll be right back.” he added as he quickly ran up the stairs to the little Owlery they had for the owls and other birds that might end up sitting in the Owlsery to rest before leaving again.

Opening the door, he smiled softly as he made his way over to Hermes; he was very fond of him. He’d ended up with a familiar later than most students at Hogwarts…most wizards and witches more like. It had made him cherish Hermes more he liked to think than the others. Moving towards him, he began to stroke his features, listening to him hooting excitedly, sensing an upcoming flight on the horizon.

“Send this to Mrs. Ollivander, she’s at St. Mungo’s, Hermes, you might have to give it to a healer instead.” said Harry, stroking his stomach a few times before he tied the letter to him. “There you go, go on then, Hermes.” murmured Harry, stepping back and with a delighted hoot he took off, his wings soaring into the air, and what a picture it made surrounded by the immaculate estate that was Prince Manor. Watching him until he was nothing but a blur on the landscape he wistfully made his way back down…to be able to do that, fly free in the wind it would be awesome. He was determined though that he would become an Animagus, the only one that had stuck to it so far was Cedric, and the others were just too busy right now.

“What did Ollivander want? Thought Harry distractedly as he ate his breakfast, poking the yolk of his egg in quiet contemplation. He didn’t even know the wizard, he’d met him once…what on earth could he have to discuss with him that he was refusing to speak to all others until he had spoken to him? Why couldn’t he have just said he would go now?

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James stirred, sleepily opening his eyes, met with the living room, sitting up abruptly confused momentarily until his memories came to him. He’d slumped on the couch last night completely exhausted and apparently fell asleep without going to his bed. Groaning softly, he sat up, his back ached something fierce, his own fault for sleeping on the couch in the first place. For the first time in months, despite his ache, he felt better than he had in a while. So would Nick and maybe with a little luck Roxy would come home for the holidays.

Rubbing at his side, where the miniaturised chests had been digging into him all night. He removed them from his cloak absently, before spelling them to their correct size. He opened it and gazed at the unicorn once again struck by the fact it had been beside Nick’s cot. Had it gone flying in the chaos? Or had Lily dropped it when getting the twins from their cots after the attack? He
didn’t know why but it was bothering him, Harry had never slept without it. He would cry until he got it if it fell out of the cot or his hands when he was younger. A small smile of pain flittered across his face. Why was it bothering him so much that it had been found where it was? He thought to himself, squashing the toy unicorn in his hands.

“Morning dad!” called Nick, wandering in, giving him a curious look as he did.

“Morning, how are you feeling?” asked James, placing the unicorn in the trunk, he’d have Sirius or Remus deliver it to Harry. He knew they were on good terms with his son, and he really envied them that. He would never have the kind of relationship with Harry that Sirius or Remus had, he didn’t really deserve it but he desperately wanted it.

"Fine," replied Nick, rolling his eyes at his overprotective and worried dad. He was always asked how he felt, it was out of concern that his magic might be on the wobbly side or if he was feeling tired or drained. His dad worried that he would have a relapse and his magical core would split again. It wouldn't happen; he knew that, he knew what to watch out for. Plus he wasn’t being forced to do spells all day and night, like he had been when it split. Normal classes, then detention with Umbridge doing spells, then training with his parents when they weren't going on about how disappointed they were that he was getting detention. "We don't have any training today anyway." he added shrugging his shoulder, he would be reading mostly today since his dad used this day to run errands between picking up his mum from the mind healers office.

"True," murmured James thoughtfully, watching as Nick sit down.

"What's all that?" asked Nick, peering at the trunks. "Oh is that your old school trunk?"

"That one is, yes, the others are yours and Harry's." explained James amused.

"Those aren't our school trunks," said Nick confused, although you wouldn't know since Harry's initials were still the same.

"It's your baby chests, with everything from your first year in them." explained James, picking one up and reverently swiping his fingers across it. "I got them when you were both born, then engraved by me a week later when your birth certificates were filled and names chosen."

"Can I see it?" asked Nick eagerly, plucking it from his dads hands, and opening it to see the treasures that waited inside. "Oh Dad!" cried Nick embarrassed as he saw pictures of himself in the bath with either his mum or dad holding him.

James laughed in amusement, finding the look on his sons face absolutely hilarious. He knew if he looked at all the pictures here he wouldn’t find many or maybe even any of Harry. Unless he was in the background of the party photos that the camera went around automatically taking on birthdays. He should check, although he was sure he wouldn’t be disappointed.

“Hey look…I remember this!” said Nick, looking at the unicorn.

James looked at his son, and belatedly realized he was looking through Harry’s chest as well. He didn’t know why but he had the urge to grab it off his son and close the chest. He didn’t, instead he decided to put the copy of the letter he’d written for his will to be given to Harry upon his death. He doubted Harry would even look in there - at least for a long while. If he did, he wanted it to remain beside the keepsakes that belonged and had been loved by his son.

“It’s Harry’s,” he stated.

“I know,” said Nick frowning, something was teasing the edge of his memory but for the life of him nothing came to the forefront of his mind. “He loved that unicorn didn’t he?”

“Yes, he was never without it, look at the pictures, it’s in every single one of them within touching distance.” James told his son, pointing out the small teddy out. He was right of course, whether in Harry’s hand, the floor, amongst his other toys or in the background the toy was there. They had gotten a new one for Harry after the attack, but he wasn’t sure what happened to it - he couldn’t
remember it being used.

“What are you doing with them?” Nick asked confused, he’d never seen them before… “Wait did you get these from Godric’s Hollow?” his face horrified.

“The wards are safe there now son, we weren’t unsafe we just picked the wrong person to trust with our lives.” soothed James reassuringly. “You cannot be scared of a house, or scared that something will happen to anyone under its roof.” perhaps he should give the property to his daughter, since Nick definitely looked as though he would never get over what happened there. Harry had killed the traitorous rat, appropriate really since at the end of the day his life had been affected worse because of what happened. No, he couldn’t blame Pettigrew…and he wasn’t really…but if it hadn’t happened surely they wouldn’t have treated Harry that way? He certainly didn’t like to think so - but he couldn’t change the past.

“I know that really,” said Nick, he just didn’t like the thought of him going back there - he needed his dad. It was just an innate fear that wouldn’t leave.

“Good,” said James relaxing into the sofa.

“What are you going to do with them?” Nick asked again, remembering his previous question. Putting the soft toy back into the trunk and letting it fall closed with a thunk, waiting patiently.

"I'm sending Harry's to him, I want him to know he was loved," said James 'even if only for a short while' he thought grimly.

"Oh, actually can I come with you? I want to get something for Susan?" questioned Nick, realizing belatedly that he needed something.

"If you want to come, you may as well try for your Apparation test, we can squeeze it in before I take your mum to St. Mungo's." agreed James, he really should have taken it a long time ago, but between everything he just hadn't had the time.

“Brilliant!” exclaimed Nick excitedly; he had been looking forward to it for ages. Even Susan could Apparate; she had passed her first time. She’d written to him about it, and how easy it was, but her aunt had helped her before she was killed by Death Eaters. “Can we practice before we go?”

James looked down at the time, “We have enough time, but you are better off eating something first, believe it or not dry toast is best, it helps with the nerves and doesn’t cause you to be sick.” not that he would be since Nick was used to being side-along Apparated, had been from a very young age. Just like all purebloods really, even if he technically wasn’t, he was still from a pureblood line. Any child he had would be considered pureblood as well. If anything in his experience it was more difficult being side-long Apparated as apposed to just Apparating yourself.

“Okay,” said Nick trusting his dad on that.

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“You boys be careful now,” said Eileen, watching them get ready to go to St. Mungo’s it was only twelve o’clock but Harry said he didn’t know how long they’d be with the healer. So they decided to head out now, have a late lunch either at Hogsmeade or at home when they were finished. Eileen had the urge to go with them, there was something inside of her telling her something was going to go wrong. Then again she felt this way every time Harry or Severus left the manor. Not to this extent though, but she failed to realize that. The last time she’d felt this strongly was hours before the ceremony for Harry and Severus’ Order of Merlin’s. She had assumed it was a case of jittery nerves.

“Don’t worry, we’ll be home in a few hours,” said Severus, rolling his eyes at his mothers worry.
Then he felt ashamed of himself, he had put her through a lot. Especially during his spying days, he may not have seen her to know, but he wasn’t stupid, she had worried constantly. Back then she’d been in Spinners End, with no way to contact him - they Floo weren’t even set up there. Then years after the Dark Lord’s defeat, and one year before Harry began Hogwarts he’d bought her the shop.

“Yep, hopefully it won’t take too long,” added Harry, as he clipped his travel cloak around his shoulders, although he wouldn’t need it for much longer - it was getting too warm for it. Summer would be approaching soon, well in a few months but it was close enough.

“He’s a healer, he will have a rudimentary understanding of potions if nothing else.” stated Severus, confident that they would be in and out of the office within twenty minutes at most.

“Well he certainly knows his stuff,” replied Harry, wryly. He’d made him feel like an idiot when speaking about the mind, not on purpose of course - he had just been a complete novice about stuff like that.

Severus chuckled dryly already knowing what Harry was thinking, he’d spoken about it often enough when he returned from St. Mungo’s after talking to him the first time. Once they were ready, both of them Apparated from the manor to the entrance to St. Mungo’s and walked in.

“Hello, I have a meeting with Healer Walsh and Smethwyck.” explained Harry, waiting patiently.

“That’s right, you know the way?” the receptionist asked, aware of whom Harry was having seen him a few times.

“I do,” assured Harry, nodding at her before he and Severus walked passed the security and right into the main hospital. Making their way to the elevator and to the floor they needed, wasting no time in getting to the healers office and knocking. They were right on time, so he hoped that they wouldn’t have to wait - Severus would have definitely concurred with his thoughts.

“Come in,” called a male voice.

“Thank you for meeting with us on such short notice,” said Harry once the door was opened, Severus closed it behind them and they both took a seat opposite from both healers. They were extremely exited, but composed; you could tell they’d been waiting for this meeting to start for hours.

“It’s our pleasure really,” said Healer Welsh, “In your letter you said you’d found the cure?”

“Created one, yes, hopefully,” corrected Harry.

“Care to elaborate on that?” asked Healer Smethwyck, sitting forward giving Harry his full attention. He had always known Harry could do it; he was a genius at Potions, a prodigy really.

“It’s a series of three potions, one can be given today, the next in exactly a week’s time, down to the last second.” he warned. “The third in a fortnight, the three combined should bring them out a bit at a time, but until the third potion is consumed there won’t be a significant amount of progress so do not be disheartened by the fact nothing much happens between the first, second and until the third is consumed.”

“It’s the combination of the first two potions that harnesses the third and brings them out of their comatose state.” Severus told them, saying in a more understanding matter what Harry was trying to say.

Harry nodded his head, agreeing with him.
“What’s in the first two? Will it interact with any potions they are currently taking?” fired off Welsh.

“Give us a list of what they are taking,” said Severus immediately.

“We had it ready,” said Smethwyck handing over the small pad of paper to Harry, smiling, he was always prepared for anything.

Harry accepted it and held it between them both so they could read it together. Both their brows furrowed as they read it, trying to think of any consequences that could occur if they were given these potions at the same time as the new one. Most were the ones they expect to appear, vitamins, nutrients, sleeping potions if they needed them things that a hospital supplied to long term patients.

“They cannot get dreamless sleeping potions - or a general one either come to that,” Harry told them when he saw that on the list.

“They have ingredients that will interact badly with this potion.” stated Severus, agreeing with him.

“To be on the safe side, I wouldn’t give them anything other than the nutrient potion.” why they were on that was a mystery, since they were able to eat on their own. They should be getting all the nutrients they needed by eating healthy.

“Why do they even need a nutrient potion? Have they stopped eating?” asked Harry worriedly.

“No, it’s just something we tend to give to all our long term patients, just to be on the safe side.” explained Healer Walsh.

“Then they’ll be fine to be taken off it for the duration of this potion?” enquired Harry.

“They will be yes,” said Healer Smethwyck in agreement. Writing the information down on a fresh piece of paper, they would be on a NP (No Potion) system. It wasn’t often that was used here, but there was those allergic to a lot of ingredients and couldn’t consume potions. They were few far between but it happened occasionally, the healers would all know what NP stood for - but considering Healer Walsh was in charge of that specific wing and its patients as well as the potions they’d get nothing would happen.

“Here are the instructions about the potion and what will happen during the course of taking it.” said Harry once the room went silent again for a few minutes. Passing over the instructions, he didn’t give the ingredients list over since he wasn’t publishing the potion yet. If someone got their hands on it, well let’s just say he would be very pissed off, so it was staying within his reach and out of everyone else’s. He hadn’t worked his arse off for someone else to come along and try and claim it as their own.

Both healers read it, making the occasional noise as they did ‘humming’ and ‘ahing’, until they read everything and nodded their understanding. It made perfect sense; even a trainee healer would be able to understand the instructions on the list. Not that they would see it of course, but it was just to clarify how simply worded it was.

“Will you be coming in to see the results of the work? Or would you like me to send you the results each day?” questioned Healer Smethwyck.

“Um,” murmured Harry, thinking it through thoughtfully.

“Perhaps you should get the results of the first two potions but here to observe the third one being administered in three weeks?” suggested Severus. He would like to be here to see it in all honesty, this was groundbreaking work, he had a feeling those he was acquainted (more like friends) with
would travel from America to observe it as well when they heard.

“Good idea,” exclaimed Harry, “We will do as Severus suggested.” he added to the healers.

“Very well, we shall write to you every day and then tell you the time the third will be administered.” said Healer Walsh.

“All that’s left to do is inform Lady Longbottom and her grandson Lord Longbottom.” added Healer Smethwyck.

“I think its best just to tell Lady Longbottom for now,” argued Harry, “Just to be on the safe side.” Neville was only considered Lord since his father was incapable of performing the duties of a Lord. He idly wondered if they even thought of the younger son. Or if he was just considered irrelevant, when it was his parents they were talking about too.

“That I am afraid will be up to Lady Longbottom,” said Healer Walsh, she did agree with Harry though, it probably was best that the children weren’t informed. It would be like being told what had happened to them all over again. The shock, the horror the devastation, no it was best not to let them feel that and being let down if it didn’t work - but Harry seemed to know what he was doing.

Harry nodded reluctantly conceding the point the healer made, it was true, and it was up to her whether they found out or not. Hopefully she wouldn’t say anything and have a heart. She was a stern woman but surely she wouldn’t put her grandchildren through unnecessary pain?

“If there is nothing else we have further appointments we need to keep?” enquired Severus politely, at least politely for someone who was basically saying ‘anything else you want - we want to leave’ at any rate.

“No, no, nothing else, I’m sure we have everything we need, if not then I’m sure you won’t mind if we ask some questions in the updates we send.” said Healer Smethwyck it was more of a question than statement.

“No problem,” replied Harry, and it wasn’t - he wanted this to work out, mostly so Neville’s parents would be whole and happy to see him graduating from Hogwarts in a few months time. He knew that was Neville’s dearest wish, that and to be there for him and Luna when they finally married.

“Don’t let us keep you,” said Healer Welsh, “And on behalf of the medical community, you have our deepest gratitude for everything you’ve done to flourish the magical community.”

Harry blushed, “Thank you,” he said abashed.

“Have a good afternoon,” said Severus, ending the conversation and getting them both out of the office. Now all they had to do was meet Ollivander and head home. Although he had a feeling it wasn’t going to be as simple as that. Oh no, this was going to be a long and terrible afternoon, Harry wasn’t going to like whatever Ollivander had to say of that he had no doubt.

“It’s only up one floor, we may as well use the stairs,” said Harry, they were closer, in fact as he spoke he opened the door and both of them took the short trip up the stairs to the ward they needed to be at. Breathing deeply, he looked for the door where Ollivander was. He didn’t know why but now he was here he was sweating, feeling nervous and dry mouthed.

“Alright?” asked Severus, sensing and seeing the hesitation written across Harry’s face and body.

“Yeah,” lied Harry, his heartbeat shooting through the roof.
“Just remain calm, you may be getting worked up over nothing.” soothed Severus, squeezing his shoulder to let him know he wasn’t alone and to help ground him. He didn’t believe a word coming out of his mouth; the silence and mystery surrounding it couldn’t be good. He wouldn’t let Ollivander near Harry though; he couldn’t risk Ollivander taking Harry to Voldemort whether it be by Portkey or Apparation. Although he was hoping the hospital had checked for the Imperius Curse and any influencing Potions or spells. “Just remain cautious.” he added grimly.

Harry nodded, before he knocked on the door, waiting patiently to be allowed in. The door swung open and a tall skinny woman smiled at them tiredly.

“Mrs Ollivander?” queried Harry, blinking at her. She was much younger than he’d expected after all Ollivander was already white and old.

“Call me Gina,” said the witch, “Come on in, he wishes to speak to you alone.” this was directly mostly at the wizard with Harry, whom she knew as Severus Snape a fellow Potions Master.

“Not going to happen.” barked Severus immediately; he wasn’t leaving Harry alone with Ollivander.

“Let them in,” whispered a breathy voice, that everyone over the age of eleven would never forget, could never forget - Mr. Ollivander the wizard who they get the most important instrument of being a wizard or which from - their wand.

Gina nodded her head; before she gave her husband one last look before she left the room. Closing the door behind her, it wasn’t fair, what was so important that he would want to speak to them rather than her and his son? Well, hopefully soon he would be back to normal, or at least normal as he could be after being held by Voldemort. If she ever got her hands on that wizard, he wouldn’t know what to do - she would kill him with her bare hands for hurting her family.

Harry stood there awkwardly, even sick and rail thin the wizard had this penetrating gaze that could make one think he was staring into your very soul. Narrowing his eyes, he straightened his spine, refusing to let anyone intimidate him or make him feel inferior - like his family had done his entire life. “You asked to see me?” stated Harry, well more like demanded to everyone around him.

“Thank you, for coming,” whispered the wizard, his voice still hoarse, speaking slowly as if each word was a pain to get out.

Those under the Imperius Curse couldn’t show pain, their bodies didn’t comprehend the fact so it looked as though he was clear for that particular spell. Severus also observed the fact his eyes were clear of any influence, not even a pain reliever by the looks of things. Still he was on high alert; he wouldn’t relax until they got back home to the manor.

“What do you want?” asked Harry, his confusion showing as clear as day.

“He knows,” whispered Ollivander eerily.

Harry gulped, but managed to get out “Knows what?” his voice as rough as Ollivander’s.

“I tried to prevent the…inevitable,” rasped Garrick, “Unfortunately there is only so much a man can take…as I’m sure you both understand.”

“What did you tell him? What was he asking?” demanded Severus; arms crossed staring suspiciously at Ollivander.

“At first he wanted to know about the death stick, tortured me for weeks trying to get information I did not know…” said Garrick. “One day I was dragged from my cell…and he began asking
questions about you.” his eerie eyes looking straight at Harry.

“Why?” gaped Harry.

“You speak the language of the snakes…” Ollivander said, “You also have the brother wand to HIM… you cannot fight with these wands brother wands refuse to work against each other.”

Harry’s eyes widened comically.

“I had suspected you were the one to truly defeat him you know.” he confessed.

Harry snorted in derision, “Really? When was that? I remember your words years ago - you expected the wand to go to Nick Potter.” spat Harry irritated and edgy.

“Easy,” murmured Severus, his tone slightly distracted as if he was thinking intently about something.

“I did, that’s when I put it together, it explained the odd aura around you…which is oddly enough gone.” said Ollivander.

That explained the intense look he’d received when he first entered the room then.

“It is,” said Harry quietly.

“What did you tell the Dark Lord?” demanded Severus, wanting more information.

“Only what he needed to hear, that the wands won’t fight against each other,” said Ollivander. “I told him nothing else; he already knew that you were the true Boy-Who Lived.”

Harry shuddered, he’d never heard anyone other than Severus say those words and he didn’t trust Ollivander to keep quiet about it. He was quite literally facing his worst fears here. He’d told Severus they would know one day, but he was being disingenuous - he’d never had any intentions of telling anyone. He couldn’t do this; he just couldn’t stand here anymore. Turning abruptly, he yanked open the door and sped off down the corridor using the stairs to get away. Not even wanting to wait for the lift to come up. He could feel a presence close by, with familiar magic - Severus.

“Harry wait up,” stated Severus sharply, as Harry disappeared out the doors of St. Mungo’s a loud grunt and cry caused him to run faster. Skidding to a halt, of all the people…it had to be the bloody Potters. Harry was the first person to get to his feet, Severus grasped his shoulder tightly…but he wasn’t looking at Lily, James or Nick.

He was looking at the Dark Lord and his Death Eaters no more than six feet from them.

“Fuck!” was the only epithet out of Severus’ mouth and he wasn’t a wizard for bad language.

Harry’s head jerked up his green eyes taking in the sight, four wizards and a useless witch against all those people? The odds weren’t looking very good.

Invisible

Chapter 88

The Truth

Harry paled drastically, almost swaying on the spot as his stared wide eyed. The only thing
grounding him was Severus, who tightened his hold on him knowing what his lover was going
through. His nightmares were coming to life, and out of all the ways he expected to be found out as
the Boy-Who-Lived…this wasn’t one of them, not in any nightmares. It was always mostly
Dumbledore who figures it out, part of him had always admired Dumbledore’s intelligence,
everything he’d accomplished and until he came along he and Voldemort had come along he’d had
the highest scores in quite a few subjects. He just didn’t like the man himself, and how he treated
all the students by favouring Nick. So it was quite a logical assumption that it would have been
him - but logic wasn’t standing in front of him, no Voldemort was.

Severus wanted to punch the Dark Lord in the face; Harry would never recover from this. He
hadn’t been able to handle him knowing the truth; it had almost caused Harry to have a panic
attack. He had to knock Harry out of his frozen state, they would need to fight. The bastard had
wards surrounding the whole area; there was no way they could get away by Apparating. He
would bet his fortune that there was a ward preventing Portkey’s from working as well. How the
hell had he found out they were going to be here? There was no way Ollivander had broken and did
what he was told - the wizard was strong. Plus he would have done it right away, if he had felt
compelled to do the Dark Lord’s bidding. He hadn’t felt any tripping wards when they Apparated
here, unless…they’d been here for the Potters but that made no sense the Dark Lord hadn’t taken
his eyes from Harry since they’d revealed themselves. His attention was sidetracked by a loud
grating voice - one he was very familiar with - Lily, he couldn’t help but inwardly rolling his eyes.

“What?!” cried Lily loudly, her eyes impossibly wide, denial sprung up immediately, she didn’t
believe it. Nick had defeated the evil monster, and he would prove he was the hero once again, by
destroying him again.

James flash backed to the unicorn and felt his heart sinking, his brown eyes glancing very briefly at
Harry before he closed his eyes in defeat. He knew with a grave certainty that Voldemort was
right; they had hurt Harry more than they could have possibility imagined. They’d been training
the wrong child, his heart felt as though it was about to squash upon itself. Was the world doomed
because of a mistake? No, Harry was powerful, smart, he could duel, and he could do this. Not
against all these people, he needed to get help and quickly. Breathing heavily, he very slowly
began to move his hand towards his pocket, thankfully Nick was in front of him, and he would do
it unobtrusively. They needed help but if they saw him doing it they would attack - and he knew
they’d be killed. There was dozens of Death Eaters there, and they were in the Muggle world - he
was exposing them all.

Voldemort stared at her before dismissing her; she was insignificant, no irrelevant to him.

“You’re lying! I was there, I saw everything,” she hissed, sounding like a wounded cat. Grasping a
hold of her son, holding him close terrified. “We will win, no matter what mind game you play!”

James cursed when he was jolted by Lily, causing the small galleon to fall to the floor. He hadn’t
even been able to call the Order before it slipped from his fingers. If he knelt down they would
know, they would attack, despair built up in him. He just wished Nick wasn’t here, but at least his daughter was safe, a small consolation but one nonetheless. It didn’t make him feel any better about what was happening.

Severus’ grip became tighter against Harry’s shoulder, actually causing him pain making him jolt out of his stupor. Why hadn’t he brought his damn potion? Thought Harry in despair, not even one so he could make sure that Severus got back to Prince Manor safely. He cared more about Severus than he did his own life, and it would surprise everyone other than those that were close to him.

How did he get them out of here alive? Harry thought, ‘Think, Harry, bloody think!’ he had gotten out of tougher spots than this hasn’t he? Yes! He’d been fourteen he could do this now he was much better prepared, if the world had to find out who and what he was for Severus to survive then so be it. A glimmer caught his eye, a galleon, like the one he’d seen of Severus’. It was an emergency coin for Order members; it had tracking capabilities in it, that’s if this ward wouldn’t prevent it. Harry shifted towards James Potter, giving Voldemort a look that said he was terrified but in actuality, nothing but determination and an utter willingness to live thrummed through him.

Toeing his foot out of his shoe, grateful that he’d forgotten to put socks on his feet tonight, he used his toes to grasp around the small coin. None of the Death Eaters could see what he was doing due to the cloaks they all wore, once he had a tight enough grip, he swung his leg back, praying Severus understood what was going on. He couldn’t hold on much longer, he was beginning to wobble dangerously, just then he felt nimble fingers taking the galleon from him and he lurched his foot back down, sliding it back into the shoe without pause.

Nick’s terrified eyes went from his dad, his mum to Harry and even Snape before turning back to the front of his head. Who was telling the truth? Was his mum right and Voldemort was just tricking them? Or was Harry the Boy-Who-Lived? Nick wasn’t sure how to feel about that, strangely enough he felt relief flow through him. The thought of killing had terrified him...but it wasn’t something he’d wish on anyone - never mind Harry. He intimately knew the burden it was, he’d always been proud of it growing up, until he went to Hogwarts...only then had he understood the burden it really was. No, he couldn’t think like that, his mum couldn’t have gotten it wrong she’d been there. The burden was still his and his alone to bear, to save his family he would try - but Nick couldn’t see how he could manage to destroy Voldemort - he was so much more powerful.

“You saw everything in your stunned state?” hissed Voldemort, red eyes gleaming, revelling in the fear and denial.

“What did you expect, Voldemort?” replied Harry, trying to buy them time. “For me to become terrified? Try and run? I’ve always known it was me. You want to fight? Then let’s duel, but be a man for the first time in your life and do it without your minions cheating. Its pathetic really, they mustn’t think you’re very good if they feel the need to intervene.” his mind was yelling at him for being an idiot, was he deliberately winding him up and going to get them all killed.

Voldemort twitched his face contorting in fury, “Come then, Potter, let me show my followers that what happened all those years ago was an accident.” he turned to face the Death Eaters, they bowed their heads without saying anything knowing what their Lord was asking of them. Or rather what he was silently telling them, no spells or I will kill you where you stand’ or rather incinerate rather since the look in his eyes was unprecedented.

“My name is not Potter,” spat Harry that was still a sore spot, moving forward having to fight off Severus’ hand briefly.

“Harry, no!” cried James, grasping a hold of Harry preventing him from going further, this wasn’t
meant to be how it happened. He was outnumbered, if they even tried to help the Death Eaters would join in, and they had nobody to help him unless someone came from the hospital. If they went into the hospital they risked everyone in there too. They were all hurt, and in no condition to fight Death Eaters…quite literally they were backed into a corner with no way out.

“James!” cried Lily, she couldn’t use magic, and she was a sitting duck. She had let him go, Voldemort was tricking them. She just knew Voldemort would kill Nick if they took their attention of him. She didn’t care what the boy said; he was lying just like he lied about everything else.

“What the hell…” was muttered to the side of the building.

“Avada Kedavra!” cursed one of the robed figures, causing Harry and the others to flinch, but it had not been aimed at them. An innocent Muggle hit the ground fast, and the dog began barking loudly, as it bolted from the scene, a green spell on its heels but the dog successfully managed to avoid it, its lead trailing along behind it.

“Let me go,” snapped Harry, yanking himself away from James, he had to do this.

“How can you let him go?!” James said turning to Snape desperately.

“He’s trying to buy us time,” replied Severus, his gaze never wavering from Harry, his wand clutched tightly in his hand his knuckles white with the pressure.

“Wha…” said James, confused.

Severus pressed the coin into his hands, and shoved him out of his line of sight. His sharp black eyes taking in everything, making sure that none the Death Eaters tried anything. The pendant would protect Harry from minor spells, but against the Dark Arts it was useless. Harry had been extremely smart to bring it up; Voldemort wouldn’t let anyone interfere now that Harry had called him on it. He would feel as though he had a point to make. Potter was predictably being a bloody Gryffindor about it, Harry had learned enough from him to act like a Slytherin. He was worried as well but he refused to give into it, he had personally taught Harry everything he knew, and he had learned from Voldemort - they were equals of sorts…not just with power but knowledge.

“Avada Kedavra!” was yelled two more times, as two additional Muggles found them, the confusion on their faces staying there permanently as they collapsed to the ground. Dead before they hit the cement.

Harry stopped walking when he was half way; there was nothing he could do for the Muggles right now, except putting an end to the Dark Wizard. Harry was watching as Voldemort saunter forward as if he wasn’t facing someone in a duel. He was mocking him, Harry realized, but he refused to give in and get angry. People that were angry made mistakes; it was one of the first things Sev had taught him. Voldemort gave a mocking bow, his gaze never wavering from Harry’s. Harry imitated his action, before backing away, never turning his back on his opponent as was customary in a duel.

“Now we duel,” said Voldemort, “Crucio!”

Harry who was expecting it this time, swiftly moved out of the way, firing his own spell back just as seas of red robed figures entered through the Anti-Apparation barriers Voldemort had put up. They had used his potion he realized with feral satisfaction.

Then the battle was on with ferocious intensity, as everyone began firing spells, fighting and dying for what they believed in.
"GET INTO THE HOSPITAL NOW!" yelled James, shoving her in the direction of the doors. He didn't even stop to see if she had done what he asked, as he quickly joined in the fray trying to keep his eye on both his sons but unable to do so. Hell he wasn't able to keep his eye on one of them never mind two.

Lily looked around at everyone fighting terrified, her wide green eyes searching for her son; she had to get Nick to safety. He was responsible for defeating Voldemort, she had to keep him safe, and she wasn't concerned about what the boy said the world would know they were right - especially when Nick finally destroys Voldemort for good. She began to panic, so many duels, and so many people! She couldn't find Nick, and she didn't dare move into the crowd, without magic she couldn't fight back. Damn the boy to hell, this was all his fault! If she had been able to fight, she would be able to keep her son safe. She prayed that James was looking for their son, to bring him here to her, to keep him safe. Squeaking in fright as three green curses fled towards her she bolted towards the hospital terrified.

“You have to help them!” she screeched, the more people that were there on the light side the less chance there was of anything happening to her son.

“What on earth is going on?” muttered the receptionist as security moved forward to deal with the hysterical woman.

“Death Eaters…outside! Help them! Help my son!” she begged, backing away from the security, she couldn’t go out there - she would be killed. She couldn’t die not yet, she was supposed to grow old beside James, watch over her kids and grandchildren maybe even be lucky enough to see one great grandchild brought into the world. James would forgive her, when this all blew over, he just had to.

The three security guards looked outside, shocked by the fact they hadn’t even realized what was going on. “This hospital is on lockdown,” said one of the wizard guards, flicking his wand and loud buzzing was heard as the three wizards stepped outside and sealed the entire hospital and everyone inside it. Under normal circumstances they would have remained indoors and secured the hospital as was the normal plans and what they had practiced during drills, nobody would be getting in or out of the hospital. As Lily found out when she couldn’t get out and began banging on the door, totally terrified.

The guards paid her no attention as they turned and also joined in the fray.

Lily watched as more people appeared, it was the Order she could see Dumbledore’s robes in the in the middle. She sighed in relief, oh, thank Merlin, Nick would be safe with Albus there, he would be safe. Yet she continued to watch what was happening, nosed pressed against the glass wishing she had her magic - never in a million years would she have thought to be useless like this after leaving Azkaban.

Albus inspected what was happening, his wand at the ready already deflecting curses from Death Eaters eager to try and take him out quickly. His blue eyes quickly sharpened on Harry and Voldemort duelling, see, family obviously did mean something to him after all. He was holding Voldemort off to give his brother time; it made his heart swell with pride seeing it. Harry had turned out to be a very mature young man, and he was in awe of him simply put.

“Protego!” cast Albus, shielding himself from a curse, causing it to go bouncing back onto the Death Eater. He was surprised by the amount of Death Eaters there, there had to be at least thirty maybe nearly forty. He tried to make his way towards Harry and Voldemort, all the while looking for Nick. They had lost enough people, this had to end now. “Stupefy!” cursed Albus, causing the Death Eater to topple over, and then he helped the fallen Auror up barely hearing his thanks before
moving on. Deflecting more curses, halting in his bid to get to Voldemort and Harry as three Death Eaters made him their next target.

Meanwhile everyone was leaving a wide circular berth around Voldemort and Harry as they duelled. The power coming from them was quite frankly astonishing, not as astonishing as the fact a seventeen-year-old was able to keep up with Voldemort. They shouldn’t have been watching, but they couldn’t help themselves even as they tried to concentrate on the battle.

“Diffindo!” cast Harry, aiming for Voldemort’s neck, but the powerful wizard sidestepped it as if it was nothing.

“Crucio!” he hissed back.

Harry moved already casting another curse. “Fumos!” as a smokescreen shot out of his wand, Harry cast another “Glacius!” the spell shot at Voldemort, but his bid to freeze Voldemort was thwarted as the wizard cast a powerful Fiendfyre at him, which caused Harry to have to use the same spell to prevent himself from being burnt - the spell unfortunately drenched him in now lukewarm water. The smoke was already dissipating fast due to the wind and people spelling it away as it affected their abilities to see the duel in front of him.

“Is that all you have, Potter? Third year spells? How disappointing,” hissed Voldemort, “Crucio!”

“What and you’re better?” scoffed Harry, not rising to the bait, he’d rather Voldemort underestimate him. He also didn’t want to exhaust himself by using powerful spells like Voldemort seemed to prefer doing. “Diminuendo!” aiming his wand at Voldemort’s hoping to shrink the wand. Which he noticed wasn’t the one he had used in the past - he must have gotten another for the purpose of duelling him. Harry cursed as he jumped aside to avoid it as it was deflected past him.

“I tire of this! Avada Kedavra!” hissed Voldemort.

Harry ducked “Wingardium Leviosa! Orbis!”

“And this is supposed to be the one who would defeat me?” Voldemort said loudly, laughing evilly, so sure that victory would be his.

“REDUCTO!” spat Harry viciously, getting really angry now that he was revealing his secret to everyone here. It was bad enough the Potters new, but he knew they’d never let the public know, it would take them from the spotlight and cast them in a bad light. Leering viciously when it grazed Voldemort’s arm.

“Avada Kedavra!”

Harry moved aside, cursing as he stumbled and twisted his ankle as he did so, pointing his wand a spell spat from it wordlessly. Distracting Voldemort enough to cast a “Ferula” spell on his ankle and get back to his feet, wiping his brow as he did so.

“Frigidus sanguis!”

“Copying spells now? Pathetic. And for the last time, it’s Peverell.” snapped Harry, “Ossa Frangere!”
“Avada Kedavra!” snapped Voldemort, deeply perturbed now, had the Potters hid who the real boy-who-lived was for this moment? He knew more spells than he had anticipated he had to kill him and quickly. “Fiendfyre!”

“Aqua Eructo!” spat Harry, but he hissed in agony as it grazed his fingers burning them in the process. Even the water didn’t help the agony of the fire eating his flesh.

“Imperio!” the spell hit Harry full force causing Voldemort to grin ferally, mentally forcing the boy to stand still - as he readied himself to stop this once and for all and prove to the magical world nobody would save them. “Ava…”

“Levicorpus!” snapped Harry much to Voldemort’s immense surprise, but he successfully managed to sidestep the spell by flying he flew past Harry, causing him to whirl around, wand at the ready.

“Langlock!” using the spell he’d learned from Severus. Grunting in frustration, how long were they going to have to fight? This was getting ridiculous; his ankle was bloody killing him. It was hindering his ability to avoid the spells.

“Sectumsempra!” hissed Voldemort.

Harry flung himself out of the way, knowing he wouldn’t be able to avoid it on his feet. Grunting as he fell on the grass, with no time to waste he turned swiftly and hobbled back to his feet. “Protego!” grunting as the spell splintered through causing him to fly through the air, landing with a thump against something squishy. Looking down he saw a dead Auror, but he couldn’t allow himself to feel pity or sadness, he had to end this once and for all before anyone else got hurt.

“Adsumo” was cast by Voldemort

Harry fell to his knees, as Voldemort’s possession spell hit him with full force, as both he and Voldemort both battled it out mentally. Harry refused to let Voldemort in, but he was too powerful, he was slowly creeping in, ensnaring his senses. Harry clutched at his stomach as he panted, grunting in agony as his mind was ripped apart by the evil wizard. His mind shields were slowly beginning to deteriorate letting Voldemort in further. Voldemort was taking no prisoners, as he ruthlessly penetrated his mind.

Then just like that Harry’s mind shields shattered like glass allowing Voldemort to see his memories. Once he got to the end of them, he would have full control of him, and then it would be over. Harry wreathed on the grass, unable to stop him. That was until a memory came forth…one that Harry cherished a great deal, the day Eileen gave him Hermes, his beautiful owl. He couldn’t lose, if he did, it would only be a matter of time before Severus and Eileen paid the price.

Strength like never before thrummed through Harry as he fought off the possession, but something odd was already happening. When he had thought of those two people, Voldemort had recoiled as if he couldn’t stand the emotions behind them. He may not have many memories that he did cherish, at least not growing up - but he had enough, he thought on them all with everything he had inside him, as he rebuilt his walls, eventually the evil presence retreated altogether.

Harry’s eyes snapped back open, he found Voldemort was on the ground as well, obviously exhausted as he was. Harry shakily got back to his feet, he didn’t even feel the agony on his hands, his body shaking and exhausted he refused to give into it. He felt as though his arm was laid up with bricks, but he managed to point his wand at Voldemort and cast once again “Reducto! Sectumsempra! Diffindo!” aiming the spells in three different directions hoping he wouldn’t be able to avoid all three of them as he fell onto his backside unable to stay standing a moment longer.
His heart sank as he watched Voldemort avoid them one at a time; he didn’t think he had it in him to utter another spell. Then he watched Voldemort pale, looking down he was surprised to see the pool of blood. The Diffindo spell had successfully hit him, judging by the amount of blood, it had severed his Femora artery; he would be dead in a few seconds.

“Death is only the beginning.” swore Voldemort, as his ruby eyes dimmed. “I’ll be back.”

“No more,” said Harry, “Your Horcruxes are gone.” his voice the tiniest whisper. Voldemort heard him it was the last thing he heard as his eyes widened before death finally claimed him after all the Dark Wizard had done to prevent deaths embrace from taking him. A shaky breath left him, he’d done it, and he’d finally after all this time destroyed him.

He heard a lot of screaming and looked up, watching as the Death Eaters who were still alive, claw at their arm as if they were being burnt. His tired green eyes began closing on their own accord; before he realized something… Severus wasn’t there. Adrenaline surged through him, enabling him to stand up, as he frantically began to look around. He tried to keep himself calm, they were right next to a hospital if anything happened, he would be fine, maybe he was just helping people, and it wouldn’t be the first time. He calmed down realizing the truth in that statement as he limped over the dead bodies looking for Severus.

Everyone was staring at him, he belatedly realized, absolutely everyone. He couldn’t see the face he wanted to see in the crowd of people, his fear returned as he ignored the looks.

“Harry, no.” said Cedric, standing in front of him, stopping him from walking forward. His face was drained of all colour, he was bloody, torn and hurt, but he didn’t care about that.

Harry just tried to move, confused by Cedric’s words.

“Don’t, Harry, you don’t want to see this,” said Cedric, hugging his friend around the waist despite his fighting.

“NO!” shouted Harry, struggling to get out of Cedric’s hold. “Let me go, I don’t want to hurt you but I will!” snarled Harry eventually.

“Trust me, please.” said Cedric, reluctantly letting go, he knew Harry was serious when he said that. Harry never said anything he didn’t mean, as much as he wanted to protect Harry from this, he also realized he couldn’t. Unbidden tears shed in his eyes, as he heard Harry’s shout of denial. Giving a shout of surprise as he was propelled away by some sort of dome that Harry had created, he realized as he looked around. He hadn’t been the only one either; a few others were picking themselves up off the ground.

Harry scrambled towards Severus, a broken sob tearing from his throat, his fingers trying futilely to stop blood that had long ago already done so. Flicking his wand he wordlessly used the resuscitation spell to bring him back. “This can’t be happening, it can’t be happening,” he murmured tears coursing down his face as he tried to bring him back. “No, no, no, no, you promised, you can’t be gone.”

Harry choked bitter tears as his wand fell from his numb fingers, his left hand shakily close those dull black eyes. Grasping a hold of Severus, he rocked back and forth before he screamed his agony to the sky, until he couldn’t anymore. He couldn’t live without Severus, he just couldn’t. He didn’t want this; he couldn’t face all these people with out him. They knew, they would hound him all the time, a shudder wracked his frame. He should have been celebrating with Sev and Eileen; this wasn’t the outcome he had wanted. Harry opened Severus’ cloak and plucked the potions bag from it, if he couldn’t have Severus in life, then he would have him in death. He couldn’t do this
without him anyway; he took the vial of basilisk venom, breathing shakily.

He silently apologised to Eileen, for doing this to her, for not protecting Severus better…for being too weak without him. His hands were too painful to open the vial, so he used his teeth to uncork it, with every intention of swallowing the entire vial of basilisk venom. It would be a quick relatively painless death, and then he would see his Severus again.

“What is that?” asked Cedric, as he tried every spell he knew to get through the dome and to his best friend who was obviously suffering - he couldn’t stand to see it.

Sirius paled, “Basilisk venom,” he had learned that during Auror training, “ACCIO VIAL!” praying it worked, nothing else had been able to get through the dome. It worked, he quickly learned things could get out but not in, it was essentially the spell they’d placed on St. Mungo’s but with a little difference.

“We need to get Eileen, she’ll be the only one who can get though to him!” cried Cedric, unable to believe what Harry was being reduced to.

“She doesn’t deserve to see her son like this,” said Sirius, in a rare moment of caring about something other than Harry in the past few years.

“It’s that or losing them both,” choked Cedric, slamming his fist into the shield in despair.

“GO!” said Sirius, giving his agreement somewhat reluctantly, but he was right, they would lose both of them if she didn’t come. “GET TO WORK!” he snapped at the other Auror’s who were staring in full blown curiosity. They were in the Muggle world for fuck sake; they had to be on high alert.

Nick watched from where he stood tears of his own falling down his face. Leaning against his dad who looked just as heartbroken as him. He knew he had no right to go over there and try and help, so he didn’t but his heart was breaking for the pain his brother was going through. He obviously cared very deeply about Snape, although he didn’t like the wizard personally. The urge to try and comfort his brother was so strong, as if sensing this; his dad tightened his hold on him.

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Cedric Apparated into the Leaky Cauldron before bolting towards the fireplace grasping a hold of the Floo Powder before yelling the destination in. silently apologising to Eileen for what he was about to do - she deserved to learn about her sons death in a more compassionate manner - but he couldn’t risk it.

“The boy’s are out…” she began, knowing only Harry’s friends had the ability to Floo in. She turned to face the young man only to pale herself. “No!” she said in denial, she did not want to hear what he had to say.

“I’m so sorry…” whispered Cedric, “But…Harry needs you…he’s trying to K…” he couldn’t even bring himself to say the words.

Tears filled Eileen’s eyes, they’d promised they would be right back, this wasn’t meant to be the way it happened. Closing her eyes, as the tears fell down her pale face. “Take me to him.” she said eventually, her entire body shaking as Cedric approached her. She knew without needing told that her son was dead and Harry… why Harry was obviously in pieces.

“T’m so sorry,” whispered Cedric again, before he Apparated them to the scene, before letting her go.
Eileen gasped, covering her hand with her mouth as she trembled even more violently. She could see Sirius Black trying to get through what seemed to be an invisible force field. Eileen’s trembling frail hand moved forward, to see if she could get through, but she too was met with the same force field.

“Harry?” called Eileen, her voice choked with so much emotion that Sirius shifted and stared at the floor. It was as though it came as a surprise that Severus was loved by people - that anyone would miss him.

“Mum,” choked Harry, using the words he’d thought of her for the first time, in his tremulous state. Shame consumed him as well as fear. He had gotten her son killed…how could she show him any concern? It was all his fault, he’d caused the death of the man he loved more than anything else. If only he had just kept the note to himself…Sev would never have been there.

“Let me through,” she said, and just like that her hand went from pressing against the dome to passing right through it. During this the tears had never abated, once she reached Harry, she got to her knees and hugged Harry as the wetness from her face dropped down onto his head. She hugged him close, wishing she could tell him everything would be okay, but she knew it would never be the same again. They had both lost the most important person in their lives.

“I’m sorry,” choked Harry, “I’m so sorry, I’m sorry.” his voice becoming a whine by the end.

“It’s not your fault,” Eileen managed to say, “It’s not your fault,” no force on earth would have stopped him from being here. Eileen pressed her hand to her son’s face, wiping away the blood with shaking hands from where it lay still curled up in Harry’s lap.

“It is,” cried Harry, taking the blame on his own shoulders. “It is.” he said again, before he slumped into her arms the force field collapsing as Harry lost consciousness.

Everyone immediately lurched forward, Cedric in the lead.

“Help me get my boy’s home.” whispered Eileen, looking ready to pass out herself.

“He needs to go to the morgue,” said Moody, his tone respectful and not barking for once.

“The old laws still apply,” snapped Eileen angrily. She was taking both her boys home, and nothing would stop her.

“I’ll help her,” said Cedric immediately.

Moody nodded grimly, stepping back respectfully, his large hand pressing against Dumbledore’s knowing what he would ask. This was not the time or place to discuss this, and the fact he wanted to angered Moody. It was utterly disrespectful; he glared at his old friend conveying his feelings.

Sirius and Cedric immediately moved in further to help, a Portkey was created for them. Before long the five of them were gone from the battlefield. Leaving behind Aurors and Order members who were shaken to the core…not just by what they’d witnessed but the intensity of the feelings and the fact it had been Harry Peverell not Nick Potter who had destroyed the evil wizard as had been foretold.
Invisible

Chapter 89

Unending Heartbreak

Eileen closed the door behind her, exhausted beyond endurance, her face haggard and worn. She fought to make her feet move, she had bundled in her arms everything Severus’ had on him when it happened. Cedric Diggory had said the spells that confirmed that Severus was dead and had died due to an unspeakable dark curse that shut down your internal organs slowly added with the cutting curses he took. Cedric had been very reluctant to tell her, but Eileen had demanded to know. Some part of her wished she hadn’t asked, knowing her son had died in excruciating agony hurt worse than his death itself. The boy had returned to the Ministry with the information, with promises to return.

Sirius stood up when Eileen entered the room, swallowing thickly; he knew the woman didn’t like him. She had every right to loathe him. He shouldn’t be here, but Harry was going through agony, he deserved someone here for him - and he was determined it would be him. Not that he was aware of anything right now, he had depleted his magic to almost dangerous levels and it had knocked him out cold while it recuperated. He couldn’t imagine what he was going through; if he lost Remus… it would kill him, so maybe he could imagine what it was like only a little.

“Dobby?” called Sirius, remembering the House-Elf from his previous visits. A frown appeared on his face when nobody came, had he gotten the name wrong? What was the name of the other House-Elf? He was sure it was a flower, Rose! That was it.

“You called?” said Dobby, his large eyes red rimmed as he stared at the guest who had called him.

“Err…could you make some camomile tea?” asked Sirius, feeling extremely awkward, not used to seeing emotional House-Elves. He had grown up with one yes, he’d hated the damn thing, but never once had he seen it crying or emotional - other than angry.

“Tea,” said Eileen, placing the items onto the table before moving over to the cupboard where she kept the alcohol. She couldn’t even muster up the energy to glare at Black for being here like she normally would. Turning back she froze seeing Harry awake and staring at Severus’ things with a tortured look on his face. She shouldn’t have put it there. Eileen moved back towards the sofa, to be beside him, but Harry had already crawled off the soda and towards the table where Severus’ stuff was lying. She was going to have to make sure one of the House-Elves kept an eye on him, stopped him from doing something extremely stupid. Dear Merlin she could only imagine her sons reaction if he caught him doing something so idiotic. Her heart clenched in agony at her own thoughts, as renewed tears ran down her face, she’d thought she was all out of tears by now.

Why Severus? Thought Harry in desperation, anyone else would have been fine by him. Why did they have to take away the person he loved most in the world? When he ended the war it was supposed to be their fresh start, maybe go on holiday again or just brew potions together. Sev wouldn’t get to complete his potion or see if his would be successful. He picked up a velvet green pouch hearing the clinking inside, wiping his tears away futilely as more just replaced them he opened the strings and two rings fell out onto his palm.

They were gorgeous, an ouroboros rings, a snake biting its own tail, a symbol of or eternity. One
had small emerald eyes and the other Smoky Quartz. Harry didn’t even see the beauty, he just squashed them in his fist as he rocked back and forth once more, completely destroyed by finding them. They should have had eternity, he was one of the best duellers out there, and he should have been able to hold his own. He should have survived damn it, he was supposed to live!

“Shhh,” murmured Sirius, kneeling before Harry and bringing the destroyed teenager into his arms. Rocking with him not caring that his robes were getting wet with tears. He may not have been overly fond of Snape, but he would have done anything to bring him back right now - bring him back for Harry.

“Who did it?” choked Harry, his voice cold.

Dobby popped in with the drinks, leaving them at the table usually used for flowers next to the sofa. Right next to Eileen who accepted the cup and poured whiskey into it. It felt the tea lukewarm but she didn’t care as she gulped the brew down. She wasn’t a big drinker; in fact she rarely drank at all. Solely due to the fact her husband had left her with a big distaste for alcohol drinking. She half expected her son to Apparate into the manor and ask them what on earth was going on. Yet he didn’t, he was gone and he would never tell her what to do out of concern, or scold her for one thing or another. She’d never see his black eyes filled with silent concern and love…mothers weren’t supposed to bury their sons. Why had she let them go when she’d known something was going to happen?

“No, Harry, revenge won’t make this better.” said Sirius, tightening his hold.

“WHO DID IT?!?” yelled Harry, fighting against Sirius’ hold angrily.

“I don’t know I don’t know.” said Sirius, repeating the words over and over again keeping a tight grip of him.

“I’ll kill them,” he said harshly, meaning every word, he would find a way to kill them if it was the last thing he did.

“That’s too good for them, let them suffer for the rest of their lives in Azkaban.” vowed Sirius, desperately trying to get Harry off this vengeance route. He should have preferred the anger to the despair but he didn’t, he knew where it led. If Harry did this he would end up in Azkaban, and that was the last thing he wanted. “Eileen needs you, you are all she has left.” using guilt to make Harry stop his thoughts before they had a chance to fester. He felt Harry slump further into him and he knew without further proof that Harry had heard him; he had won for the moment at least.

Eileen plucked a dreamless sleeping potion from her son’s potions bag, and poured some into the tea. There was no way anyone would be getting sleep without it. Black observed what she was doing, and accepted the mug for Harry, as he let go. “Drink it, you need to keep hydrated.”

“I want Severus,” whispered Harry, his hand unclenching showing the rings to Sirius whose heart sank seeing them. How was Harry going to recover from this? Why did it always happen to him? He’d been through enough shit to last him a lifetime without this piled on top.

“I know, Harry,” said Sirius sadly, “I know.” Sirius unclasped his chain, and looped both rings through it before clipping it around Harry’s neck. It had been a gift from Harry’s grandparents, so perhaps it was fitting that it finally went to him. He wished he could say he was surprised by the fact it had been Harry who finally destroyed Voldemort, but he wasn’t. Harry was the most powerful of the twins, the smartest, and the most resourceful.

Of course just wait until he realized the full extent of it.
Sirius lurched forward when the cup slid from Harry’s fingers, as Harry lost the fight to keep his eyes open. Sighing softly, he moved Harry’s hair from his face. He couldn’t stay here forever; he had to get back to the Ministry to give his statement about what happened. Which is probably where the Diggory boy was at the moment. Placing the cup on the table, he lifted Harry into his arms. Looking over he saw that Eileen had passed out as well.

“Dobby?” called Sirius, wishing he didn’t have to call him.

“Yes sir?” replied Dobby answering the call.

“Where does Harry sleep?” asked Sirius, grunting slightly, Harry was heavy after all.

“Follow me, sir.” said Dobby, guiding Sirius towards Harry’s bedroom.

“He can’t sleep here,” said Sirius, wide eyed when he realized belatedly that this wasn’t just Harry’s room but rather a place where both of them had slept. He was better off sleeping somewhere else, where he wouldn’t be met with a constant reminder of what he’d lost - at least for the moment until it sank in.

“Master Harry’s old room?” suggested Dobby, doubling back and opening another door - one more familiar to Sirius since he remembered visiting Harry in here many months ago when he’d been hurt.

“Thank you, and if you could help Eileen as well…I would appreciate it.” it was more of a question than a statement.

“Dobby will look after them both,” said Dobby firmly.

Sirius just nodded as he put Harry into the bed, and pulled the covers up and over him. “I’m sorry, Harry, I’m so sorry.” he whispered thickly before turning and leaving the room, closing the door behind him. At least he would sleep straight through the night. He hated leaving, but at least if he went now, he could be back before they woke up.

A sharp crack surrounded the lobby as he Apparated out of the manor.

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Sirius had barely gotten into the Auror’s office before James approached him looking very concerned. “How is he?” he asked, hoping Sirius would at least answer his question. It had been a sort of silent agreement between them that they’d never bring Harry into any conversation. To begin with it hadn’t been difficult for James…but things had changed since they had gotten their rocky friendship back on track after the attack on the Ministry.

“How do you think he is?” Sirius said, rubbing his hands over his face. The worst of it was James probably had no idea what Snape had meant to Harry - nobody outside his little circle of friends knew. Although he was sure many people had guessed, he was fucking exhausted.

“We screwed up,” muttered James, “So badly.”

Sirius gave him a confused look, “We’ve already established that.” he pointed out, moving towards his desk and slumping down. Not only did he have his own paperwork to write but he had dozens of Auror’s statements as well before signing them and handing it in.

“You don’t know do you?” said James, his face spasming in pain.
Sighing in exasperation, “What? What is it that I don’t know?”

“We were wrong, we made a big mistake that night…” whispered James, shame going all the way to the core of his being.

“Either spit it out or bugger off and let me do this!” snapped Sirius, extremely agitated. He wanted to get back to Harry before he woke up. Seeing the stunned look on James face, he groaned, he’d always had a bad temper - he blamed his mother. “Look I’m sorry I just want to get back to Harry.”

“Just read my report,” stated James, handing it over, “Hand it in when you are done; I have something I need to do.” First he had to get Nick and Lily, who had also been giving their own reports, he wasn’t sure whether they’d stayed or not - but if they were anywhere they would be in the cafeteria where everyone had been directed to go after giving their statements well with the exception of the Auror’s.

Sirius accepted the report…wondering if he had entered the twilight zone. James was going on about messing up badly…yet it had something to do with what had happened this afternoon? Glancing at the time, he noticed it was already dinner time, three hours had already gone by since it started…it was beyond comprehension. The only way he knew the time was right was the grumbling of his stomach, but Sirius didn’t think he could handle anything right now.

Leafing through the paperwork, he stopped when he got to James’ and began reading. He understood why James said it just a few minutes in, his jaw was unhinged as he stared at the written statement of what Voldemort had said. It had been Harry all along, unsurprisingly he wasn’t overwhelmed by the fact Harry was the Boy-Who-Lived as he ought to have been. He had suspected it a few times; he’d talked himself out of it like an idiot of course, what would they have done if Harry hadn’t had Eileen and Severus? He certainly hadn’t had a family…he could have gone down a dark road and they would have all lost. How could Lily have made such a stupid fucking mistake? Why hadn’t she just told them she was unconscious because of a stunning spell? Why say Nick was the one who survived? He didn’t understand it…had she favored Nick over Harry even before that night? No, no, she had adored both boys, he was absolutely sure of it. What had he known? He hadn’t realized half of what James and Lily put Harry though since he was always gone - searching for Pettigrew to give his friends peace of mind. They weren’t solely to blame though, since he too had ignored him practically.

Why hadn’t Harry told him? Had he even known? Yes, he realized as he read further, Harry had said he’d always known. Did that mean Harry still didn’t trust him? Had Snape and Eileen known? Considering the spells Harry had used he would say definitely. Harry had destroyed Voldemort for them and lost the most important person in his life, it wasn’t right, closing his eyes he breathed harshly through his nose - Harry was right, it wasn’t fair.

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James entered the cafeteria, and found it heaving with people; most of them were sitting but a great deal were standing. Many of them were actually Order members, who had joined the battle after his warning, he assumed Shacklebolt had alerted the Aurors immediately so the Order wasn’t alone in trying to help win what was now being termed the Last Battle.

“Can we go now?” shouted a voice James couldn’t identify.

“I’m sorry but you’ll need to wait a while longer, Head Auror Moody will be down shortly and he can tell you more than I can.” James said loudly, so everyone could hear him.

“DAD!” yelled Nick, waving his hand as he stood on his chair so his dad could see him.
“Why are we being kept waiting?” demanded the security guard from St. Mungo’s.

“Many Aurors were hurt and killed during the battle, we do not have the resources to track everyone down - we would rather it was dealt with now so you can go home and not be bothered by us again - its better this way while its fresh on everyone’s memory.” said James softly, no doubt he wanted to get to his family and reassure them that he was alright. “Just have a little patience; I’m sure you’ll be able to head home soon.”

The security guard had the decency to look embarrassed as he nodded his head reluctantly.

James was then able to get through the crowd of people, grunting painfully as Nick tackled him giving him a hug. James returned the hug, relieved that his family had made it through still alive. “Have you seen your mother?” he asked Nick as he let go. Looking around for a familiar red head, but he couldn’t spot her - but that didn’t mean she wasn’t there.

“She’s at the toilet,” said Nick, “She’s really away with it dad, she’s still insisting HE isn’t gone because I wasn’t the one to kill him. That he would be back for them because Harry was desperate for ‘fame’ there’s something wrong with her isn’t there?” his eyes shadowed with sadness.

“Yes,” agreed James, perhaps she should be in St. Mungo’s full time for a while. She was becoming increasingly deluded and quite frankly he was worried about what she would do to herself or those around her - especially Harry who seemed to be the subject of her hatred. If anyone could help her, it was St. Mungo’s, it would mean he would need to stay married to her because once they divorced he wouldn’t have any say. Maybe she would snap out of it quickly, they were all in a state of suspended disbelief, but he wasn’t going around telling their son that Voldemort would be back.

“Ah, James, finally, we need to talk,” said Albus, his blue eyes glimmering as if he was suppressing tears.

“About?” enquired James, but he already had a feeling he knew what it was about, he slid himself and his son into the booth - taking the weight off his feet.

“Was Voldemort telling the truth?” asked Dumbledore sadly. It explained why Severus was so adamant about not training Nick. The wizard he thought of as a son had known all along, and hadn’t trusted him with the information. That hurt very profoundly, but not as painful as the fact that he was taken from them so young. Thirty eight years old, he should have had his entire life ahead of him. He wanted badly to say goodbye to him, to send flowers but he knew they wouldn’t be received well. Eileen hated the fact that he had asked Severus to spy, he hated himself, and perhaps Severus wouldn’t have died if it hadn’t been the case. They would never know now, he just had to summon up his courage to visit Prince Manor - he had to do it even if Eileen wasn’t happy.

“Yes,” sighed James, “I found Harry’s teddy unicorn by the crib where it happened, last night when I visited. I was too tired to think straight, and I didn’t think anything of it at the time. Harry must remember that night…”

“It’s not true,” said Lily, having heard James statement as she returned. “I was there, I saw everything!”

“You were not unconscious?” demanded Nick, remembering Voldemort’s words that he had stunned his mum.

“He stunned me, yes,” she admitted, “But I still saw everything.”
“You can’t see anything while stunned.” stated Albus in feigned calmness. It was the petrifying charm you were aware of everything happening around you. The stunning spell was exactly that, it stunned you, rendered you in an unconscious state. His heart sank, he should have insisted to Lily and James that both boys go to the hospital and get examined but he hadn’t had a reason to disbelieve Lily. Why would he? Especially with something obviously as important as her children?

“It was Nick!” cried Lily, “It’s all wrong!”

“I’m afraid you were wrong, Lily,” said Albus tiredly, he had spent years training the wrong child to defeat Voldemort. He thanked Merlin Severus had had the forethought to train Harry… otherwise their world would have perished in fire and flames. The horror of what could have happened almost crippled him; he had alienated everyone for what? Absolutely nothing.

“I was NOT!” she hissed, her eyes wide with indignation.

“Nick…may I see the memory?” asked Albus, being straightforward and honest. “It may be slightly disconcerting since I will be going quite far back?”

Nick gulped loudly, “But that will mean I will see it…” he said worriedly.

“Yes, yes it will, only if you wish to.” said Albus; he had to know the truth once and for all.

“No! He’s been through enough,” denied Lily.

“Alright,” agreed Nick, knowing his brother was right, he was the Boy-Who-Lived. Harry never lied; never in all the years had he said anything that wasn’t true.

“Not here,” said James insistently.

“James!” cried Lily, glaring at her husband, but once Albus viewed the memory he would know for sure that she was telling the truth. Nick was the hero, and because of the boy Voldemort would be back.

“Enough, Lily.” said James coolly.

“Here, this Portkey will take us back.” said James, pulling out a Portkey he’d made when he was in his office. He shouldn’t be leaving yet, but he’d already done everything that was needed. If he was told to come back in then he would, but he was hoping it wasn’t necessary.

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“Keep relaxed and open, allow me to enter,” instructed Albus, as he penetrated Nick’s mind, paying no heed to any of the memories that passed him by. He only wanted one memory, one that he already knew in his heart was wrong from the image he had possessed for the past sixteen years. He went slow as not to cause any mental pain to Nick, knowing that the boy would automatically erect his mental shields and throw him out causing both of them headaches they wouldn’t get rid of anytime soon. The family got younger in each memory until Roxy wasn’t in them and the twins were just toddlers. It was coming up to the memory, he realized, slowing down so he didn’t end up accidentally skipping it.

Not much longer, the memory began to play out in slow motion backwards, the fact that he could see the confrontation told Albus everything he already suspected and knew. It had not been Nick that had defeated Voldemort at the age of one; it had in fact been his twin brother. He absently noticed the unicorn James had been talking about earlier, Lily was on the floor face down, stunned by a ‘Stupefy’. She woke up, begged for her children’s life before the exploding door went back to
its normal shape - that was how Nick had been hurt he realized at the phantom pain that disappeared. The door exploding had caused the scar; he had been such a fool. The last thing he saw was Harry reaching for his twin; hand in the air when they first heard the screaming.

It must have touched a nerve in Nick as he let out a sob of despair and bolted from the living room.

“Nick!” called James getting up concerned.

“Let him go, he is feeling very fragile right now,” said Albus, stopping James from following.

“Well?” said Lily, sitting there so sure of herself.

“It is as I feared, it wasn’t Nick that defeated Voldemort - it was Harry I saw it with my own eyes.” replied Albus calmly, preparing himself for her denial.

“He was next to Nick’s crib!” said Lily, as if Dumbledore’s memory wasn’t enough for her.

“Enough!” roared Albus, causing James to whip around to stare at him in surprise. “Severus died today and you haven’t even shown the slightest bit of sadness - he was the only friend you’ve had in your life.”

“Why would I care? We haven’t been friends since I was fifteen years old!” said Lily. She had plenty of friends, she used to visit Alice all the time, and Amelia and…Molly and…she couldn’t think of anyone else off the top of her head.

“He was the reason you even knew Voldemort was after you. If it wasn’t for Severus putting his life on the line to tell me you would have all died sixteen years ago. Then he proceeded to put his life on the line by spying for me, but his main concern had always been keeping you safe.” snapped Albus, revealing something he had promised Severus he never would. Yet he couldn’t take it, her nonchalance at what had happened, the fact she hadn’t shed a single tear even for old time sakes.

James and Lily both sat there stunned, for obvious different reasons.

Albus didn’t stick around to see the looks on their faces; he finished his diatribe before Apparating out.

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Harry stirred his green eyes opening, looking around his old room tears immediately springing to his eyes. He weakly got to his feet, and opened the bedroom door and made his way to his bedroom - his and Severus’. It was dark outside, he didn’t care though as he slipped into the room. Crawling into the bed he’d shared with Severus, he curled himself up in a ball, grasping Sev’s pillow closely. He was never going to leave this bed, not now, not ever. He didn’t want to go outside, didn’t want to see anyone, he just wanted his Severus back.

Clasping a hold of the rings, wishing for a miracle he knew would never come. His eyes soon closed on their own violation as sleep claimed him once again his exhausted and still injured body recovering. He slept through the explosion of people finding out the truth about whom and what he was. Instead of celebrations and parties being thrown like last time, there was a respectful mournful silence descending on the magical world as they prayed for the people who had lost loved ones and those souls that had passed on.

Even back at Hogwarts the students were asked to observe a few minutes of silence. Minerva, Filius, Pomona and Horace were all devastated by the loss of a talented young man who they had
taught and worked alongside (with the exception of Horace) for many years. Some of the students however, were less saddened by the entire affair - Severus Snape had been a harsh taskmaster after all.

Unbeknown to all, something was about to be discovered that would change everything…and renew Harry’s determination.
Chapter 90

Invisible

Chapter 90

Concerns

Every surface of Prince Manor was covered in flowers and cards that had been showing up from everyone Severus knew. Including those that had known him from abroad, his friends in the Potions community. It was hard to believe that five days had already gone by, to the very hour ironically enough since it was two o'clock in the afternoon. Eileen hadn't really had a moment to herself unless it was late at night. Even then she spent it with Harry, trying to get him to sleep, but he wasn't having any of it. He wasn't sleeping, eating, talking he was just laying there practically comatose with his two snakes. Even his friends weren't able to get through to him; he would come out of it on his own. It was difficult keeping it together, but she had to, for Harry's sake, it's what her son would have wanted.

Eileen's shaky hands looked through all the pictures she had of Severus, bringing forth the memories behind them feeling her heart breaking all over again. To most people Severus hadn't been a good looking child, but to her, he'd been handsome, classically handsome. She hadn't been surprised when he took after her, he had received many traits from the Prince family and not just magical ones either. There was one she really liked and decided to use, the picture of Severus and Harry up on stage receiving their Order of Merlin's. Severus even had a small smile on his face and his eyes were twinkling in a way that hadn't been familiar until Harry had confessed his feelings.

He must have been about to propose after the battle, Severus hadn't even told her about his decision. Not that he needed to since he had been the heir to the estate. If she had been the matriarch then it would have been different, although the world wasn't the same anymore. Old traditions weren't being observed as they used to be, a soft sigh left her lips, her son was gone, the Prince line was officially ended - not that she cared. She would have taken her son back in a seconds notice - Prince Line or not. Even after five days she was still looking up expecting to see her son, with his calm presence but no.

She took solace in the fact those that had harmed her son were now dead, Nott Senior, Gibbon and Travers, two of the three were killed by her son before he fell and the third had been killed by Auror Alastor 'Mad-Eye' Moody. At least Harry wouldn't try anything silly; she had Dobby watching him day and night just in case he did anything. All Harry did though was lie there and hiss at the snakes occasionally. There weren't many Death Eaters left alive, the Auror's hadn't been willing to take chances and had fired killing curses mostly, as they were allowed there wouldn't be consequences.

"Luna…what should we do? This isn't normal…maybe we should convince him to go to St. Mungo's?" questioned Neville, as they left Harry's bedroom. He was carrying a tray of half empty food; the other half had been consumed only to be sick back up a few minutes later. He knew the feeling of wanting to be sick all the time, especially after what happened to his parents…but he hadn't actually puked. "Will he get better?" he asked heartbroken for his friend. Snape had scared him when he was in first year, although Snape had mostly targeted Nick Potter. Probably due to the exploding potions, but his partner had quickly figured out he was bad and made sure he didn't explode too many. Reese had pretty much ignored everyone other than Nick in a reversal of roles;
a lot of people had actually gotten hurt when he was Potions professor. Slughorn was much better and nicer than Reese. He had gotten less terrified of Snape over the years… and he was saddened he was gone, and devastated for Harry.

Luna stopped suddenly, her eyes glazing over as she was hit with a vision with intensity she hadn't experienced before. Gasing softly, she closed her eyes and opened them again. So many conflicting futures, how was she supposed to make sense of this? What was happening to cause it? Oh, of course, how could the future be so much brighter… so much better off if one man hadn't died? Why hadn't she seen this before? It made no sense… but it was rare for anything to make sense about the rhyme and reason behind her seer abilities.

"Let's get you sitting down," said Neville guiding his fiancée to the living room, and getting her sat down. The tray now floating behind him instead of being carried in his hands. "What did you see?"

"I'm not sure, it doesn't make sense," admitted Luna, but his comment of St. Mungo's had triggered it so perhaps the answers lay there. Luna turned to Eileen, what she must be going through, she understood a little, she had lost her mother as a young child. "They looked so happy didn't they?" she said seeing the picture in Eileen's lap.

"He was," she said quietly, she knew about Luna's special gift, had done for a long time. Harry always spoke so fondly of Luna; she was his first real friend. Which meant she knew a great deal about the blonde haired girl, for the longest time she had been the only one Harry had to confide in. She was glad they were sticking with him through this; he needed them more than ever. They all had been round these past five days, Viktor and Lukas, Gary and Fleur, Cedric and of course Neville and Luna - Dumbledore had left them leave the school but considering they were seventeen they could come and go. As long as their Head of House knew where they were.

"I'm so sorry, Eileen!" said Luna, reaching out and hugging the frail older woman, she was being so strong for Harry but she didn't have anyone it wasn't fair. Luna tightened her hold when she felt her break down, Neville awkwardly stood back and sat down he never knew what to say when things like this happened. Luna was amazing, she never had an occasion where she didn't know what to say or do.

"How long has it been since Harry ate?" asked Neville after a few moments of silence.

"Breakfast, five days ago," whispered Eileen, rubbing at her eyes, horrified that she'd come apart, they were children themselves the last thing they needed was her being emotional. Although what couldn't be denied was the relief that she wasn't alone, she didn't need to be strong twenty-four hours a day. Even the potions she put into the food weren't helping, he either full out refused to eat and when she resorted to begging he would reluctantly eat something only to sick it back up.

"He does look like he's lost a lot of weight," said Luna, "I think it's best if we take him to St. Mungo's." finally agreeing with Neville now that she knew how long it had been since Harry had eaten. Hopefully they would be able to give him something, she did find it ironic that they were going to St. Mungo's for potions when Harry was a Potions Master but it couldn't be helped. Before the funeral, would probably be best, it was being held in the Prince Private cemetery, which she hadn't even known about. It would keep the public away, which is a very good thing - Harry wouldn't want anyone to see him.

"He won't get out of bed," sighed Eileen, she knew how he felt, she didn't want to get out of bed either, but she had to arrange her sons funeral - it was the last thing she could do for him - other than taking care of Harry.

"Then we get a healer to come to Harry," said Luna grimly. "Can you go to St. Mungo's and ask for
Healer Andy Walsh, she knows Harry and his medical history."

"Me?" cried Neville in surprise.

"Please," begged Luna.

"Why not Floo?" asked Neville taken aback.

"I don't know her office address," explained Luna.

"Alright, I'll try my best," said Neville, giving Luna a look that said if Harry cursed him for bringing a healer, she would be sleeping on her own until well after graduation.

"Thank you," she said sweetly. She turned to Eileen and asked "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"I'll be fine," said Eileen strongly.

"I can see where he got his strength from," Luna said. You would be surprised by the amount of people who just wanted to talk about loved ones but everyone avoided it like the plague. She had wanted to talk about her mum, but her dad had avoided the subject as if he was terrified of causing her pain. "He was a lot like you."

Eileen gave her a pained smile as she nodded, knowing it was true, Severus had been a lot like her.

"Have you been eating?" Luna asked rubbing Eileen's back in comfort. She hadn't seen her eating much, but she wasn't there twenty-four hours a day. She wished she could be but the only reason she could come now was because it was the weekend. Graduation was coming, they really should be studying but friends meant more than exams.

"Yes," agreed Eileen, rubbing at her tired eyes, she didn't know what she would have done with Harry's friends, not only for being there for Harry but her too.

Luna wasn't sure what St. Mungo's could give him if the potions Harry himself had brewed weren't working. So much talent would be wasted; Harry had no intention of brewing potions again. That she had picked up in the vision, along with what Severus and Harry could have done together in future. That was the part she didn't understand, why would that have shown up? She didn't normally see what could have been, only what had been, what was, what could come to pass. Never what COULDN'T come to pass.

"Where is he?" asked Andy, despite it being a home visit she was being professional.

"Follow me," murmured Eileen, standing up it was only proper that she show her to Harry, plus she wanted to know everything the woman said. She had to know so she was best able to take care of Harry.

"I'm so sorry for your loss," she said, breaking her façade for a moment to give her genuine heartfelt condolences to the woman. She had liked Severus, he was professional, had created very useful potions, been one of the best potion brewers in the world. He'd also had a very legendary temper and sarcastic nature that she herself found hilarious.

"Thank you," said Eileen timorously.

The first thing Andy noticed about the young man was that Harry was so different; he usually had an air of self confidence around him. Even when he'd been injured he had been full of life, although
he had never complained its one of the things she'd noticed nearly right away. He was the complete opposite from the boy she'd had a meeting with just five days ago. She had watched the battle happen useless to help since the entire hospital had been locked down. They had prepared for Voldemort attacking St. Mungo's thanks to Neville Longbottom. She hadn't been able to help them, but she could help Harry, he may need cheering potions for a while.

"Hello, Harry," said Andy, stepping into the room, observing the lacklustre seventeen-year-old solemnly. Moving towards him, not surprised by the lack of greeting. "I hear you've not been able to keep anything down?"

"Nothing," said Eileen, sitting on the chair across from the healer and Harry.

"Is he vomiting blood?" she asked Eileen.

"Not that I'm aware of," Eileen told her.

Andy nodded her head in understanding, "I'm going to run a diagnosis charm on you, Harry, just to make sure there's nothing wrong." she told Harry, it could be an ulcer, with his recent stress it wouldn't surprise her the slightest. She was once again met with silence, so she quickly began running a complete diagnosis, instead of just a basic one, she wanted to be sure nothing was wrong.

Neville and Luna stood at the back of the room, watching everything just as concerned as Eileen. Neville had been so shocked when he read the newspaper, unable to believe that Harry was the Boy-Who-Lived all along. How could Lily Potter have made such a big mistake? They'd treated Harry like shit and he'd been the one all along. One look at Luna's face he realized she had known, but he hadn't been annoyed with her. She saw a lot that she didn't tell him about, and he honestly didn't want to know…most of the time. He wouldn't have been able to keep quiet if he had known the truth. The injustice against his friend would have caused him to explode, and flout the truth upon the world. Not something Harry would have thanked him for he was sure.

Andy read the results, looking shocked causing everyone there to tense waiting for the bad news… had he been cursed with something they didn't know about during the battle? Had Harry managed to do something drastic? Their hearts were pounding wildly in their chests as she performed another diagnosis as if she wanted to double check the results. The paper came out of her wand and she immediately dived into the information once more.

"This isn't possible," she said completely stunned. Removing the covers from Harry, she began to inspect his stomach explaining what she was doing. There was nothing to indicate what she was reading on those results.

"What's going on?" demanded Eileen, sounding like her son - impatient and worried. She couldn't lose Harry, she'd already lost one son she refused to lose another - Merlin be damned she wasn't going to outlive both of them. Losing Severus had nearly killed her, if it wasn't for Harry it would have.

"I'm not sure," she said, grabbing her bag from the floor she opened it and removed a syringe and drew some of Harry's blood. Dipping back into her bag she removed a blue (runes) piece of parchment and pushed the plunger down allowing the blood to spread across the paper. Instead of flowing everywhere it sank into it, glowing brightly. The results were the same and this way did not lie, the blood did not lie.

"Dear Merlin!" she cried, shaking her head as if she could change the results in front of her.

"What's going on?" Eileen said, her mouth over her hand, truly fearing the worst.
"He…he…he…he's pregnant," she stuttered the words leaving her mouth feeling foreign and baffled to the core.

"What?" cried everyone else in unison.

"But my son," choked Eileen, "He didn't get a chance to complete it."

"Complete it?" gasped Welsh, "Do you mean to say they were creating a potion that would enable men to get pregnant?" this would change everything…all the medical world had ever known.

"He was," admitted Eileen, a lone tear running down her face.

"If it wasn't completed…how did Harry…?" asked Luna, stepping forward, a shiver going down her spine. This moment was important, she didn't know why or how - but something was going to change. Why wasn't she getting a vision? Was her gift expanding or changing that she could feel something like this? Or was she over reacting to the news? No, she definitely wasn't, maybe something hadn't happened yet to coalesce and reveal a vision.

"The changes occurred the day of his accident," said Andy, realizing why the date was so familiar.

"But…he's a man…how will he…where will it…" stuttered Neville agog.

"I would need to run a scan…" said Andy, Harry hadn't removed his hand from his stomach as he stared at it as if he couldn't believe it. "I mean this is…unprecedented." she was in uncharted territory, and the healer in her was very excited by the prospect, he was two months pregnant according to the results. If it had survived thus far, then it was possible it could survive to full term…the prospect was baffling.

"You mean there really is a child…" said Eileen, breathing heavily, her son would never know…would never hold his child…she was a grandmother, this wasn't the way she had envisioned things at all.

"Harry, may I run a scan?" asked Andy, wondering if the young man would answer this time.

Harry did answer, nodding his head numbly. He felt as though he was having the weirdest dream of his life, but the fact he could feel pain when he pinched himself proved he was very much awake. A baby? He couldn't have a baby by himself, couldn't raise one alone…panic quickly set in, terrifying him to the core. Then a small blurry image showed above his stomach, very blurry. It looked like a blob in the middle.

"Scan's are not normally this blurry, I cannot see it properly," she frowned, but from the results the foetus was healthy.

Harry looked up for the first time, tears running down his face; he couldn't do this without Severus. He should be here for this; somehow someway the unicorn blood had given him the greatest gift he could have ever received. Breathing deeply, he clenched his jaw…he had to find a way to bring Severus back…he only had two days…two days to accomplish it. There wasn't a second to waste, he didn't care what he had to do - defy magic itself he would do it. Batting the hand aside, he got up for the first time in days and hobbled away from the room.

"Harry…wait you need to eat…you need to keep yourself healthy." called Andy.

"I trust that you will keep this under wraps?" said Eileen, standing up.

"Of course…but I need to run more tests." protested Andy.
"I know, and you will once Harry's had a chance to come to terms with this," promised Eileen.

"He's just lost the man he loves and the father of his unborn child," said Neville grimly. "He's going through a difficult time right now."

"I understand that," said Andy, "Alright, I'll come back in a week if that is preferable?"

"Excuse me," said Luna, following Harry out of the room, and into the library.

"Will you help me?" he asked his tone vulnerable and pleading. He didn't even need to specify, he knew Luna would understand him in ways that nobody else could - with the possible exception of Neville.

Luna swallowed the lump in her throat, "Harry…nothing can bring him back, and magic doesn't work that way, if he did come back he wouldn't be the same man."

"There has to be a way!" snapped Harry, his fingers trailing over the spines of the books. "I'll figure it out, I just have to."

Neville entered the library, watching Harry closely, wondering what was going on.

"There has to be, there just has to be…do you see any way Luna?" choked Harry, one hand remaining on his stomach. Begging her like he hadn't before, to use her gift to see if there was a way for Harry to get back the man he loved.

"I've never tried to…" protested Luna, wide eyed.

"Please," begged Harry, his finger brushing against a book causing Luna to gasp, Harry immediately stopped staring at Luna in guilt and hope. He shouldn't be doing this to her, but he just wanted Severus back. He was desperate, perhaps deluded as well, but he had to try at the very least.

"There is a way," said Luna, "But where there's death…there's always death." she added causing a shiver to go down Neville and Harry's spine in the way she spoke.

Harry gulped, "What does that mean?" asked Harry, would he have to die to save Severus?

"The chance of this working is less than five percent," Luna told them.

"There's a chance?" croaked Harry wide eyed, he'd gone from desperate to hopeful in the space of a second. He could have his Severus back? He didn't care how small the chance was he had to take it, he loved Severus more than his own life. "What is it?" a spell? A potion?

"Not a what…you've already thought about it but most was destroyed when the Ministry was attacked. There are only three left in existence now…and they are very closely guarded. Only two people could get it without setting off every alarm in the Ministry, Scrimgeour and Moody, and only a handful of Aurors even know where they are." said Luna.

"A time-turner," breathed Harry, his mind mentally calculating just how long he would need to twist the dial for…one hundred and twenty times that wasn't including how much longer it took to get it.

Luna nodded solemnly.
Harry blinked open his sleepy eyes, his hands automatically moving to the other side of the bed before he realized there would never be a warm body there again. No, thought Harry firmly, he had to make it right, he had to bring Severus back to him, and he couldn’t raise a child alone. Sitting up, his hand cupped his stomach unable to believe it. He’d cast the spell to show him the baby a dozen times last night and just stared. Viktor had stopped by last night again as well, this time without Lukas who had been working that night, he loved being a healer. He hadn’t dared to tell Viktor what he was planning; it was risky enough that Neville and Luna knew. They could get into serious trouble, and he didn’t want that. He’d spent hours after Viktor left, reading a book on time-travel. Just reading it made his head spin, there was so many theory’s for a magical world that could go back in time they really should have had more than just assumptions.

Luna had said ‘where there’s death- there’s always death’ he was beginning to assume it meant him. He would die in the process, but considering there couldn’t be two of the same person it would work out. Severus would live, and his other self would never know the agony of losing the person he loved more than anything else in the world. The baby would be fine, in his other self too, but could he take that risk? Sev would kill him himself if things didn’t work out right - but he would never know, nobody would really. His body would disappear probably, magic covering its tracks. He wished he had solid proof, sighing in sadness; he picked up the book again, flipping through it without really seeing the words. So many theories, what if he really screwed things up? Killed them all? A shudder wracked his frame.

Every action had its own risks, his was just a little bit more risky, closing his eyes feeling tears once again building up inside. He was breaking every law in the magical world, but he had to, he couldn’t live without Sev. He felt so empty without him, so lost; nothing could put him back together. Brewing had always been his passion, though all the turbulent times, yet the thought of brewing was repugnant to him. He didn’t want to do anything never mind brew potions, Sev was his everything, and he had to do this, no matter the consequences. He had to be strong, even if it all went wrong.

It was six o’clock; Eileen wouldn’t be up for a few more hours…maybe he could have it worked out by then. Sliding from the bed, he opened the cupboard door and closed his eyes his heart twisting viciously, he could smell Sev everywhere. Forcing himself not to think about it, he would see him alive again even if it was the last thing he did. Swallowing the lump in his throat, he grabbed his clothes and slammed the cupboard door closed hastily. It probably would be the last thing he did.

He was really about to do this, thought Harry a feeling of hope and disbelief consuming him as he dressed. He really shouldn’t get his hopes up, since he had no idea where to find the time-turners. He could only hope that Sirius knew where they were, since he doubted he could get that information from either Scrimgeour or Moody. He might have had a chance with Shacklebolt, praying to Merlin he begged for things to go right - just for once in his life.

Fully dressed, wand on his wrist he Apparated out of Prince Manor to Grimmauld Place.
Remus’ ears caught the sound of Apparation, causing him to stand up and move out of the kitchen where he had been sitting drinking coffee. Ever since the battle had happened he hadn’t been sleeping much. Sirius was lucky; he was able to sleep for more than a few hours at a time. Probably because he was working his arse off capturing the remaining Death Eaters who had escaped after the battle. Which consisted of three or four Death Eaters, the most dangerous ones were behind bars, like the Carrows, Malfoy, and the Lestranges of course they had always been locked up.

“Harry,” breathed Remus, staring at the teenager stunned, his mind frozen. He honestly didn’t know what to do or say, he had been lucky in the war - he hadn’t lost anyone particularly close to him. Sure Order members had perished, but he hadn’t been close with them, the only people who really knew him were James and Sirius, Pettigrew too in his childhood but he’d felt nothing but vindictiveness when he died. Kicking himself into gear seeing the trembling teenager, he rushed forward and hugged him tightly before he lost his nerve. He had always felt as though Harry merely tolerated him since he was with Sirius. He couldn’t blame him for that, what he’d done was despicable. “I’m so sorry,” he murmured, he and Severus hadn’t gotten on at all, but they’d come together in the end to bring Voldemort down. Remus closed his eyes when Harry’s trembling grew worse, maybe he shouldn’t have said it - maybe he was trying to get away from the useless words - sorry wasn’t going to bring Severus Snape back after all.

“Come on, lets sit down,” he said, urging the teenager to take a seat, worried that his legs would buck any given moment. He looked as though he was losing weight at an alarming pace. Turning he began to make coffee and some biscuits, anything to keep himself busy while he sorted out his thoughts. He so badly wanted to ask Harry why he’d kept the fact he was the Boy-Who-Lived a secret - and not told someone, anyone really. His life could have turned out so differently…but could Nick have handled what Harry had? A disgusting sneaky thought entered his mind. It was true, could Nick have handled the situation at a young age if Harry had told them and they believed him? No, there was simply no way Nick could have handled what he could now. Something had caused Nick a lot of emotional upheaval, James didn’t know and he said only Dumbledore did.

“Here, drink, eat,” said Remus, passing an entire plate at him.

“Where’s Sirius?” asked Harry, his voice oddly enough tinged with desperation.

“He’s in the shower,” explained Remus, feeling hurt that Harry wasn’t here to speak to him but not surprised. Who would have thought Sirius was the calm presence someone wanted? “He’ll be out in a few minutes.”

Harry merely nodded before reluctantly picking up one of the biscuits and began eating even as it made his stomach hurt and him feel sick. He was trembling with nerves, anticipation and rekindled hope. He really hoped Sirius knew where they were, he was his only hope he didn’t know any other Aurors who would be willing to tell him. Harry could only stomach half the biscuit before he put it down in disgust. He felt as though he had a million butterflies flapping around in his stomach.

“How are you feeling?” asked Remus quietly, staring at him with sadness.

Harry looked up at him slowly, staring at him blankly, why did people keep asking him that when they knew he was far from alright? He didn’t grace him with an answer, just looked back down at the mug, wishing Sirius would hurry up. Each minute that went by was being wasted.

“Remus we really need to get that damn water heater fixed, it went cold on me…” Sirius stopped talking as he walked in and saw Harry sitting there, his earlier thoughts and irritation left him. “Harry!” he was surprised to see him up and about, he hadn’t even left the bed in five days, not even to brush his teeth, he as getting better, slowly it seemed but better nonetheless.
“Can I talk to you?” asked Harry his voice soft and lost.

“Of course you can, you know that.” said Sirius, immediately.

“I’ll just…leave you to it,” said Remus, standing up and leaving the kitchen to let them talk.

“Alright, Harry, what is it?” asked Sirius, sitting down giving Harry a pointed look. He wasn’t stupid, Harry wanted something, he certainly hadn’t come here to talk - he’d tried that for five days to no success.

“I need your help,” admitted Harry, unsurely.

“Okay, with what?” enquired Sirius, his blue eyes boring into Harry’s head.

“I need to know if you know where the time-turners are kept.” Harry admitted awkwardly.

“What?!” yelped Sirius, “Harry come on, you can’t do that, promise me you won’t do something stupid!” grasping his shoulders and holding them tightly. Trying to get Harry to see how daft he was being.

“I’m not being stupid, I’ll do it with or without your help, but I will have a better chance of succeeding if you do help.” said Harry, feeling ashamed that he was using Sirius like that but he didn’t care about anything other than Severus.

“You are going to get yourself into deep shit!” snapped Sirius; “You have a bright future ahead of you, Harry, please think about this.” he was hurting that Harry was hurting so badly that he wanted to do this.

“I need to do it, I need Severus.” said Harry, choking out the words, saying them for the first time since he died.

“I know you do, but Harry…you aren’t the only person that’s lost a loved one, this war…has taken so many of us, I lost six friends from the Auror department that night.” consoled Sirius, people who had trained under him.

“You don’t know…I really need him,” argued Harry, he needed him so much.

Sirius sighed, kneeling down beside him properly, “I know you feel like that right now, but you will love again…I know it seems like you won’t but you will.”

“I’m pregnant,” croaked Harry.

Sirius gave a bark of laughter, “That might have worked if you were a woman.” he pointed out dryly, thinking Harry was joking with him. Although this wasn’t really the time or the place for jokes.

Biting his lip, Harry used the spell he’d been using all night to see for himself that it real and not some absurd dream. Sirius’ breathing hitched when he saw for himself that Harry was telling the truth. Disbelief thrummed through him, what the fucking hell was going on? This wasn’t possible….men didn’t get bloody pregnant…the only males that got pregnant were some animals, if he remembered right. “What did you do?” asked Sirius, assuming that they had done something to Harry to accomplish it.

“The changes happened when I got unicorn blood in my…system.” said Harry weakly; he’d been pregnant the entire time Sev was trying to come up with a way for men to conceive. The irony
amused him each and every time he thought about it, a dark morose humour of course.

“I’m going to assume he didn’t know?” sighed Sirius, rubbing his eyes tiredly. There was no way in this world Snape would have let Harry fight if he had been pregnant. Bloody hell, this was really happening, his godson was bloody pregnant at seventeen the first man in the history of the world to get bloody pregnant. Yes, shit had just gotten complicated and fast.

“No,” sniffled Harry, trying to prevent the flow of tears but unable to do so. “Will you help me?” begged Harry. The spell showing the budding pregnancy dissipated on its own.

“Even if I want to help you, Harry, I don’t know where they are.” admitted Sirius sadly, “I’m sorry.” did his godson even realize he would need turn the damn thing over one hundred times? He didn’t even know if such a thing was possible.

Harry slumped in defeat, grief overwhelming him again.

“But I know someone that does, you do too.” said Sirius, wondering what on earth he was doing? He didn’t want Harry to do this so why was he bloody helping him? Oh yes, because he knew Harry really would continue to do it - and get himself into trouble as well. If this all went south and Harry told them he helped he wouldn’t just lose his job he’d end up in bloody Azkaban for aiding and abetting.

“Who?” asked Harry desperately, staring at Sirius with wide green eyes.

“Your dad,” stated Sirius simply.

Harry grimaced, well he doubted James would help him…but if there was a chance…surely he owed it to Sev to take it? Owed it to himself too? Was he really considering going back to Potter Manor? Merlin be damned, he hadn’t set foot in that house in years, six years to be exact. He had sworn to himself he would never go back either, closing his eyes he gathered his dregs of determination and hope refusing to let go of it. If James wouldn’t help him then he would just Obliviate him then go and search the Ministry of Magic for it - he didn’t care how long it took, he had to believe in himself. He would do anything for Severus, absolutely anything. He had saved his life, gave him hope, faith in people, love, a chance to love and be loved, and most important...had given him something he hadn’t dared to hope - a family.

“Harry…he will help you, go to him,” said Sirius, being honest.

Breathing out he nodded his head, he would do it, and he was desperate enough at any rate.

“Just be careful, you cannot be seen by yourself,” warned Sirius firmly.

“I’ll be using the invisibility cloak,” confessed Harry, he would be getting it as soon as possible.

“Good,” said Sirius, standing up, he brought Harry’s face to look up at him solemnly, “I love you, Harry, and I would do anything for you, but even I cannot get you out of Azkaban. I know you are desperate to have Sn--Severus back, but going in half cocked will not work. Think it through properly, plan everything first, so you don’t panic and do something you might later regret.” kissing his forehead, he hugged the pregnant seventeen years old his mind utterly blown. He almost wanted to see Snape’s face when he learned about it, just for the sake of amusement - he imagined the wizard fainting. He should be doing everything to discourage Harry, but in hearts of hearts...he knew he would want to do the same thing if anything had happened to Remus. Although he wasn't sure he would have had the guts or forethought to actually do what Harry was. He had learned long ago that Harry was brilliant at planning ahead, research and a level headedness. It
hadn't been more obvious when the shock of knowing Voldemort had made numerous Horcruxes, he'd been calm as you please, already planning the where and when.

Sirius watched as his godson Apparated away, shaking his head as if he could somehow clear it up, gazing unseen out of the window to the small backyard that was mostly just cement. With a few patches of grass growing out in various locations. He rarely paid any attention to the garden, even as a kid there was just not much room to play around in. Pressing his hands against the marble counter, he closed his eyes as he contemplated everything he had just learned. Should he go and help him? Time-travel was tricky business one person going back was bad enough, but two? He fought against the urge to go to his godson, feeling wretched that he felt so conflicted.

“Is everything alright?” asked Remus, staring at Sirius in contemplation, whenever Sirius got like this he wound himself up pretty tight.

“No,” said Sirius, slamming his fists against the counter grunting in frustration.

“What did he say?” enquired Remus, becoming concerned.

“It’s best if you don’t know,” admitted Sirius, carding his shaky hand through his hair, if Harry got caught and questioned…he wasn’t dragging Remus down with them. They couldn’t arrest him if he didn’t know anything about it, questionable deniability. He didn’t like the thought of keeping anything from Remus but it was for his own good. He wouldn’t survive Azkaban even for a few months, not because he wasn’t strong…the wolf would kill them both trying to get free.

“Sirius,” grunted Remus, getting frustrated himself now.

“I’m not exaggerating this time, Remy, I mean it, this is for your own good, Merlin be damned I won’t let anything happen to you.” snapped Sirius, “Just please trust me on this.”

“You aren’t about to do anything illegal are you?” asked Remus, alarmed.

“Not me,” admitted Sirius, before he clammed up, “Enough please.”

Remus’ mind raced, he came to the obvious conclusion that Harry was going to do something but what? What could he possibly be going to do that was breaking the law enough that Sirius was clamping up on him? They shared everything. It couldn’t be too bad could it? Otherwise Sirius would never allow it to happen - surely? It was killing him not knowing, but he doubted Sirius would tell him, he just had that look on his face and in his eyes that told him he was determined this time.

Sirius remained standing; inwardly praying that Harry could pull this off, there would be hell to pay if he didn’t. He just hoped that Harry’s knack for getting things right would pay off once again.

“Want something to drink?” asked Remus, trying to help Sirius take his mind off what was happening.

“Whiskey,” murmured Sirius, sitting down planting his face on the table with a thump. He was going to get himself blind drunk.

“You have work in a few hours,” reproached Remus, if he was planning on going in, but this was the wrong time to take any days off.

“No I’m not,” muttered Sirius, if Harry planned on going back in time to save Snape…did that mean he was already really alive but just spelled? Harry couldn’t change anything; things had to happen as they did. Harry was smart enough to know this, so logically he had to assume he did
something to keep Severus alive. There wasn’t anyone unaccounted for, no spells unaccounted for, no magical signatures that they didn’t know. Ugh, it was hurting his head just trying to think about it. Then again it would do the same to everyone, especially knowing that if someone planned on going back and it worked, then they were already back - had already been back and done something. Rubbing at his temples, even that had made his head spin, nothing was making it spin more than the fact his godson was pregnant though.

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James sighed softly, daylight streaming through the curtains there wouldn’t be any more sleep for him. Throwing back the covers he got up, sliding his feet into his slippers he left his bedroom, and made his way to his son’s room. He was concerned about Nick; he’d been odd since the last battle. He had been locking himself in his room, but at least he was corresponding with Susan at the very least - since he saw his son’s owl going back and forth constantly. Knocking on the door, he wandered in, seeing Nick stirring.

“Come on, Nick talk to me,” said James staring at Nick, wondering if he should remain here and not bother with work. His son had been quiet, too quiet since Albus had found out the truth. It boggled his own mind, even he had to admit that. Unfortunately he hadn’t had a proper chance to sit down and talk to him between work, his own guilty conscience, Lily and everything that had happened he quite frankly hadn’t had a chance to sit down and breathe for twenty minutes.

“Why are you annoying me so early?” whined Nick, shoving his pillow over his head groaning. Unfortunately consciousness was already setting in, tiredness leaving him; considering his sleeping pattern had changed yet again he’d slept a lot longer than he usually did. Grumbling under his breath, he sat up feeling very put out - even more so when he actually noticed how early it really was.

“Talk to me,” repeated James, “It won’t go any further than this room…you have my word.” promised James, and he meant it.

“Dad for the last time, I’m fine,” said Nick, getting tired of repeating himself.

“Really? Fine is barely talking to me or eating?” said James bluntly, “I’d hate to see you depressed then.”

“Dad,” sighed Nick, shaking his head, he didn’t want to talk why was his dad pushing it?

James sat on the bed, looking at his son, trying to stare him down.

Slumping in defeat, Nick stared at his covers as he spoke, “You know that night…the night it happened, I was brawling my eyes out, and Harry was just wakening up. Mum came in; she screamed your name a few moments later trying to shield us from what was happening. Then he came in, demanding that that mum hand them over and she would live. I started screaming worse; something had cut open my head. She was yelling no, begging him to kill her instead. Then he stunned her, face down on the floor, but Harry…Harry was trying to get to me, to hold onto me but the cribs were too far apart. He had such a look of determination on his face to get to me.” croaked Nick. It reminded him too vividly of the ending of the Tri-Wizard tournament.

James paled he hated thinking about that night, what Lily must have gone through…what his kids had been through. The fact his son could so vividly remember had him regretting so hastily allowing Dumbledore to bring that memory to Nick’s conscious thought. He has assumed that Nick was feeling guilty and maybe disappointed that he had been living a lie all these years - unknowingly of course).
“I remember being really scared and angry when the curse hurt Harry, then I cried all night because I wanted him but he wasn’t there.” admitted Nick.

James swallowed thickly, the night flashing in front of his eyes. Nick hadn’t stopped crying, he remembered that neither he nor Lily had been able to calm him down. He’d constantly had his hands out as if he wanted someone. By the time Albus showed up he’d stopped crying but he was very upset, and refused to settle. It had been sheer exhaustion that finally caused Nick to sleep that night. Harry had been sleeping in their bed, probably due to sheer magical depletion. They could have turned Harry into a bloody squib without realising it. Albus had been right; they should have taken the twins to the hospital and got them checked.

“I just don’t understand how I could go from that to hating him,” murmured Nick, Susan had said it wasn’t his fault, that he had just emulated his parents. That they were to blame, even if things had changed, it didn’t make the past any different. He understood her words, but he didn’t believe them or maybe he just didn’t want to believe her. He was his own person, he had his own emotions, and how could his feelings for his twins have just turned like flipping a switch?

“It’s not your fault, Nick, do not blame yourself, it’s me and your mother that’s at fault, you saw us ignoring Harry and did the same thing.” snapped James, he never wanted his son to blame himself; he’d rather he rightfully blamed him and Lily.

“Maybe,” muttered Nick, saying it solely to placate his father and stop the argument he could feel brewing. He felt tired again; he wanted to get some sleep if he could. “Can I sleep now?!?” he asked, wishing his dad would get out of his room.

“Just remember wh---” James cut off, what the hell? Standing up he abruptly let Nick’s room, closing the door behind him as he rushed down the stairs. Thankfully he was only on the first floor, he hadn’t felt that magical signature in the manor in five years…no six years he belatedly realized much to his shame. Why would Harry be here? He knew his son couldn’t stand the sight of him and he honestly couldn’t blame him.

“Harry,” breathed James, staring at his son in horror, he looked like he’d lost a lot of weight and aged twenty years. He so badly wanted to go and comfort him, but he was stuck, guilt and distress held him immobile. He already had so much guilt for what he’d put Harry through. Knowing he was responsible for the death of someone Harry loved was worse - no matter whom that person was. Or rather partly responsible, Snape had saved his families life, inevitably at the expense of his own.

“I need your help,” whispered Harry, somehow despite his whisper James head and understood him in the silent hallway.

James blinked, he never thought in a million years he would hear those words out of Harry’s mouth. What could he help Harry with that Eileen or his friends couldn’t? Or should he say mum? Since it was pretty obvious Harry loved Eileen like a mother. He’d implied it a few years back, but he’d heard him say the words himself just five days ago. “Anything,” he gushed quickly, unable to believe his son was willing coming to him for aid. He owed it to him, he owed it to Snape, and he would do anything to make it up to his son for everything they’d done. Or in this case what they hadn’t done.

Although he would regret those words in a few seconds once he heard exactly what Harry wanted.
Chapter 92

“I need to know the location of the Time-Turners,” murmured Harry, staring at James with wide pleading eyes, he didn’t feel his normal hatred at James or the disgust at coming back here - he was just too consumed with his quest to bring Sev back that he couldn’t muster up any other emotions negative or otherwise. “Please, I’ve never asked you for anything since I was eleven years old… please,” begged Harry when James continued to stare at him in shock.

James remembered that well, Harry had asked for a bloody owl and he’d been too fucking immature and excited about playing Quidditch of all things and denied him. He’d always been worried about Nick, knowing the prophecy he’d wanted him to have a childhood for as long as possible. They hadn’t known how long it would be before Voldemort found his way back into their lives and destroyed the peace. He assumed it was when it started, ignoring Harry, it was no excuse he hated himself for it, but there was absolutely nothing he could do…well maybe not nothing, if he did this his son might forgive him for the atrocities he’d committed. Did he dare even say? Not only would he lose his job but he could end up in Azkaban, Nick and Roxy needed him…but Harry did too. Swallowing thickly, feeling wedged between rocks and hard places.

“Harry you can’t change the past…it’s against the law…hate me now but you will understand one day, I’m not letting you ruin your life.” said James, he had to be strong, he couldn’t let Harry get himself arrested. Although he would only be sentenced for a month if he even got a sentence, diminished responsibility due to losing Severus would keep him from Azkaban if he tried. Harry was such a determined character, if he wanted this he would continue to try. He had to talk him out of it if it was even possible - Harry wouldn’t listen to him but he might listen to Sirius or Eileen.

“I should have known you wouldn’t help me,” Harry told him bitterly, “You never have, and never will, and I hate you.” his tone filled with bitterness and disgust.

Those words pierced James right in the heart, and the worst was he knew Harry was serious about it. Nick however, had just been upset and angry when he used those words. Harry presumably moved to leave, and James knew if he left there would never be a chance of reconciliation; could he live with that to keep his son safe? Or was he too weak?

“Wait…why now?” asked James, what had he found out that he didn’t know days ago? Was it the first time he could think coherently? It didn’t make much sense but he had nothing else to go on.

“What does it matter?” whispered Harry exhaustedly, his back still turned.

“How do you want to do this, Harry? You’re breaking the law! The law I swore to uphold and make sure was upheld when I became an Auror. You’re young, you’re smart, I know you lost someone but so have a lot of other people and they don’t go trying to change things! Trying just makes everything worse, it always comes back to bite you.” argued James.

“NOTHING CAN BE WORSE!” hissed Harry angrily, facing James his face furious. This was torture at its finest! He would have preferred to be back at Malfoy Manor and enduring what they did than stand here and beg the man who was supposed to be his father. To risk his life, to risk everything to make sure that Sev didn’t die.
“It can get better,” said James desperate to help him but reluctant to break the law he’d help upkeep for nineteen years.

“No, it won’t,” stated Harry, he paused before he added. “I’m pregnant.”

“Harry wizards don’t get pregnant.” was his son delusional? If he was he really needed to get him to St. Mungo’s and be seen by a therapist, obviously Severus Snape dying had fractured his mind and he needed help picking up the pieces. He’d heard of animals thinking they were pregnant but not people - not men. Why hadn’t anyone noticed how badly affected Harry was by this? “You know that.” he added coaxingly, his brown eyes filled with worry.

Sighing softly, “Pellego,” intoned Harry, and immediately a scan of Harry’s stomach hovered in mid air.

James froze when Harry muttered the words to the scan, was he hallucinating things as well? Then he gasped in astonishment, if Harry was crazy then he was too! Stumbling forward he looked at it in awe his fingers hovering above it. It was real, this was really happening, he could scarcely believe it. Tears entered his eyes, his son was actually pregnant. Swallowing the lump in his throat, the worst of it was - he would never be part of its life, Harry wouldn’t want him to be. How could he blame him? After the way they’d treated him? He could have been a grandfather if things had been different…a broken sob tore out of his throat. Thirty seven years old and he was going to be a grandfather to a child he’d never know.

“You don’t have to do anything, just point me in the right direction, please.” Harry desperately pleaded with James.

“You will set the alarms going before you get near, there are only three left in existence, they’re down with the rest of the valuable items. Nobody can get near them, least of all strangers who aren’t employed in the Ministry or had their magic recorded. A lot of new security went into the design.” explained James, feeling a failure. Narrowing his eyes he straightened his spine, no, he wouldn’t let Harry down, he couldn’t. “When do you need it?”

Harry’s heart broke in two as he heard just how impossible it would be to get the Time-Turner. Then he heard James speaking again, and Harry refused to believe he meant what he thought James did. “What? What do you mean by that?”

“When do you need the Time-Turner?” James demanded, grasping a hold of Harry’s shoulders, the picture scan had already disappeared.

“Now.” croaked Harry, totally numb.

“You aren’t taking anything with you? You need to stay away for six days, remain unseen by anything, until time reinserts itself. You need food, warm clothing, money and a place to stay that you know will be empty - but a different place where you are going to be using to go back with the Time-Turner.” James told him; evidently Harry had just gotten too caught up in the prospect of saving Severus that he hadn’t thought straight. Or he hadn’t planned that far ahead yet.

Harry nodded dumbly; he knew that he’d just planned on getting his hands on the Time-Turner first.

“Get everything you need and get back here as soon as possible, stay outside on the grounds, don’t be seen.” stated James firmly, the Auror in him coming out. He would know the second Harry landed back in the wards, then it was a racing game to see if they succeed or not. If this was going down, he wouldn’t put Nick at risk, but the sneaky acknowledgement that he was putting Harry at
risk snuck upon him. No, he was protecting him, if they thought he had it - Harry would have a
safe pass to go back and maybe even make sure he could put it back before anything gets heated.

“Why are you helping?” asked Harry his tone baffled. He hadn’t really expected anything to come
of his visit to James Potter. He’d just sort of assumed he would have to search the Ministry from
top to bottom until he found something. Of course, he hadn’t even thought of the new wards in the
place.

“You’re my son, that baby is my grandchild, and I want to be part of your lives,” confessed James.
“Right now I’d take even the prospect of being part of it. Even though I know we will never be
really close, I want to try.”

Harry stared at James, not sure what to feel anymore. He was risking his career, his freedom and a
jail sentence to help him. He’d never expected that of the wizard, he’d always assumed he’d been
nothing but an afterthought if that for James Potter. Maybe one day he could like him, right now he
didn’t exactly hate him but it was far from wanting Potter in his life.

“You don’t have to say anything, I know.” sighed James, it would take more than this to make up
for all the shit he’d put Harry through all his life. It was a start though…it was a start. “Go. Now.”

Harry looked at him for a few more minutes silently, assessing him before he Apparated out of
Potter manor. Dropping himself off at Diagon Alley, his cloak immediately pulled up to cover his
face, keeping him hidden. It was too early though, so there weren’t many people around. He
wasn’t taking any chances; the press would hound him making his mission completely impossible.

“I need to make withdrawal,” stated Harry calmly, handing over his key, he didn’t have time to go
the vaults so he would deal with it here. “Four hundred galleons. Half of which I want in Muggle
notes.”

The goblin immediately placed two hundred galleons in a pouch, and then began to flip pieces of
paper with £20’s on them. He kept flipping until there was one thousand pounds, which he rolled
up and also added to the pouch. The key he took glowed briefly before both items were handed
over to Harry.

“Anything else?” asked the Goblin grunting.

“No. Thank you.” stated Harry, his hand tightening on his pouch as he put it into his pocket. Then
he remembered he actually did have to go to his vault. He’d been so distracted that he’d forgotten
he needed his invisibility cloak. “I need access to the main Peverell vault, as quickly as possible.”

“Follow me,” replied the Goblin, jumping from the step he was using to appear at human level.
Harry quickly followed him, his heart pounding in his chest at each second that went by. He was
led to the cart, he didn’t hesitate as he jumped in, watching the goblin get in at a snail pace,
inwardly groaning in irritation. That irritation disappeared fast when the cart began moving at
breakneck speed, and Harry could have sworn it was travelling faster than any other time he’d felt
it. He could barely see the vault numbers as they passed, he glanced at the Goblin who seemed
unperturbed by the speed, just simply gazed at where Harry knew the numbers for the vault were
just above the archway.

Then it began to slow down, its breaks making a grating noise as it clamped down on the rails to
force the stop. Then as if by magic, it stopped with him exactly in the right place, standing up he
took the necessary steps to get into his vault. Pressing his palm against the door, it registered his
magic before he plucked the key in the hole and opened it.
He didn’t play attention to the money, he was looking around for a piece of cloth that looked silvery/grey and would help keep him hidden from everyone for days. Then he spotted it, at the far end of the vault, Harry ended up having to climb over galleons to get to it. Then climb back down, wincing at the racket the money was making going back down as it clattered everywhere, as Harry pushed with his feet to grab his cloak.

Harry stepped over the money until his feet were no longer being hurt by the galleons digging into his shoes. His fingers caressing his cloak, it felt so smooth and silky under his fingers. He’d never touched it before, or held it so close; unsurprisingly it had been given straight to Nick Potter. When he had become the heir of the Peverell estate it had been reverted to him. He was glad he had it though, this would be so handy, and help him in ways he wouldn’t have been able to accomplish otherwise.

“Ready,” said Harry closing the vault with difficulty but succeeding. His key was twisted again, locking it this time instead of opening it. His key was automatically shoved in his pocket, as he slid back into the cart; he stared at the cloak as the cart began moving quickly getting faster and faster.

Was he really going to do this? Could he? What if things went so wrong that he erased his own existence? No, that wasn’t possible he was only going back six days not seventeen…eighteen years. What if he lost the baby? What if that was the death in repayment? Could he take that risk? Staring down at his stomach his eyes glazed over, he felt like he as being pulled in a million different directions.

“Mr. Peverell?” enquired the Goblin in concern; he knew the wizard had just lost his lover if the human rumours were to be believed. Goblins mated with only one woman in their entire lifetime, they could understand the pain of loss and loneliness.

“Sorry,” murmured Harry, scrambling out of the cart, and straightening up.

“No need for apologies,” stated the Goblin curtly, what this boy had done had gone around the Goblin nation as rapidly as fire spread. They all respected him a great deal, along with his ingenuity, and more important his business savvy. To think he was only seventeen years old, and had been doing this for years, well he wouldn’t be surprised if the young man became one of the most important clients at Gringotts, no the most important client.

Harry just nodded grimly in gratitude before he left the Goblin and Gringotts behind. He didn’t need clothes, what he had on would just have to do, it would keep him warm. He did however; have to decide on what to do - where to go. Scoffing softly to himself, shaking his head, he’d never thought much of James, he’d had no reason to yet here he believed he would actually get the Time-Turner for him. What if he got him into a lot of trouble? He’d never cared about them… even hated them at one point but Azkaban? There were too many unknown parameters and the prospect made him worried…he was a Ravenclaw for a reason; he liked everything to be neat orderly and most importantly make sense.

Closing his eyes he Apparated back to Potter Manor, before he changed his mind, appearing right next to the Quidditch shed, if it could be called that it was more like a hut that was filled with old brooms with a few new ones. Quidditch gear and things they probably hadn’t seen in years.

Each second felt like minutes as his heart pounded in his chest, anxiety mixed with fear and elation…the thought of seeing Sev alive again and whole was more than he could handle. He tried not to get too ahead of himself, but he just couldn’t help it. Despite how mature he felt most days, he was still seventeen-years-old at the end of the day. What if he got caught? Thought Harry, his heart pounding even more fiercely. If he did it blew his chances, closing his eyes again he slid down until his backside hit the grass.
“If anything happens to you I won’t be able to forgive myself,” Harry murmured to the baby growing in his stomach. “You deserve to know Sev, your dad, he’s the strong one, he will be better at this than me. We both need him, I’m doing this for both of us and I pray that everything goes okay.” Sev would be furious when he found out, but as long as he was alive he didn’t care. Harry absently pulled his chain from under his clothes, where the two eternity rings lay. They were gorgeous, exactly the thing Sev would want. He wished with all his heart that Severus had asked him before it happened. He knew why he hadn’t though; there had never been a good percentage for both of them surviving. He’d stupidly thought that he would be the one to die fighting Voldemort. Severus had always been one of the best duellers he knew; he had ruthlessly put him through his paces. It had taken him years to keep up with him when they actually began duelling.

Where there’s death…there’s always death. Luna’s words echoed in his head, they’d been constant like a drumbeat.

Squeezing the rings determinedly, he stood back up, he would do this and he wouldn’t fail, he knew what was going to happen before it did. Surely that gave him an upside to what on earth was going on right? He knew the outcome, knew what would happen…maybe more than one innocent life could be spared. It just said where death was - death would be…he just had to make sure it was Death Eaters.

Jerking around when he heard the telltale of Apparating, it was James and he was alone, a chain hanging from his hands. He’d successfully managed to get the Time-Turner.

“You did it,” said Harry wide eyed.

“I did,” said James, moving the chain and placing it around Harry’s neck. “Be careful.”

Harry observed that he was very calm, too calm if he had just been running from the Ministry.

“What are you going to do?”

“The alarms were disabled, nobody will know.” said James wryly. He knew more than people gave him credit for, including all the spells surrounding that department. “Just get it back to me as soon as you can when time re-inserts itself…do you hear me?”

“I promise,” swore Harry, and in a very rare move, he hugged James. “Thanks…dad.” calling him a name he hadn’t in many a year.

James closed his eyes as he swallowed back the emotion choking him. Squeezing his son close, praying that it all worked out, for his son’s sake. Merlin he didn’t want to let him go, he wanted to keep him safe. “Do you want company?”

“No, the more people that go are more chance of the time-line screwing up worse.” said Harry, reluctantly. He would have liked some company, but the knowledge where he was going - he would see Severus again gave him all the strength he’d need in the world.

“Alright, go on then,” said James strongly, giving him one more comforting squeeze before he stepped back. Watching him go, hoping he had succeeded and that he would be back soon. Did he wait here? Would Harry return quickly?

Harry looked around the Shrieking Shack, realizing he couldn’t have picked a better spot if he tried, although he couldn’t help but wonder if maybe he should leave this spot to stay in for six days? There certainly wouldn’t be anyone coming, or disturbing him that’s for damn certain. It didn’t matter now; he had to leave as soon as possible. Harry repaired a ratty chair, transfiguring it into something he could use to sit cross legged on. Cursing silently when he realized he’d only end
up hurt since it wouldn’t be in the past for him to sit on.

Grumbling dismissively he remained standing, putting his wand away again he breathed deeply. He could do this, a small smile appeared on his face…very soon he would see Severus again…he would save him and anyone else he could. Then he began twisting the dial, one…two…three…four…five.

Twenty…twenty-one…twenty-two….twenty-three, Harry made sure to count very carefully and never let himself be distracted.

Sixty-six…sixty-seven…sixty-eight…sixty-nine. His fingers were going numb and starting to ache, he refused to let it deter him. He would do this; he would go back to a time where things were so much simpler. Inside this room, nothing changed, but outside as he continued to dial…the further he dialled the more significantly it changed.

One hundred…one hundred and one… and then one hundred and two…one hundred and three…

Then he got to one hundred and forty before he stopped, only then did he drop the Time-Turner and began to massage his aching hands. He’d done it; elation tore through Harry, as he shakily began to move towards the door, peering out just to see if there was anything he noticed different. If he had gotten his timing right, he and Severus would be in Prince Manor at the moment but not for long. They would be going to see the healers then Ollivander before all hell broke loose. His hand tightened on the invisibility cloak, it was time.

He would succeed - he had to, he couldn’t let anything go wrong.
Harry didn't know what to do first, part of him wanted to Apparate into Prince Manor and warn Severus but he knew that was completely illogical, and not to forget utterly stupid. He was smart enough to know better, but it didn't stop the burning desire to see Severus - to hear him talk, walk, and so blessedly alive. He sat down on the disgusting floor - he might as well get used to roughing it since he would be doing exactly that for near enough a week. They go to the healers about the Longbottoms potion; he had no idea if it had worked - he hadn't opened any his mail. Although truth be told he wasn't sure he had received anything from St. Mungo's. Eileen had begged the press to give Harry the privacy to grieve in peace, and they'd actually listened to her. With the obvious exception of flowers and condolence cards coming from those that had known Sev. No, not known, he would do this, he was a little bit apprehensive, maybe scared stiff now that he was here and actually interfering with time itself.

He reasoned though, as long as he wasn't seen, didn't get hurt, and remained hidden once the fight was over he would be just fine. Well, maybe not after Severus got his hands on him, he just had a feeling that Sev would be furious if he found out. He didn't necessary have to tell him, or anyone for that matter, but could he keep something like that from him? It would be like keeping the fact he was pregnant from him. He had shared everything with Severus and he honestly couldn't comprehend keeping it from him - no matter how furious Sev got over it.

The first thing that he had to do was make sure the Muggles didn't walk across the ally between St. Mungo's and whatever Muggle shop that was there. It was a simple Muggle-repelling charm that would stop them from even going near the confrontation. They didn't deserve to die due to one man's obsession with taking over the world, shot down like animals as if they didn't have families or feelings. Swallowing thickly, where there's death - there's always death…did that mean if he saved them here they would die later? Or would more Wizards and Witches die? Could he live with that? People he know dying for the Muggles that he did not?

Rubbing at his head, feeling agitated, going back was supposed to make things better - easier even. Yet here he was stressing about things he hadn't even thought about. He couldn't save everyone; he knew that, it was just easier to say it than actually allow people to die when he could change it. Change the outcome that was coming, the death and destruction that would occur up until he finally destroyed Voldemort.

"Tempus," muttered Harry, and bright flame numbers danced across his vision, showing the time. It was getting closer to when the battle would take place. Suddenly he felt a sense of calmness overcoming him; he just knew what he had to do. Scrambling to his feet, straightening his spine, he had overcome everything life had thrown at him, a family that didn't care, learning what love really was, being stabbed in the back by his own twin, being tortured and surviving, almost cursed by his own mother, falling in love, allowing himself to feel and then also allowing himself to feel forgiveness. If this all went according to plan and he pulled it off he owed it all to James, Merlin he'd called him dad! He hadn't called him that since he was what? Five or six years old? From a certain point all he had called James was sir. It had never been out of respect, but to him it was better than dad or father since he had been neither - this, this was the most fatherly thing he'd ever done.
Shrouding himself in the invisibility cloak, making sure that it stuck to him until he wanted it removed. A weigh down charm, so it didn't billow in the breeze and give away his location. How he as going to perform spells from under it he didn't know, but he would worry about it when the time came. He would work it out - he hadn't been sorted into Ravenclaw for nothing.

"Please let me do this," murmured Harry as he stepped out of the Shrieking Shack, and began his walk, staying hidden and out of peoples ways. It didn't take long at all until he was at the other side of the alley, but it had always been small - just seemed bigger when you were a child. A child… Merlin would he get to do the same thing with his? Walk down this beaten path that millions had? Part of him and Severus mixed together. He'd never imagined children in his future, he'd thought about it as a teenager, from a teenager's perspective when he realized he would never love a woman…that he was drawn to men. Fourteen years old, he had been, hard to believe it was almost four years ago but there it was. He hadn't even thought about it when the couple asked Sev to invent a potion. Not because he didn't think Severus could pull it off, but he'd been under immense strain or what he had thought to be a great deal of strain back then - nothing could have prepared him for this past week.

Once Harry got to a more secluded spot, he looked up, and in the background stood Hogwarts, proud and strong and resilient. He'd stupidly thought the last battle would be here, in the place that had stood the test of time, that one place that had remained unconquered by Voldemort during both wars. He was glad it hadn't don't get him wrong, children shouldn't fight in war - Harry couldn't help but scoff at his own thoughts. He really should have been included in the 'children' statement. Truth was he wasn't, it had been decided before he was even born, that he would toil over life that he would have to fight to survive.

Well he'd fought and he'd survived; now he just had to make sure the man he loved greater than life itself would too.

With that thought, Harry Apparated on the spot, five minutes from St. Mungo's, he still didn't know how Voldemort had realized they were there yet. He was beginning to suspect that a Death Eater had been sent there under surveillance duty, to wait until they appeared. It wasn't like Voldemort to work that way, let them get Ollivander and the others who had been rescued? Or had he just taken advantage of it? Hoping for something to come out of it? Either way it had worked, but just in case it was a magical barrier they'd set off he didn't want to risk going first. So lost in thought he didn't realize someone was just in front of him until he bumped shoulders with them.

"What the hell?" shouted the Muggle, looking around in confused disorientation, rubbing his shoulder definitely freaked out. Clutching a box in his hand tighter, he continued looking around for an explanation but found none, then he abruptly began walking faster away from the area.

Harry looked back biting his lip, finding it hilarious until something struck him, the man he had been one of victims. He was almost sure of it, no he was positive, he could remember everything that happened, even in his grief he knew everyone, and yes even the innocent bystanders. He'd been with someone then, the guy that was leaving and a woman. He must live nearby if that was the case, Harry thought or he was meeting her along the road. The box he had in his hand flashed to mind, a ring? Closing his eyes feeling sick. Shaking his head refusing to dwell on it, he had to keep himself focused.

He eventually got to the alley between the charmed St. Mungo's building which to Muggles looked like an abandoned old warehouse and the shop at the other side - which was also boarded up. Both buildings had probably been bought by the Ministry a very long time ago, to keep the area as safe as possible for wizards and witches to get into without being seen using magic. There was obviously nothing on the alley to stop them going down, or seeing what was going on or they
wouldn't have ended up killed by the Death Eaters - well maybe they would have but they wouldn't have stopped or brought attention to themselves.

Peering around, he saw James Potter Apparate with Lily, he knew she'd been given mandatory sessions with a mind-healer. He didn't think that would help, she was just rotten to the core, but he was entitled to think that. Even to this day he can remember the look on her face as she cast the Crucius curse at him. It's the same look Death Eaters got on their faces, the hatred, anger, disgust and pure unadulterated hared. No nothing would change with her, and he was glad she hadn't been in the Manor when he visited.

Speak of the devil, thought Harry, as the Death Eaters all appeared, something was nagging at him though...how the hell had James and Lily not heard the sound? James was an Auror surely he would have heard it? Unless...they'd Apparated in the moment he had bumped into them trying to get out of St. Mungo's? Turning around hearing barking noises, he saw a man with the dog was at the end of the long street. He was the first casualty, breathing trembling in jittery anticipation, he clasped his hands around the rings and kissed them before removing his wand from its holster and letting the end jut out the cloak only just and cast a spell to prevent Muggles coming anywhere near the area. A shudder wracked Harry's frame as magic flared around the area, more intensely than he'd ever felt. It didn't just come from the area he'd cast the spell...it felt as thought it had come from everywhere.

Swallowing thickly, he steadied his nerves, silencing all sound with a quick 'Muffliato' and began to walk towards the oncoming confrontation. He must be mad, he couldn't watch himself from all angles, but he would stay near the area that Sev was found in. near the building, which meant his back would be at least measurably safe. He would only need to keep himself safe from oncoming curses or spells not watch his back.

Gripping his wand under the cloak, breathing heavily, had his face really looked like that when all had been revealed? He turned to Voldemort his hand trembling, as he fought with himself. His mind was just egging him on to cast the curse that would end Voldemort now. Save everyone, stop the war altogether the intellectual part of him knew it was a very bad idea he was already messing with things.

"Let me go!" snapped Harry, causing the invisible time-traveller to look in the opposite direction to see himself yanking out of James' hold. Realizing all shit was about to break loose, especially in this area he hastily ran towards the building staying to the left out of the doorway. He passed Severus, staring at him he felt his eyes tear up; oh it was so good to see him alive - whole and just imposing as ever but of course, not to him.

What was he doing just standing here? He thought, feeling deeply ashamed of himself. Many wizards and witches were going to die and he was just standing here? Waiting? It was too late now; Harry was walking towards him, ready to do what he had to - to save the people he loved. No the people they loved, the time-traveller thought with conviction.

"Now we duel," Harry didn't need to hear the words to know what he was going to say - they were firmly imprinted in his mind never to be removed. Next comes the torture spell thought Harry, and just as he thought it - and so it was. "Crucio!" then all hell broke loose as everyone began appearing at the hospital. Oh crap, thought Harry, it was much more intense than he realized as he ducked three spells in a row. He'd had his back to the battle mostly before, focusing on Voldemort without a clue to what was happening.

"GET INTO THE HOSPITAL NOW!" shouted James, bodily grabbing Lily and shoving her in that direction before he joined the fray himself. Harry was barely able to get out of the way in time,
between getting out of the way of Lily and avoiding the spell to his right. This was bloody madness, thought Harry wide eyed, if this continued he wouldn't be able to stay under the cloak it was constricting his movements.

"You have to help them!" he heard Lily shriek, as Harry made a slightly reckless decision to conceal himself magically, and then remove the cloak, and place it in his pocket. In the mist of battle nobody seemed to notice - or care come to that. Sighing softly grateful that he could breathe again, without his own recycled air getting in the way.

Harry locked in on Severus fighting, a small smile playing on his face, he was so efficient, and powerful...how the hell had the Death Eaters gotten one up on him? Oh yes, they didn't fight fair - they were cowards who had to hunt and hurt people in packs or someone defenceless. A loud cry caught his attention; he swivelled around to find a female Auror on the ground, bleeding from a wound to her leg that was severe. She had grasped for her leg leaving her wand to fall from her numb fingers - leaving her defenceless.

Without consciously thinking he cast three spells, "Langlock! Stupefy! Incarcerous!" now even if the bastard got free he wouldn't know the counter-curse for the first spell. Severus never shared the counter-curses, in fact the only reason they would know his spells is if they heard him using them. Which is only when he first learned them, the rest of the time he cast them non-verbally. He was really screwing this up wasn't he? He thought to himself, he shouldn't be changing things so badly but he couldn't help himself. He wasn't a Death Eater; he couldn't just watch someone die.

He noticed idly that she'd wrapped a bandage around it and probably healed it as efficiently as they could. Which mean it was probably still bleeding but not as badly. They were Aurors they weren't perfect at healing spells, it's why healers aided the Aurors when they needed them. Which was quite often since the higher up Aurors actually had their own beds at St. Mungo's permanently reserved for them. Even after they retired, if rumours were to be believed 'once an Auror always an Auror' or so the saying went. Not all of them were lucky, some were haunted by what they'd seen and done in the line of protecting the magical world - that they fell through the cracks ended up down in Knockturn Alley or in the Muggle world. With nothing to show for all the good they'd done, even the Medals (order of Merlin's) didn't mean anything; in fact they could be sold for anything as low as five galleons then of course resold for twice or three times the amount.

Shaking off his peculiar thoughts, he moved off away from that area, not noticing that the Death Eater had been freed by his comrade - not that he was able to do harm as a stray spell hit him, a green one - killing curse and judging by the angle it was definitely Voldemort's own spell. He never strayed too far away from Severus, and if he was helping he looked back when he could to make sure he was alright.

Albus looked around, spotting Harry fighting Voldemort, he was holding off Voldemort - giving his brother time to defeat him. Family obviously did mean something to him, he was proud of the man he had become. He had to remember and tell him that, but something caught his eye, making him gape in astonishment. He could scarcely believe it; he looked between the pair of them in shock. He immediately noticed a distinct kind of magic wrapped around his neck, a time-turner. His heart pounded in his chest, what happened to cause Harry to go back in time? Unfortunately he wasn't able to concentrate on it as he was attacked by two Death Eaters trying to bring him down.

"Protego!" cast Albus, deflecting both curses causing them to go back at their targets. One hit the Death Eater the other managed to duck it but Albus was ready for that "Stupefy!" and he was down. He began to make his way towards Voldemort and Harry - he had to do what he could to help. As he moved he noticed a fallen Auror on the ground, Albus helped him to his feet, and successfully moved them out of the way of a killing curse.
Looking back at the barely visible teenager, he wondered again what had caused him to go back. He did notice he was staying in a particular area, he never moved from there. Where was Nick? Why wasn't he stepping up? Why was he leaving his brother to fight his battle? He had stupidly thought the teenager had changed from the fourteen year old he had been when he left his brother to die. He’d always been disappointed in him, there was no doubt Harry should have been the hero, the Boy-Who-Lived, he acted more like it - selfless and brave. There was no denying it, he was up there fighting him, and Auror's themselves wet their clothes in fear when confronted with the darkest wizard known to the magical world.

"Stupefy! Incarcerous! Petrificus Totalus!" he lost track of how many spells he cast, or returned to sender by reflecting their own spells back at them. He wasn't a violent man, never had been and would never consider splitting his soul and committing murder. He didn't have it in him, perhaps when he was a teenager but that…that was a very, very long time ago.

Perhaps for the first time, Albus realized something as he watched Harry, he was constantly looking back for someone…his blue eyes narrowed in on that person - Severus. It made him feel like a right fool that he hadn't guessed right away. Who else would Harry risk using a time-turner for? Panic and pain lanced through him, the thought of anything happening to Severus hurt him physically. They may not have agreed or seen eye to eye for the past seven years but since Severus had become a member of his staff at such a young age he'd always looked out for him. Developed feelings of attachment, he thought of him as a son. Not having any children of his own, he did have his favourites, but none like Severus.

Severus himself was looking over at the fight between Voldemort and Harry, such a look of concern on his face. He was quite literally blown back to the past…seeing that same look in his eyes. While he had begged him to keep Lily safe, that he would do anything even turn himself in to keep her safe. This look was much more heated, with a lot more worry than Albus had ever seen. Things weren’t quite so platonic between the pair of them, Severus had finally found someone to settle down with - he shouldn't be surprised that it would be with someone just as smart and passionate as him. Something must have happened though, something quite worrisome.

"ALBUS!" yelled James, seeing the spell going towards the distracted wizard.

Albus immediately came back to himself and moved out of sheer instincts that age couldn't prevent. He wasn't quite as successful as he would have liked, as the cutting curse got him in the arm, his wand arm - but thankfully he was ambidextrous, skilled at using both hands to write or in this case use his wand. Which he did to stop the blood pouring down his torn arm, between him and James he had his arm tightly bound to his chest. He would need the hospital to get it fixed just as soon as this was over. It wasn't as if he could get into St. Mungo's at the moment.

"Go to Poppy," urged James, wincing slightly, the wound was very deep and through the bone, no matter what he'd done to stop the flow of blood it must be agonizingly painful.

"I'll be fine," said Albus dismissing James with a wave of his good hand.

"Albus that wound's deep," exclaimed James wide eyed.

"Its fine." he stated sharply, looking over his shoulder to where he could make the outline of Harry - he could see through concealments. He sighed in relief that both he and Severus were still standing. "Where's Nick?"

"He's alright, he's over there." said James, pointing out his son. "DUCK!" he yelled, crouching down sighing in relief when it whizzed past.
"Why is he not fighting Voldemort?" asked Albus, standing back up. "Stupefy!"

"Avada Kedavra!" snapped James, after ducking the Cruciatus Curse aimed at him. He was legally allowed to use the Unforgivables as an Auror. The law Crouch Senior had put into affect still held, all Aurors were allowed to use such spells especially against Death Eaters. James ignored the disapproving look on Albus' face; this was war you didn't win by stunning them. "Nick isn't the one the prophecy foretold would be able to defeat Voldemort."

"What?" cried Albus surprised, "What do you mean?" but he already knew the answer to that. Everything just clicked into place once the denial could no longer be contained. He'd thought it for years, but he'd just been too invested in Nick to see the reality staring him in the face. Suddenly he felt calmer than he had ever before, if Harry or Voldemort was to die and survive, and Harry was back in time it must mean he was successful in defeating Voldemort this day.

Severus had always believed that he wouldn't survive to see the end of the war, he felt the irony that he would die at the very end - but it looked like he had a guardian angel that wouldn't let him. "Incarcerous!"

"Reducto!" snapped James, catching the Death Eater in the chest, making him go flying. James didn't wait around, he joined in the fray - there would be times to talk and now certainly weren't one of them. He knew Albus well enough to know his mind was probably spinning and unable to comprehend what he'd just been told. If they both survived he'd be bombarded with a million questions. "Stupefy!"

Harry couldn't help but look at the battle between himself and Voldemort, the magic that was being drawn from the area was...immense. As a bystander he could see the looks of awe, reverence, concern and worry being thrown at his other self while he engaged in battle. He'd thought the battle had lasted for a lot longer than it actually had. It was no slouchy battle he supposed.

Whirling around when he heard a billow of pain, a voice he knew all too well. Severus was surrounded by the three Death Eaters; one he recognized to be Nott Senior, his son looked like him. He was the one Moody had killed, the others Sev managed to kill so Nott must have been the one to cast the fatal spell that brought his lover down. He'd taken a cutting curse to the chest but he was continuing to fight. His green eyes narrowed in on Nott and he went for him, bodily knocking him to the floor and in a moment of rage he grabbed his face and twisted his neck.

Scrambling back from the now dead body, he managed to get up just as Severus brought down Gibbons. He froze for a second, as Severus stared right where he was hidden as if he could see him. His breathing hitched when those black eyes went straight to his other self, it was the same moment he'd been possessed...he had become distracted. He realized that was exactly what caused his death...it wasn't that he had been bested by any of the Death Eaters - it had been concern over him.

"Concido!" hissed Travers.

Harry's eyes widened in horror, that the spell, that was the one that killed Severus. He'd been wrong, it hadn't been Nott at all, and for a second he contemplated the fact that he really did fail - that he never saw it coming and had already failed. NO! He hadn't done all this to fail, without a thought of the consequences; he barreled into Severus knocking them both to the floor, but Severus' head smacked against the concrete causing an injury. As long as he was alive Harry didn't care. He scrambled away so Severus couldn't reach him, worried about the timeline. As he was, he bumped into a body, turning around anxiously, he gasped in horror, no, no, no, NO! Where was his wand? He scrambled looking for it, Cedric didn't deserve to die! He couldn't die; this couldn't be happening not him. Tears pouring blindly down his face Luna's words ringing in his ears like a
never ending drumbeat.

'Where there's death- there's always death' 'Where there's death - there's always death'

No, he refused to believe that, then his hand curled around his wand, it had fallen beside Nott Senior. Scrambling back over to Cedric, not caring about his skinned knees. He'd found out what spell had been used and incidentally he also learned the counter-curse.

"Don't worry, Cedric, I wont let it be you, I promise," vowed Harry, he couldn't let his best friend die - he absolutely refused. "Curare patiens morientem iterare imum," chanted Harry before he said it an additional two times already seeing the affect of the counter spell being cast as his lips immediately began to colour from where they'd done blue. "Curare patiens morientem iterare imum, curare patiens morientem iterare imum!" Harry pressed his hand against his chest, his hands shaking badly but he took solace in the steady thump of his heart it as a little erratic but Harry didn't care - just as long as his heart kept beating.

Just then he was hoisted up by strong hands, face to face with a furious Severus. 'Finite Incantatem!' was non-verbally cast revealing him to Severus but out of view of everyone else.

"What the hell have you done?" he hissed out.

Harry just stared at him stunned speechless unable to say anything, opening and closing his mouth wordlessly.

Then before Severus' eyes, he disappeared, quite literally, the clothes and everything he'd had on falling limp in his hands. Including a time-turner…and two rings that Severus definitely recognized.
Chapter 94

Invisible

Chapter 94

Severus stared down at the things, unable to comprehend what had just happened. Harry had just literally disappeared in front of him, no Apparation, no Portkey just faded from the face of the earth as if he didn’t exist. His gaze was fixated mostly on the rings, ones he had special made, the maudlin part of him had hoped that both of them would survive this war and he would claim Harry as his for the entire world to know. The part he had quashed completely when he was a young teenager. Or so he thought until he found himself requesting these made. Numbly his fingers grasped them in his hand, squeezing to the extent that it bloody hurt his hand leaving an indentation in his palm.

Black eyes sought Harry out in the battlefield, taking in the sight of him completely relieved. His left hand sought out the rings he knew he’d placed in his pocket and he found them still there. He wasn’t sure what had happened but he knew he wouldn’t get his answers here - and he knew not to mention this to anyone. Harry had obviously travelled back in time using this time-turner. Glancing around making sure nobody saw him he slid the time-turner into his pocket. His first instincts to protect Harry, at all costs considering he knew deep in his heart it must have been him Harry had come back to protect. It was the only conclusion he could reach for Harry having both rings - and not just one of them.

He didn’t even know if Harry would remember anything, the Time-turners didn’t normally act that way. It wasn’t as if he’d been seen by himself - and been driven mad by it. It wasn’t as if Harry was the only one who had been found out using a Time- Turner, how do you think they knew what to avoid and what to do? By trial and error - Unspeakables of course who had consented to it. Unless Harry had created an alternative timeline starting from this moment. Which of course if his theory was correct then he was right. By eradicating the cause of his Time-travel he would not go back in time, hence that Harry no longer existed - he’d erased his own existence from this point in time. Rubbing at his temples in agitation, just thinking about it was making his head ache.

Turning his attention back to what as happening, he could see people were starting to gather up the wounded. The two security guards from St. Mungo’s were undoing the wards to help get them safely into the hospital, he ignored his own wounds as he began to tend to the fallen, trying to get his thoughts into some semblance of control. The thought that he could have died…should have died weighted rather heavily on him. Just as heavily as the fact that Harry may have risked his own life to aid him when he needed it most.

Harry let out a surprised squeak; looking around confused…just a second ago he’d been grabbed by Severus who looked furious. The next thing he knew he was looking at Voldemort’s dead body. Gazing around in confusion, not understanding what on earth had happened. His hand fell numbly to its side, as confused as he was he kept a tight grip on his wand. His jaw dropped when he noticed the clothes he’d been wearing were gone…he was in the clothes he’d worn during the battle. Swallowing thickly he began to look around furiously….dodging people not listening to their words or congratulatory speeches. He needed to see Severus….Merlin he was terrified he’d done all this for nothing and everything had gone back to the way it was.

His heart was pounding in its ribcage, as he moved around the people, barely seeing anything just wanting Severus to appear - so he knew he was okay. He almost fell over Alastor Moody, he was about to apologize to the older wizard when he noticed who he was trying to help.
“Cedric!” cried Harry, kneeling down beside him, he was still hurt…did this mean Sev was alive? Oh Merlin, he couldn’t live with himself if he’d caused his death.

“Don’t worry, laddie, he will be fine, someone said the counter-curse just in time.” said Moody, staring at Harry.

“Are you sure?” asked Harry shakily, breathing out in relief. He blinked at the look on Moody’s face, if he didn’t know any better he would say Moody knew…he avoided looking at his eyes as he concentrated on Cedric, he had to get him into the hospital. He had to know for sure that Cedric would be okay, and would also have to let his parents and Cho know what had gone down.

“He’s gonna be fine,” Moody stated again. Standing up when Harry levitated the junior Auror onto a stretcher and immediately began to move towards the doors of St. Mungo’s. He should report it, the boy had used a time-turner…unless of course he’d had permission to do it but they never usually made exceptions like that. It would have been next to impossible to break into the room - especially with the new Ministry. Wrong or right…he may very well have saved quite a few people…no, he’d saved them all he belated realised. He had defeated Voldemort; it wasn’t as if he hadn’t been doing something illegal himself. Technically he, as an Auror should never have gotten involved with the Order, it was a vigilante group. The group should never have been founded, it should have been left to the professionals or so the Ministry felt.

“Don’t worry Cedric, I’ll get you help, I promise.” said Harry, finally getting into the building. He fought his way over to the reception getting passed everyone who was standing there. “Is Healer Walsh available?”

“We’re helping everyone as much as we can,” she said soothingly, trying to calm him down as if he was hysterical.

“It’s important,” explained Harry, keeping his cool.

“I understand,” she said, as if she truly believed it.

“He was hit with the Concido curse, I’ve said the counter-curse but the damage is done…he really needs a healer.” Harry bit out, his anger showing through for the first time.

“Oh,” she said, “Give me a moment.” she added quickly gathering her wits.

More healers quickly made their way through the door at the exact same minute.

“LADIES AND GENTLEMEN PLEASE!” boomed Healer Walsh, “IF YOU ARE UNINJURED I WOULD LIKE YOU ALL TO VACATE THE PREMISES SO WE CAN TEND TO THOSE WHO ARE IN AN ORDERLY FASHION! AS SOON AS WE HAVE EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL YOU MAY COME BACK IN. FOR THE INTEREST OF OUR PATIENTS PLEASE LEAVE.”

“Healer Walsh, we have someone here who was hurt with the Concido curse, he needs immediate attention - the counter-curse has already been done.” explained the receptionist. Guiding the healer towards the injured Auror, who was mercifully unconscious.

“Raile!” called Healer Walsh, “Get this gentlemen to the high dependency ward immediately I will see to him in a moment.”

“Yes ma’am,” said Mediwizard Raile, quickly taking over the levitating and he was moved into the hospital.

“I’ll let you know what’s happening,” said Healer Walsh, knowing how much Harry cared for his
friends.

“Thanks Andy,” said Harry, giving her a small relieved smile. He noticed that everyone else injured was being guided in by the Mediwizard’s and Mediwitch’s even healers; he belatedly realized when he noticed the different coloured robes. They were more prepared for this than they had been during the battle of the Ministry. Then again that battle had been a lot bloodier. So many innocent people had been in the building that day, and been seriously hurt by falling debris, from statues to the actual building itself.

She squeezed his shoulder in comfort before she was gone.

“YOU TELL EVERYONE THE TRUTH!” snarled Lily, forcing Harry to face her. “TELL THEM THE TRUTH NOW!”

Harry blinked almost bewildered as he was forced to face Lily Potter, a woman who was by birth his mother…but nothing but a stranger to him. This hadn’t happened the last time…then again nobody had been able to get near him in his grief from the loss of Severus. He would have to adjust to everything now since anything that happened…well hadn’t happened before.

“Let me go,” said Harry firmly, shoving her away from him. He wasn’t going to get into this with her, especially not at St. Mungo’s surrounded by people who were hurt and needed desperate attention. There were people still getting rid of blood and mud that had been trailed in with everyone.

“I should never have kept you,” she spat, her green eyes filled with disgust.

“Why don’t you get some new material?” Harry told her, his insides twisting at her diatribe. He may hate her guts, but it did hurt him but he refused to give way to it. He’d been hurt so many times over the years, that he had no more tears to cry and no more wishes of a better family to think about. He had moved on with his life, he hated her and he just wished her words wouldn’t hurt still.

“I want you to leave this hospital right now.” boomed Healer Smethwyck glaring at Lily Potter in disgust. He was aware that she was seeing a mind-healer; in fact he had come to him for advice on a very difficult case. Her case, since they made no progress in near enough two years now. They didn’t like committing people but the mind-healer felt he might have to if things didn’t change. He hadn’t gone into details about it; he couldn’t due to the oath. Perhaps he was right; she definitely needed some sort of treatment. Whatever they were doing for her obviously wasn’t working; perhaps James Potter could try and shed some light.

“You will tell everyone the truth, do you hear me?” snarled Lily, her green eyes alight with desperation and fear. “He’ll come back - it has to be Nick…you’ve destroyed everything, you tell them the truth or I will.” she raised her wand her face blank giving her a slightly deranged look around the eyes.

Harry stepped back, raising his own wand, not for fear of himself…he didn’t just have himself to protect anymore. He was the only one that knew that right now though, he had his unborn child to protect and he would at all costs. The thought that he might not be pregnant anymore didn’t even cross his mind. She was losing her mind, attacking him in a deserted Hogwarts corridor was one thing…but in the middle of a hospital with dozens of witnesses? “I just defeated Voldemort…you’ve faced him three times yourself, and you want to go up against the one who successfully beat him?”

“He’s not defeated!” she said shaking her head adamantly. Refusing to believe that her son, Nick, who she’d trained for years before being put in Azkaban was not the hero of the people.
“Cease and desist this behaviour at once!” snapped Albus Dumbledore stepping into the hospital. His blue eyes like ice chips. “We’ve already lost many people today, and this behaviour is completely unacceptable. They aren’t even cold and we are already squabbling amongst ourselves. Don’t you see you are allowing the dark to win with this disregard for decent acceptable manners!”

“You don’t understand…he’ll be back…it must be Nick,” exclaimed Lily, terrified. Looking around as if she expected the evil wizard to suddenly appear.

“Enough of this,” said Albus, frowning at Lily. She must just be in shock; she’d watched the entire battle locked inside while her husband and son fought. Once she processed what had happened she would likely feel very silly for her reactions, he reasoned to himself. He didn’t even want to contemplate the idea that one of the brightest witches to come out of Hogwarts was simply put going out of her mind. “Let’s go.” he added firmly, pressing her wand and her arm down so it wasn’t pointed at anyone. “We are required at the Ministry of magic.”

Harry looked around and realized Severus wasn’t anywhere to be seen, biting his lip he felt as though his heart would explode. Was he that angry that he didn’t want to face him? What if he’d done all this and Severus didn’t want anything to do with him anymore? Breathing heavily, feeling sick to his stomach, dear Merlin, he didn’t want to even think like that but unfortunately those thought would never leave him. He was too used to being abandoned; hurt, alone…he never wanted to be alone.

“Harry?” his name was called.

Harry looked around wondering who was calling out to him, he noticed Healer Walsh making her way over.

“How’s Cedric?” asked Harry, his eyes wide with fear.

“I’m not supposed to say, you know the rules, family only.” said Healer Walsh shaking her head solemnly. She took her vows as a healer very seriously.

“Then why…” Harry trailed off confused.

“Severus is asking for you,” she explained.

“Sev?” gasped Harry, his earlier fears returning that he hadn’t done enough to save him.

“He’s being patched up the cutting curse did a number on him,” Healer Walsh told him, before quickly adding knowing his next question. “He used the potions he had on those that needed it more urgently.” without his quick actions two others would have lost their lives due to blood loss. If Severus hadn’t come in when he did he would have been one of the casualties as well.

“Oh,” muttered Harry, shaky with relief.

“Come on,” said Healer Walsh leading him along to the room Severus was in. “How are you feeling? Were you injured?” just because nothing appeared wrong outwardly didn’t mean they weren’t hit with something. She knew that from personal experience. She’d had to pronounce perfectly healthy people (at least outwardly) dead when their insides had been deteriorated due to curses.

“Yes,” grimaced Harry, now that she mentioned it he was in agony. His hand was burnt and his ankle was broken, he hadn’t felt it last time due to the immense grief of losing Severus. “I’ll get fixed when I go home.” he added as they entered the ward.
“Nonsense, you’ll sit down and let me fix you up!” demanded Healer Walsh, ushering Harry onto an empty bed, noticing for the first time the bandages around Harry’s ankle.

“As long as you get burn paste quickly,” said Harry, the pain was becoming unbearable. “Let me see your hand,” said Severus, standing in front of Harry.

Harry’s green eyes shot up to meet black ones, showing every single one of his emotions particularly his fear. He gave Severus his hand, never wavering from his face, as if he was trying to soak up every detail of it. Seven days he’d lived with the knowledge that he’d died…that he’d be alone and his baby would never know its father. Harry winced yanking his hand trying to get away from what was causing the pain without conscious decision. It didn’t take long before Severus had applied the paste on the burns.

“Well?” he said soothingly, as he began to wrap bandages around his hand keeping the wound sterilised and incidentally the paste on the burns. He didn’t think he’d ever seen Harry look that vulnerable before, not even after escaping the Dark Lord at the age of fourteen. He didn’t like to think he had the ability to destroy Harry’s spirit to this extent without even saying anything. That wasn’t it though was it? He thought as he felt the time-turner in his hip. Harry had been through something traumatic and he had no clue as to what it was. He suspected for sure, but he didn’t like speculating, he preferred definitive proof and understanding.

“Drink this down, and try and keep as much weight of this foot as possible, I’ll ask one of the staff to bring you up a crutch.” said Healer Walsh handing over the bone-mending potion.

Harry looked at the potion, staring at it blankly, could he even drink that? He’d drank it before he even knew he was pregnant the last time…but now he knew he wondered. He looked around the four bedded ward and found that the two other beds (despite the fact Severus wasn’t using his he had still been assigned to it) were empty - nobody else was in the room.

“Harry?” Severus said gravely, staring at Harry as if he was a strange specimen he had never before encountered.

“Are pregnant people allowed to consume this potion?” whispered Harry, never lifting his eyes.

“Excuse me?” demanded Severus, not believing what he had just heard come out of Harry’s mouth.

“Yes, it’s perfectly safe, why do you ask?” enquired Healer Walsh, having stopped what she was doing to stare at him also. She knew Harry was in a relationship with Severus Snape, and that he was very male - she couldn’t find a reason for him asking such a question.

Harry downed the potion, not even grimacing at the taste. Half wishing he hadn’t said anything; he should have told Severus when they were alone. If he knew Sev like he thought he did, he would have just been brought right back here for confirmation and to make sure the baby was alright.

“Could you excuse us for a moment please?” enquired Severus, his gaze never wavering from Harry’s. His heart was beating rapidly; it just wasn’t possible…was it? He hadn’t even created the potion yet…Harry couldn’t have come from that far in the future that he’d finished it for him could he?

“Of course,” said Healer Walsh, immediately putting everything down and leaving the room so they could discuss it in private. She locked the door behind her out of habit before taking a seat that was usually for patients waiting to visit their offices.

“Are you…” Severus couldn’t even say the word as his heart pounded even harder against his
Instead of replying to the question, Harry murmured the scan spell under his breath.
Chapter 95

Invisible

Chapter 95

Severus inhaled sharply as the image appeared in front of him, he felt as though his entire world was crumbling around him. Without conscious thought he silenced the room, as he tried to process what Harry had just implicated. Men couldn’t get pregnant; it was just the one thing that was normal or rather considered normal in all worlds, Muggle and Magical. He stared utterly mesmerised, there was definitely a baby there, and you could see that even if it was blurry. The head, the arms and the legs, but how was it surviving? “How far...” murmured Severus, unable to look away.

“Two months,” confessed Harry, feeling guilty that Severus hadn’t been able to find out in happier instance. “Or it will be in a few days at least.” no, he wasn’t going to feel guilty, it was better than him never knowing at all. Of raising a child on his own messing up and having his own child hate him. He didn’t want another generation being screwed up. He didn’t have faith in his abilities other than potions.

“Merlin,” breathed Severus still shocked.

“I’m sorry,” whispered Harry, green eyes overly bright with unshed tears.

Severus’ eyes snapped up to Harry’s, “Why would you be sorry?” enquired Severus, having a funny feeling he already knew.

“I had to do it; I would do it again...” Harry told him vehemently.

“This is not the place to discuss this,” warned Severus, his tone firm and grave. Silencing charms or no, he didn’t want to risk their being eavesdropping charms and such on the hospital. No, the only place he would talk about it was in the safety of Prince Manor where they were both safe. Especially with this news on top of it, it wouldn’t just be Harry he was protecting but his unborn child. Harry had risked everything by coming back, dear Merlin, it made his heart burst in pride and love so profound it stole his breath away. He’d known how Harry felt; part of him had waited on Harry realizing he could do better but along the way he’d realized Harry was there to stay. Now this, how could he think even for a moment - to doubt him when he’d done all this?

“You are angry through...aren’t you?” Harry asked, or more like stated. Severus hadn’t touched him since he’d grabbed him...even now that they were in private so it wasn’t a stretch to realize he was angry with him.

“I was,” conceded Severus, “I do not have all the facts yet, but I will have them all.” the last part sounded more warningly than he would have liked. He didn’t take it back; no matter what he found out he had to know. He couldn’t let Harry go through whatever it was alone; the stress couldn’t be good for either of them. Merlin that was odd to say, either of them, he was going to be a bloody father. In seven months if things went well he would have a child, he’d thought about it when he was asked to brew the potion...constantly if he was honest with himself. It was definitely something he would have considered using if he’d created the potion for the couple that had commissioned it. He would need to get in touch with them and explain what was going on. If this news got out they would assume the wrong thing.
Harry nodded solemnly, before he launched himself at Severus unable to take the distance between them. Just feeling those arms around him, the strong heartbeat under his face caused his composure to shatter into a million pieces. A strangled sound left his mouth before the tears ran freely being soaked up by Severus’ torn shirt. Harry’s hands fisted into his clothes, as he continued to let out all the anguish - how he still had any tears to cry was anyone’s guess.

“Easy,” soothed Severus, his face screwing up in pain, Harry was leaning against his healing skin; the cutting curse had been deeper than he originally thought. Yet he wasn’t able to concentrate on the pain overly much, no he was trying to stop Harry becoming more upset. Shifting slightly so Harry was on his other side, he rubbed at Harry’s neck deciding to let him release the maelstrom of emotion caught up inside of him. It was killing him that he could do nothing to help him, didn’t know the right words to soothe him.

“Better?” asked Severus, not moving, Harry’s entire body was shaking with the force of his sobs, which were thankfully tapering off now.

Harry nodded still pressed against Severus, just revelling in the closeness of him…the smell of him and hearing him talk. He’d done it, they were all safe…they were going to be alright now. He didn’t quite understand what had happened and why, but he couldn’t complain about the outcome. At least he didn’t have to rough it for a week, sleeping on the floor of the shrieking shack or anything like that. “Sorry,” he murmured, breathing out as he wiped his tears away, trying to regain his composure.

“Never apologise, Harry.” stated Severus, it let him see just how much Harry cared -even if it hurt to see him in such a way. “I’m going to call Andy in now…I want to know more and make sure the baby is developed properly.” So out of his element that he was actually referring to Healer Walsh by her given name - something he rarely, if ever did.

“Okay,” said Harry, sliding from the bed and hobbling over to the sink and giving his face a quick wash to cool down. Grabbing a towel that had St. Mungo’s blazoned across it; he wiped all trace of the water from his feeling a little bit better. Who was he kidding? He felt more than just a little bit better, he had his Severus back. He was more prepared to ask questions this time around, he wanted to know why the image was so fuzzy, it was like looking through a pair of strong glasses, it’s the only way he could describe it. Looking over when he heard a noise, he realized it was just Severus opening the door - there would be no point to calling out since the room as still under the silencing charm.

“Everything sorted?” she said, giving them a smile, which was slightly tense not sure what to make of Harry’s statement.

“I need you to do a full workup on Harry, immediately and in private,” said Severus, her office would be perfect for this, the ward should be used for people that needed it - right now neither he nor Harry did. He did however need to see someone and make sure he was in perfect health. Although he wouldn’t be surprised to see his stress levels off the charts, and blood pressure.

“Of course,” healer Walsh replied immediately, “You both know here my office is, I must check on a few patients first and see if my help is needed further since this isn’t an emergency.”

“Understood,” stated Severus, helping Harry off the bed he had just sat back down on, Andy was already out of the room and down the hall by the time they got to the door. Both of them walked up the stairs instead of waiting for the lift. With the amount of people currently in the hospital it would be occupied constantly. As long as they would have to wait, it wasn’t worth trying to get into a jam packed lift.
Severus tried the door to her office and found it open, much to his surprise. He knew they normally locked them, both manually and magically. Then again all of them were probably flustered, it’s the first time the spells around the hospital had ever been fully called into affect. They will have all panicked slightly; despite the training they’d had, seeing people hurt from their windows wouldn’t have helped the slightest. Then everyone had come running, the probability of all their offices being open was quite big.

Stepping inside, he elected not to close the door behind him as Harry sat down. He looked down at his torn clothes, he had to get changed and soon. The wound was still sore and very red, it would heal nicely though and hopefully not scar. He wasn’t a vain man by any means, but he didn’t want any scars or tattoos or anything on his body as a reminder…he’d bore the Dark Mark for years because of a stupid mistake.

“Dobby?” demanded Severus, realizing he could use a House-Elf. He didn’t want to go to the Ministry like this.

“Yes Master Severus?” answered Dobby appearing at the hospital his eyes widening at the state of both of them. “Master Harry! Master Severus! Is you both okay?”

“We’re fine, let my mother know that the war is over and that we are both alive and well just in case she’s been Floo called.” Severus said sternly. “Bring us both a change of clothes, perhaps something to eat as well, we will be held up for a while.”

“Dobby will do that right away,” said the House-Elf popping away immediately. He was familiar with the hospital having come and gone with potions and even letters. As well as the occasional time he had transported someone to and from St. Mungo’s. Their magic as different, different enough that they were able to come and go without disturbing the wards the wizards had put up even now.

Severus turned to the sink himself now, and grabbed a few paper towels and began to clean the blood off his skin. Most of it had gotten onto his clothes, and now was dried to a hard crust. He quickly removed his cloak, grimacing at the pain of ripping his clothes from his skin where the blood had stuck them together. He made sure everything was in the pocket still - including the time-turner. He would give it to Dobby, less chance of anything happen that he couldn’t contain. He did look at the rings for an amount of time. He couldn’t help but wonder what Harry had thought when he saw them…especially if he suspected right and he was dead. Imagining the scenario reversed his heart clenched tightly, he swiftly forced himself to think about something else…the baby, which swiftly made him very hopeful. A vision of a child with Harry’s looks and both their smarts flashed across his mind eye. He had to know how it was possible; he prayed that Andy didn’t take too long.

“Let me help,” murmured Harry, re-wetting the towel and getting the rest of the blood Severus had missed. He was still in shock that he’d done it, he’d saved Severus and he had his whole family alive and safe. He hoped that Cedric would survive, that the spell hadn’t done too much damage before he stopped it. Putting the towel down, he leaned against Severus again, just relishing in his presence. He didn’t get to touch him nowhere near as long as he would have liked before Dobby returned with Sev’s requested items.

“Can Dobby do any more to help?” asked the House-Elf as he placed the pile of clothes and boxes of food on the table.

“Take this and go home and make sure my mother doesn’t worry.” stated Severus sharply. Handing over the cloak with the rings, time-turner and the remains of his potions.
“Yes sir,” agreed Dobby before he was gone again.

“I’ll be fine, take a seat,” said Severus, not used to Harry being quite so clingy, especially in public - it could be more public its true, but still he had to remind himself that Harry had just been through something traumatic. Not only could he see it in his actions but his eyes as well, he didn’t want to see it there. It was more than just having to murder someone, which was enough of a burden to carry, even if it was kill or be killed. Once he’d sat Harry back down, he picked up the clothes Dobby had brought for him. Thankful that it was his normal wear and not his more dressy clothes he had in his wardrobe. Moving over the screen he moved it around and quickly began to undress then dress himself again. Not as quick as he found it difficult to put his shirt on without aggravating his newly healed wounds. Perhaps he should have taken the pain reliever Andy had offered him, but he hadn’t wanted to take potions he hadn’t made himself. He did contemplate calling Dobby to bring a few but he heard the door opening and his thoughts turned.

“Sorry about keeping you waiting, I’m afraid there were a few people who needed seeing to immediately.” said Healer Walsh, smiling at them as she closed the door behind him. She was a little put out that she’d left her office door open but she trusted them not to have been snooping. She was quite flustered it wasn’t every day she had to tend to Albus Dumbledore! But he had put her quite at ease, with his cheerful disposition.

“Its fine,” replied Severus as Harry said, “We understand…how’s Cedric? Has his parents been told?”

“They are visiting him yes, you can go and see him on your way out, he’s in the room across from my office.” explained Andy, he was awake but groggy from the pain relievers they’d given him. His internal organs were already beginning to repair thanks to Eileen’s potion. It would take a while before he was released, but he was on the mend and that was the most important thing.

“Thank you,” said Harry, giving her a short smile, she’s told him he was doing fine without actually saying anything. He wasn’t in the intensive care unit which meant he was on the mend - and that’s all that mattered to him.

“So a full work up? Why don’t you sit up on the bed,” said Andy, gesturing for him to get up and onto the bed. She quickly drew the curtain back that Severus had used just moments ago to get dressed. She’d not even had a chance to dwell on what Harry had said, at least until she’d been making her way back up here to her office. If it was a joke…it was a seriously misplaced one, especially now of all times. From what she knew about Harry and incidentally Severus neither were the joking kind. Both serious academics, making strides in the potions community hadn’t seen in a few centuries. It was normal for a potions master to create say one groundbreaking potion but more than one had never been done before.

“Has the first round of Potions been administered to the Longbottoms?” enquired Severus staying where he was; he wanted to see everything she was doing.

“Yes, I and Healer Smethwyck had just administered it three minutes before the hospital went on lockdown.” explained Andy, having Neville Longbottom’s permission to administer experimental potions to his parents cut a lot of red tape. They didn’t need to ask permission from the board of directors at St. Mungo’s. “Unfortunately we didn’t get to stay around for any result, but from what you said earlier it will take a while anyway. The Mediwitch’s and wizards know to scan them and place the results at the bottom for us to send to you.”

Harry startled at that, earlier…if only she knew. It couldn’t have been further from the truth, he
almost wanted to laugh but instead just breathed deeply. He wondered if she would have the same reaction as before...or if in her office in a professional setting she would behave with more decorum...not that he thought her reaction was a bad thing...everyone had been shocked.

He watched her closely, as she read the results, pursing his lips finding the shock on her face hilarious this time around. Merlin so much had changed! It caused a genuine grin to spill out onto his face. He’d done this, he had made things normal again and he…would have to thank James Potter…for it if wasn’t for him there would be no guarantee he would have successfully made it back.

“This shouldn’t be possible,” she said, “Lift your shirt up Harry.” she asked, before she began to poke and prod at his stomach an intense look of concentration on her face.

“What is going on?” demanded Severus, would he not be able to carry the baby to term?

“I just need to be sure,” she added, how had Harry known? How was it possible that he would trust his own results? Obviously he had known since he said earlier. Moving off towards her bag she opened it and removed a few items before going back to Harry. Sterilising and numbing the area around his arm she drew blood before pressing down on the plunger letting the blood escape back out onto the rune filled paper she had placed on the side of the bed.

“Well, that confirms it, he’s pregnant.” she said completely thrown, she felt the need to sit down - or eat something…she felt dizzy as if she hadn’t eaten enough or something. “I have no clue how, but he’s pregnant.”

“How far along?” demanded Severus, his gaze never wavering from his stomach.

“Two months in a matter of days,” said Andy, “Wait a minute, the changes begun the day Harry had his accident!” she realized upon digging further into the information she had in her hands.

“Unicorn blood,” said Harry, staring at Severus, the missing ingredient needed for his potion to complete.

Severus’ eyes widened, since when did Unicorn blood enable such a thing? It made no sense…but the results were here in black in white. “How will the baby survive? How has it been surviving?”

Andy murmured the words to create a scan, bringing it up for both parents to see.

“Why is it blurry?” enquired Severus, his hands grasping the bottom of the bed tightly.

“I can’t say for sure, but I think it’s his magic,” explained Andy. “The unicorn blood perhaps gave him a gift that…is quite frankly unprecedented…but his magic created a sack that fits right here, where the womb would be in a woman.” she added showing them what she meant. With it being magical there might never be any outwardly sign that he is pregnant…it just depends.”

“I see,” said Severus, this all sounded like conjecture and he didn’t like it. Unfortunately there was no way he would know for sure what would happen. This was a first…he would definitely need to get in touch with the American couple, not only would he have this potion completed for them - he would need to tell them about himself and Harry’s surprise…no miracle. He didn’t even know if the unicorn blood would help them like it had Harry…he would need to wait and see what occurs.

“The baby is getting all the nutrients it needs, see, here is the placenta,” said Andy mesmerised by what she was seeing. Magic had created a womb and everything the foetus would need to survive. It was quite unreal really; she didn’t know what to think this truly was a whole new era. “If the foetus survives you will need to have a C-section to remove it.” she was very lucky to be the one to
be doing this. She was Harry’s healer, had been since the first time she saw him when he was injured. It was
no coincidence that the accident with the unicorn blood had started all this.

“I have to ask this of course…as I always must, do you want to have the baby?” asked Andy, professionally.

“Of course,” snapped Harry and Severus together in sync, they were not going to get rid of this…miracle child.
Andy nodded having already known the answer but she’d been obliged to ask as part of her job. “Do you have any other questions?” she asked absently moving Harry’s top back down, she desperately needed to sit down so she picked the paperwork back up and took a seat behind her desk. Opening one of the drawers she pulled out Harry’s folder and placed the new paperwork into it - she certainly wouldn’t risk her job leaving it lying out! Someone had already lost their job, but she had brought it on herself by informing the press. She had questions of her own she wanted to ask, but they were quite frankly none of her business. Harry had destroyed You-Know-Who, completely obliterated him, and the papers had constantly said it was Nick who was the ‘chosen one’ who would have to destroy the evil wizard. Had they been wrong? Had it been Harry all along?

“Nothing I can think of at the moment,” said Severus, he was still trying to process everything and with the battle and Harry using a time-turner on top of it - it was little wonder he wasn’t quite himself at the moment.

“Okay, let’s set an appointment up for next week,” said Andy that would give them time to relax and recover.

“The magic I did today…it won’t harm the baby will it?” asked Harry, sliding off the bed, as he wandered over to Severus and sat down next to him.

“As long as you don’t go home and get into another battle then no, your magic is as strong as ever.” answered Andy immediately. “Unfortunate I think you already suspect that you cannot be near Potions or the fumes for the duration of your pregnancy.”

“What? The entire time?” gaped Harry, he hadn’t thought about that! Taking potions yes, but not being able to brew anything for seven whole months?

“Yes, the entire time,” replied Andy, it was just too dangerous. There were only a few potions they were allowed while they were pregnant as well. Flipping through papers she found the list of forbidden potions as well as the few he would be allowed and passed it along wordlessly to Severus.

“Oh,” murmured Harry, well he would just have to work theoretically on some potions he had lying around. He would never risk the baby, not that Severus would allow it. He would miss brewing through, desperately miss it but needs a must.

“Come, we must go to the Ministry, otherwise they will be chasing us down, hopefully everyone has already given their statements so we can get in and out.” said Severus, although he knew that wouldn’t happen.

“I doubt that, quite a few of them are in here for treatment,” said Andy, honestly.

Severus groaned but reluctantly got up - he would rather that than being accosted by them when they next saw them. Or coming into the manor half cocked over a bloody statement. Severus
glanced at Andy when laughed a little at their predicament. “I hope I don’t have to reiterate that this must be kept under wraps?” he told her firmly.

“Of course you don’t, but you know as well as I that things get out despite our best efforts.” said Andy, “So choose wisely who you choose to tell and what you say in letters. The press will be all over Harry now…and do anything to uncover even the smallest story.”

Harry shuddered at the thought, going paler by the second.

“Indeed,” said Severus, already realizing that statement and knowing it was true.

“Feel free to use the Floo,” said Andy, the smell of the food was making her stomach rumble. She hadn’t had any lunch today and quite frankly she was starving. Hopefully she would be able to have five minutes to herself to eat something, although it wouldn’t be a cooked meal - not until she got home to her husband later tonight. If she lasted until tonight, her husband had been so worried - the news had already reached him but thankfully when he saw her in the fire the majority of the panic had faded.

“I would be grateful for that,” said Severus, standing up absently picking up their food as both of them moved towards the fireplace. Harry had been extremely quiet, had he already known the answer to the questions or was he still feeling out of sorts with what had happened? He wished he knew, but until they got home they weren’t discussing it - he wasn’t going to risk it. He just wished he knew what was going on in his mind.

“I’ll see you next week,” commented Andy, “I’ll send out an owl with a date and time.” realising they didn’t have one yet.

Severus nodded curtly, before he grasped a handful of Floo powder from the pot at the side of the fireplace before throwing it at their feet. Shouting his new destination in, wishing for nothing more than to be in Prince Manor. He hadn’t expected to like the place so much when he finally moved in. Yet he did, but he knew it wasn’t solely due to the house but the people inside it too.

“Urgh,” complained Harry, “I hate the Floo.” he added as he regained his bearings inside the Ministries Atrium.

A million flashlights went off, as a dozens upon dozens of people began shouting questions at him. Harry looked around his face impassive but inwardly horrified to the core to see them all there. It was as if they had been waiting for the moment he appeared. Shuddering softly, he quickly ran towards the wand weighting wizard - and stuffed his wand in his hand and waited on getting it back.

“They won’t get near the Auror’s office, don’t worry.” said Severus calming Harry down - the wild look in his eyes fading just slightly at the knowledge.

“They won’t get passed here, Sir, they aren’t allowed unless they have explicit permission or are interviewing someone.” explained the wizard passing Severus’ wand to him. It was true, they couldn’t get passed the wards, and it seemed as if the Ministry was still on partial lock down. No doubt due to the worried families trying to find out what had happened to their loved ones. They wouldn’t get to talk to anyone other than a receptionist at St. Mungo’s so they probably thought they’d have better luck here - but since the new building had been built it just wasn’t true.

Severus nodded curtly saying nothing as they both ventured further into the ministry, grateful for the forethought to stop the press. Harry was going through enough without them bothering him every minute. This was Harry’s worst fear literally staring him in the face. He didn’t know why he
feared it so much, but he did, and there was nothing he could do to stop it. He would just have to learn to live with it unfortunately as callous as that sounded it was the truth. Severus wished he could protect his lover from this but it wasn’t possible.

It didn’t take them that much longer to climb the stairs and get to the Auror department. They did pass a curiously packed cafeteria on the way up, but they didn’t linger with fear of being trampled - they certainly weren’t taking any chances. They’d just gotten into the main area, where a few others were sitting waiting - presumably for the Auror’s when they bumped into someone.

“Harry! Erm…Hi,” muttered James dumbly staring at Harry surprised, not sure what to say. Anything he wanted to say would be rejected anyway so what was the point. He was going to respect Harry’s wish and remain out of his life…as hard as that would be.

“Hello,” replied Harry, blinking at him. This James hadn’t given him the time-tuner but he was still the man who risked everything to help him.

Severus arched an eyebrow clearly surprised; okay he definitely needed to see what on earth had happened. He’d actually said a civil word to James Potter the world was turning on its axis. Staring at Harry cautiously, he could see only wary acceptance on his face. Potter looked as though a feather could knock him over, he was stunned - no doubt he’d expected Harry to ignore him - he knew he had.

“Do you want someone else to take your statement?” asked James, his tone cautious. He didn’t know what Harry was up to but he tried not to let the hope consume him but it was a futile effort.

“I’ll take Snape.” boomed Moody, from inside the office; they could see him from the side of the room sitting at his desk.

“Alright,” murmured Harry, shrugging his shoulders he just wanted to get home so anything that got it done quicker he was fine with. He didn’t know how to feel about James Potter anymore…but maybe Severus would be able to help him sort out all his chaotic thoughts and feelings.
“Alright,” said James clearing his throat, reminding himself to remain professional, there was no point to begging Harry his forgiveness or asking why Harry had not told them the truth. He didn’t deserve it, he had dismissed his son his entire life…what right did he have to demand answers from him now? None at all. He hoped Eileen and Severus would be there for him since he could not, he remembered his conversation with Nick - and no doubt Harry felt the same. It wasn’t just hypothetically killing a wizard - no matter what Voldemort had done, Harry had actually had to kill someone to survive as the prophecy foretold. Not that it was the first time, but those hadn’t been aimed to kill, Harry had just been trying to escape it was pure luck that he’d hit Pettigrew and Voldemort’s snake. “Start from the beginning.” he said the quill was poised next to the paperwork ready to begin recording everything Harry said. The names dates and location were already written on the otherwise blank parchment.

That might be a bit difficult; it hadn’t just happened for him…it was nearing a week ago. Shifting slightly, he summoned up his courage and began talking. “Sev and I got a note from Ollivander, he wanted to see me, and so we went to see him. We were already going to the hospital anyway; I finished the potion Neville requested to help his parents.”

“You brewed a potion to negate the affects of the Cruciatus Curse?” gasped James, his heart hammering in his chest. Would he have a good friend back soon? He had been devastated by what happened to Frank and Alice, they might not have been extremely close, but both their children having the possibility to be a prophecy child had been terrifying. Lily and Alice had gone into labour on the same day as well, which hadn’t helped matters; both women had been on eggshells praying that they wouldn’t give birth. What should have been a momentous and joyous occasion had been filled with dread and fear.

“Yes,” replied Harry, sighing softly, he wanted to get back to St. Mungo’s and check on Cedric. He felt so guilty that he’d been hit, and with what Luna had said he was even more on edge. What if despite the fact he’d used the counter-curse quickly Cedric succumbed to the curse? He would never be able to forgive himself - so he was determined to be there to see for himself that he was okay.

“Continue,” said James, despite the fact he wanted to ask about the potion - not that he’d understand. He and Lily only had a cursory knowledge of potions, him more than Lily surprisingly, but nothing like what it took to pass a Mastery in the subject. He knew how to identify potions, by scent alone, never mind actually seeing them but that didn’t mean he could brew complex potions. Harry hadn’t received the ability from them, no if anyone it will have been his mum. Harry’s grandmother, she had been a Black before her marriage and being disowned and quite good at potions. She’d been a stay at home mum though, and never had a career - back then it hadn’t been normal to have both a career and a child.

“You were there! Why do I have to repeat everything all over again?” grumbled Harry, his ankle was spasming in pain as it repaired itself. Evidently there hadn’t been a numbing or pain relief in it. At least the burns on his hands were numb, it was going to be a very long day he realized - and he was already exhausted. He just wanted to go home and take his shoes off and sleep for a year.
James frowned, he may not know his son well, but from everyone who spoke about him they'd never heard him whining. He had to forcefully remind himself that Harry had just ended a life; he would want to go back to his house and recover no doubt. Either that or someone he cared about was in critical condition at St. Mungo’s. “It will only take a few more minutes then you can go.”

“Voldemort approached… and I um…noticed the medallion for the--” Harry cut off giving James a weird look, the wizard was gesturing for him to stop quite emphatically. Of course, he wouldn’t want the Ministry to know he was part of the Order of the Phoenix. Rolling his eyes, Harry began to talk quicker; just thinking about it was bringing everything flooding back. He mentioned Lily’s words, Voldemort’s words and everything that happened in the duel. He even mentioned Lily pulling him aside at the hospital and warning James that he would take legal action if she didn’t stop. Harry was not going to risk his baby, not for the sake of ignoring his family and he knew she wouldn’t give up. He was largely unaware of the spell preventing Lily from casting even the miniscule harmful spell at anyone. James didn’t seem surprised by his words - more resigned than anything but he didn’t say anything, just nodded his head as they finished the statement.

“Hand over your wand,” said James.

Harry froze, swallowing thickly his eyes wider than usual as he handed it over, his heart pounding like a drum. James took it delicately, frowning at Harry’s odd behaviour and the wand. He had been with Harry when he got his wand, and he was ninety-five percent sure that this wasn’t the wand that had picked him when he was eleven.

“Prior Incantato!” James said clearly, a bright gold glow began to emerge from Harry’s wand and began to show echoes of all spells he had used. James quickly said their names as they came along, or the affects they had which was promptly recorded on the parchment on the desk.

-Diffindo - Fumos - Glacius - Diminuendo - Wingardium Leviosa - Orbis - Reducto - Ferula - Frigidus sanguis - Ossa Frangere - Aqua Eructo - Levicorpus - Langlock - Protego - Reducto - Sectumsempra - Diffindo (with an image of Voldemort indicating that this had been the spell that had taken the evil wizard down) - Counter-Curse to the Concido spell.

Harry almost doubled over in relief, but he was plagued with even more questions now. Where was his other wand? Had it disappeared? The clothes off his back had as well as the time-turner; it may very well be a mystery that he would never find out. Just like Luna’s words…Merlin he had been so glad for his friends during the last week even now despite the fact it had never happened.

“Deletrius!” cast James, ending the spell having no further need for it.

“Read the statement and if everything is correct, sign it Harry,” said James, handing over the parchment and quill. He felt as if a wall had come down between them without him even knowing about it. They weren’t exactly friendly…but there wasn’t the stone cold iciness that had been present since he’d seen him last well if you didn’t count today.

Harry gave it a cursory read, before he quickly signed his name. Harry Peverell.

“That’s the last of the Death Eaters caught,” exclaimed Proudfoot as he entered the office, he was absently rubbing at his shoulder as he sat down at his seat. He was utterly exhausted, but feeling very elated by the way things had gone. Many of the Death Eaters had gotten away during the last war, but the prominent ones who had managed to weasel out of a one way ticket to Azkaban were dead this time around. Well with the obvious exception of Lucius Malfoy, he was in Azkaban. His own wife had yet to even approach the Ministry with a request to see him. Neither had his son and it wasn’t as if he couldn’t, he was seventeen years old now…nearly eighteen. Graduation was coming up quickly, he had a nephew he was going to see graduate; it was why it
was firmly imprinted in his mind. The fact they’d done it with so many of their own injured or worse killed in the line of duty spoke of their resilience.

Evil would never win as long as there were people who would risk it all to keep everyone safe.

“Why didn’t you say anything?” asked James his eyes clouded with torturous pain.

“About what?” enquired Harry, already having a good idea what he was referring to.

“That it was you…” murmured James, sadly.

“Would you have believed me?” demanded Harry bluntly.

James just smiled bitterly; of course he wouldn’t have believed him…years ago, but in the past two years? He would have thought about it and made sure it was true.

“Are we done?” asked Harry, standing up, clutching onto the table wincing, how the hell could he have forgotten about the damn ankle? It was hurting enough that he shouldn’t be that’s for damn certain. The beginning was the worst, as it literally knitted the bones back together.

“Are you alright,” asked James lurching forward, stopping just inches from Harry before curling his hand back aware that Harry probably didn’t even want his aid.

“Lean against me,” said Severus, coming towards him, his black eyes filled with concern. He didn’t need to be concerned with the fear he might faint since he’d taken two doses of blood replenishing draughts to ensure it. In fact he hadn’t been dizzy since he sat down and allowed Healer Walsh to heal the wound on his chest. She had thankfully put a salve on it that would get rid of the scarring (not that it always worked) but if put on quick enough it did help. “Do you need us for anything further?” enquired Severus, giving Potter and Moody a quick look.

“Just your signature on this, then we are done,” barked Moody, in his usual no-nonsense voice. He in an unusual move grabbed the parchment and quill and walked over to them putting both on James’ desk for Severus to sign. His magical eye moved between both of them, if the eye could show emotion it would be showing speculative curiosity.

“I guess I best tell everyone they can go home,” said James “Is it alright if Nick stays here until I’m finished?”

“Just head home, I’ll do the paperwork,” said Shacklebolt from his desk to their left. Unlike a lot of other Auror’s he didn’t have a significant other. Plus he had been doing nothing but paperwork anyway so it made him feel better to be useful. Even if it only helped let James go home early. He was curious about what happened and what better than to read the eye witnesses accounts of what happened? Simply put - there wasn’t. It was just too bad that he was being cleared for work in two weeks time; the war (and the worst) was over.

“Really?” James perked up at the idea, turning to face Kingsley to see whether he was serious or not.

“Yeah,” Shacklebolt nodded, hands out expectantly.

James didn’t need further convincing as he lifted them all up and thumped them on Shacklebolt’s desk. “Thanks Kings,” he told his co-worker honestly, he was very grateful for him doing this. The information that had been dropped on him like a bomb today and the battle he wanted to go home and drink himself into a stupor.
“No problem.” Shacklebolt told him, waving his hand off as if it was nothing.

“Does anyone know how Dumbledore is doing?” asked James, realizing he hadn’t been interviewed by them - the others that had interviewed people at St. Mungo’s were still not back yet.

“He was interviewed at St. Mungo’s he’s fine,” said Moody.

“Smith is back?” asked James surprised, staring over at Moody now.

“They all are,” said Moody, his hand pointing towards the large pile of paperwork on his desk. They were now cleaning up the mess, as junior Aurors it was expected of them to do it at least a few times. After the battle ended they’d been more interested in helping the injured and the dead on their own side.

“Oh,” murmured James surprised. “Let Sirius know I’ve left for the evening.” turning ready to open his mouth, but to say what he wasn’t sure, only to notice that Harry and Snape were already gone. Go figure, Snape had always been good at slinking away; it’s what made him a very good spy. It was probably for the best, he honestly didn’t know what to say to Harry - he never did really.

“Bye!” called James as he hastily made his way out of the offices, making a beeline for the cafeteria. It was just as packed as before; they were all looking impatient and irritated at having been kept so long. Which was understandable a few of them probably had someone they cared about in the hospital. Which such a small community it was hardly surprising.

He ran towards the cafeteria, or rather jogged since it wasn’t far from the Auror Headquarters. The door was wide open, allowing him to see everyone was milling around looking irritated.

“Can we go now?” shouted a voice as soon as he entered. Looking around he tried to identify who had spoken, and only one person was actually walking forward an expectant look on his face.

“Yes, you are all free to go, please do so in an orderly fashion, as you can imagine we are extremely busy and people are going back and forth with regular intervals. We do not want to deal with shoving matches either, if anyone causes problems they’ll be in the cells for the night.” James shouted loud enough for them to hear. “Now you cannot Apparate in the building and we don’t have time to create Portkey’s for you all, so please make your way to the Atrium and use the Floo Network…does anyone need help finding their way there?”

“I do!” said an eighteen year old.

“Come with me,” said the security guard, giving James a nod of respect and then slowly but surely everyone began to leave the cafeteria, although it seemed as if a few of them were remaining behind to finish of their meals. He knew the feeling he was absolutely famished, seeing Lily in front of him soured his appetite.

“DAD!” yelled Nick barrelling forward, hugging the life out of his dad. He’d been completely immersed in the battle, and he hadn’t seen him afterwards. He’d assumed the worst when he was Apparated to the Ministry but they’d only wanted his side of what happened. That and he didn’t want to even be in the same building at his mother never mind the same room. Especially with what she was saying, she was quite frankly freaking him out. “Will you make her stop? Please!” he was paler than normal, looking sick.

“What’s wrong?” asked James, alarmed by his son’s pale complexion. With Voldemort gone and the fact he didn’t need to kill him should have made Nick happy. When the ‘her’ of his sons
previous statement sunk in his heart sank with it. Rubbing his head tiredly he tensed waiting on what his son would say.

“She’s saying he will be back, that we need to keep training that Harry had ruined and destroyed everything. Mum’s really losing it isn’t she dad? What are we going to do?” said Nick, he loved her deep down, she was his mum after all, and seeing her like this was making him hate her more. He was seventeen years old, not far off eighteen…so it wasn’t a surprise that he was beginning to realize that there was something wrong with her mentally. This wasn’t just anger that he was seeing or embarrassment this was delusional behaviour, she couldn’t accept what was in front of her.

“Don’t worry about it, I’ll sort it out,” James told him adamantly, rubbing at his head again agitated. He needed to think it through though, about the best way to see it through. He would also need to talk to the healers at St. Mungo’s if he could get them to take her in he wouldn’t need to remain married to her. If he put her in then he would, otherwise he would no longer be responsible for her and she could potentially be let out again before she was better. He wasn’t quite up to date on the rules, but something had to be done, he would go first thing tomorrow - but right now his entire family needed a rest.

“Oh my god James!” cried Lily copying her son and basically crushing her husband and son in her arms.

“Enough!” snapped James, forcing himself out of her hold, barely keeping it together, he was so tired but he didn’t want to let her out of his sight. Not until he knew what he was going to do at any rate.

“What’s wrong?” trembled Lily, “I was just so glad you survived, I watched the entire battle unable to help.”

“You wouldn’t have anyway, you are limited in your magic remember?” James said bluntly.

Lily flinched at the remembrance of how useless she was - but at least now she can go out and do shopping and such at Diagon Alley or Hogsmeade without having to worry about a Death Eater attack. Well for however long it was before Voldemort found his way back, just because the boy couldn’t take the fact that her son as the hero. She had seen it, it didn’t matter what Voldemort said or what everyone believed she had seen it and she knew she was right. She would go shopping and be happy, buy some things for Godric’s Hollow, new clothes, see if she couldn’t tempt James into remembering the old days and maybe give them another try. Nobody would have to know about the stupid Merlin’s Law thing that was in affect.

She really should have known better than to insult magic itself.

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St. Mungo’s Hospital - Cedric & Company

“Hello Harry! It’s been a while!” exclaimed Cedric’s mother, Karen giving him a gentle hug, smiling even if it was a little tense - but that was to be expected her son had just been hurt after all.

“Hello, Mrs. Diggory, is it okay if I come in?” he asked politely.

“Of course! Come on in,” she said, opening the door letting Harry into the hospital room.

Amos was sitting at his son’s bedside looking as if he had been sobbing for hours. His eyes were red rimmed and he was hunched over, but Harry wasn’t surprised. Amos could be...qu
emotional and rude when it came to praising Cedric’s abilities - he was proud of him no doubt, but he seemed to think it was alright to exploit other people’s weaknesses. Cedric though was much more like his mother in temperament.

“Harry!” murmured Cedric cracking a smile, “Thank you.”

“What do you mean by that?” asked Amos, sitting up straighter wondering what was going on and what he was missing.

“It’s no problem,” said Harry, taking a seat. “I’m just glad you’re going to be okay.” wondering how he had found out…had he been conscious and able to see what he was doing? Or had the healer told him? It couldn’t be possible could it? He had told them the counter had been cast…but never said it was himself that did it. They must have made an assumption, correct as it was.

“I am, they gave me your potion, I’ll be out tomorrow morning.” said Cedric relived. “Although Moody said I’ve to take the rest of the week off.”

“Just because the potions repaired the damage it doesn’t mean you won’t feel delicate and exhausted doing simple things. Try doing a bit of exercise when you wake up in the morning not tomorrow though, tomorrow just relax, then go for a run in the evening you’ll feel the strain then but it will help you recover quicker.” said Harry assuredly. “Oh and eat plenty of healthy foods for a while, avoid alcohol too.”

“Do you have knowledge in healing?” asked Amos, doubt coating his voice.

“Yes,” stated Harry sharply, not as patient as he usually was when dealing with Amos Diggory. “Unless you have forgotten its required to have such when dealing with potions, a big portion of my questions during my Mastery exams pertained pertinent information regarding the body, healing and the correct amount of potions.” his tone remained curt.

“Now, Amos, he saved our sons life,” said Karen, placing a hand on her husband and the fight left him. Her tone unusually severe, really angry at her husband for his words. He always acted as if everyone was out to get him and that if he listened to anyone else’s advice it would take their son away.

“Enough, dad, enough,” said Cedric shaking his head, giving Harry an apologetic look but his friend thankfully just smirked ruefully at him. “Any more of this and I’ll ask you to leave.” it was worse with Cho, the only saving grace was the fact she was smart and a pureblood. His dad wasn’t prejudice per se but he was proud of their name.

Amos’ jaw dropped before it slammed back up and surprisingly he did keep quiet. Perhaps he was realizing his son wasn’t a young boy anymore, and wouldn’t put up with it. Shaking his head wryly, Cedric was too much like his mother, not that it was a bad thing, since he was proud of him regardless. He could have been one of the best Quidditch players, but he gave it up for a more dangerous career as an Auror. He’d never thought he would see him in the hospital so soon in his career. Merlin he’d nearly had a stroke when he was approached by one of the clerks at the Ministry with a letter from St. Mungo’s.

Karen smiled behind her hand, “So, Harry, I trust you weren’t hurt today?” she asked assessing him for damage.

“Just a broken ankle that’s already healing and some burns,” explained Harry, showing his bandaged hands in way of explanation. "I'll be fine tomorrow."
"Good," said Karen, smiling at him. He had defeated Voldemort without permanent harm, even Aurors weren’t that lucky most days. Harry wasn’t exactly the most lucky of wizards either, she’d read the papers often enough to know that without Cedric’s tales.

"Have any of the others come to see you?" asked Harry, "Do they even know?"

"I’m not sure, they’ve only began letting people in that's not family," said Cedric frowning.

"With so many people coming in they didn’t have a choice," Karen told them softly, they hadn’t even let cousins in, just immediate family. The hospital was packed with people trying to see those they cared about. Friends and family, it just wasn’t possible to let everyone in - until things settled down. Which they were now, or at least as settled as possible.

"Would you like me to tell everyone that you're okay?" asked Harry. With Luna in their group he knew that Neville and Luna probably already knew everyone was safe and alive.

"Dad brought some parchment in, I'll write to them, I'm just glad I'm going to be able to go to Cho's graduation!" said Cedric relieved, he had promised her after all. For one brief moment there, he had assumed he wouldn’t be able to. He would have to do something for Harry to show how grateful he was, but Harry wanted for nothing...he had absolutely everything he wanted - he was impossible to shop for.

Harry grinned at him in amusement, nodded his head Cho wanted him there - he was her significant other of course he did. The only other person that was going to be there was her mother, since her father had passed away years ago, and she'd become distant with her friends. Which was a good thing; they were a bad influence, when Cho changed to keep Cedric well her so called friends weren’t as happy with that. Changed was a big word, she’d just become more serious, stopped all the incessant giggling at boys and such. Unfortunately that was all her friends had done, and continued to do.

"Are you going to attend this year’s graduation, Harry?" enquired Mrs. Diggory curiously.

"I don't know," said Harry thoughtfully, "I've never really thought about it."

"Just remember it’s your graduation too, even if you completed your N.E.W.T's early, it will be nice to have a certificate. It's something that's important to me, it may seem like a silly thing but it’s a nice thing to show to your children and friends." added Karen.

"It's true, mum showed me dozens of times, she was in Hufflepuff too." laughed Cedric, shaking his head in amusement. His dad as well, both certificates had a pride of place in their studies with four small badgers in the corner with Hufflepuff colours. His was still in his trunk in his new house; well it wasn’t new per se anymore.

"Sweetie you look exhausted," Karen admonished. "Have you even relaxed since it happened?" she knew that he had defeated Voldemort - it was impossible not to since the news had spread like wildfire even through the hospital. It's all people wanted to talk about, that and the fact he had been the Boy-Who-Lived all along. It didn’t change or colour her opinion of him, he was Cedric's friend and had been since his last year at Hogwarts. The letters from her son had been revealing to say the least...she hadn't been able to look at the Potter's quite the same way.

"No," admitted Harry, trying to smile but it came out a grimace.

"Where's Severus?" asked Cedric, realizing that the wizard wasn't there. "Nothing happened..." he added his voice tinged with panic.
"He's fine, he went home," said Harry quickly, shuddering softly. "I can't stay long since I promised him I wouldn’t be."

"Then go home," said Cedric adamantly. "I'll Floo over to see you tomorrow...at lunch time? Or would you prefer dinner?"

"I doubt I'll be up until after lunch," Harry told him wryly, he was dead beat.

"Alright then, dinner it is." said Cedric, "Go home to Severus - I'll see you later."

"If you're sure?" murmured Harry, not able to argue or fight - his bed was screaming for him.

"I am," said Cedric.

"Thank you for saving my son," said Amos emotionally.

"He's one of my best friends, I did what anyone would have." said Harry simply, before he turned and left the room.

Karen looked at Cedric thoughtfully, if she didn’t know any better she would say that Severus and Harry was an item. The way Cedric had said go home to him, it's exactly what one would say to a friend about their partners. It would explain why he as still living at Prince Manor instead of having his own place, and he most certainly had the money for it. Would have done even if he hadn't kept the Potter investments his own potions would have seen to it that he had enough galleons in Gringotts for such a purchase.

“Dad can you pass me the parchment please?” asked Cedric, withholding a gasp of pain when he sat up. He needed to write to them before they got even more worried. News had probably reached Hogwarts already by now, which made it even more vital to get word to his friends and girlfriend who was probably beside herself with worry.

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Prince Manor - Harry, Eileen and Severus

“Harry!” Eileen cried out as she tackled him as he was exiting the Floo network. Her frail body was trembling showing her fear for what could have happened. The first she’d heard was from Dobby! She’d known they were alive but that was as far as her knowledge extended. She had no idea if they were hurt or if they’d survived unscathed with such a battle she knew it was unlikely. Just as suddenly as she was hugging him she stood back and began to inspect the damage done to him. She had been seconds from going to St. Mungo’s herself to see them, but she’d been worried she might miss them returning.

“Where’s Sev?” asked Harry, his shoulders tense.

“He’s up the stairs,” replied Eileen, gazing at him shrewdly, she knew something was wrong just not what. “What’s going on?” she demanded extremely concerned.

Harry shook his head taking a deep breath, “Don’t worry, it’s not bad, well, not all bad. I promise.”

“Harry,” stated Eileen, giving him a stern look, if she had to do any more waiting she was going to scream.

“No, I mean it, we need to talk.” said Harry seriously, they had to get this all out in the open.

“Very well,” Eileen gave in very reluctantly. Judging by the look on Harry’s face he wasn’t about
to give in any time soon. “I want to know what’s going on soon.” she pointed out.

Harry nodded, giving her another hug he exited the living room and began making his way up the stairs. Butterflies were making themselves home in his stomach multiplying with every step he took. He honestly would have preferred going out to face Voldemort again than do this, but he had to face this. Breathing out again trying to calm his racing heart, he opened the door and found Severus sitting on the bed, the pensive on one side a cup of coffee on the other. Just seeing him there, he realized he didn’t give a shit about one uncomfortable conversation or telling him what happened or rather giving him the memories. All he cared about was the fact that Severus was alive, that he was going to have a family. All else paled into insignificance. With that knowledge and realization Harry relaxed, come what may he was positive they would face it together - as a family.

Severus stood up, moving towards Harry he cupped his face, staring him straight in the eye. He looked exhausted, not just physically but emotionally, and he wondered if he would look the same once he emerged from the pensive. Did he honestly want to know what happened? He already suspected what had and that was enough for him. It wasn’t though was it? He couldn’t let Harry go through it alone; even if it hadn’t happened he still had the knowledge in his mind and always would. “Put the memories in the pensive, go have a bath and get some sleep.” he said soothingly.

Harry pressed into Severus’ long fingers, closing his eyes feeling the tears beginning again. Merlin it felt so good to have him back, he wouldn’t have been able to do this without him. He needed him, more than anything else in this world. He always knew what to say, what to do, he had been there for him and kept his secrets, honestly…he could never have found anyone better if he tried. “Too tried,” murmured Harry, almost swaying where he stood. It was as if all the stress and lack of sleep had remained with him despite everything else disappearing.

“Go on,” said Severus removing his hand and prodding him in the direction of the pensive.

Removing his wand from his holster, where he had put it when he got it back from James, he began to put a weeks worth of memories into it. Thankfully though it wouldn’t take Severus a week to get through them all, it would take him a while, maybe an hour or so. As he did he began to pour the memories in he began to feel lighter, an added side affect to placing the memories in the pensive. Severus removed it from the bed and placed it on the table, making sure that it was well away from his coffee.

“Sleep,” said Severus, moving the duvet and placing it over him when he hopped onto the bed. Once he was sure Harry was burrowed in properly, he picked up his pensive he left the room. Staring down at the memories with trepidation, before stiffening his spine and walking towards his office.
Tired of being here
Suppressed by all my childish fears
And if you have to leave
I wish that you would just leave
'Cause your presence still lingers here
And it won't leave me alone

These wounds won't seem to heal
This pain is just too real
There's just too much that time cannot erase

When you cried I'd wipe away all of your tears
When you'd scream I'd fight away all of your fears
And I held your hand through all of these years
But you still have all of me

You used to captivate me by your resonating light
Now I'm bound by the life you left behind
Your face—it haunts my once pleasant dreams
Your voice—it chased away all the sanity in me

These wounds won't seem to heal
This pain is just too real
There's just too much that time cannot erase
*My Immortal - Evanescence*

“No, Severus…come back,” murmured Harry desperately, even in his sleep his arm was outstretched as if he could pull the wizard from his dreams and into his arms. Moaning softly, he continued to toss and turn, begging and pleading for something nobody other than he could see. For a brief moment he did calm, and seem to drift off into a deeper sleep but it didn’t last long. No matter what happened Harry hadn’t been destined for a good sleep while alone tonight of all nights.

A few doors down Severus were awake and viewing Harry’s nightmare…so to speak and had been doing so for quite some time.

The pensive in Severus Snape’s office glowed for over an hour, before the wizard was swiftly ejected at the end of the series of memories he had been viewing. Everyone would agree that Severus had always been a pale wizard, but the man who stepped out of that pensive looked whiter than white if such a thing was really possible. Tears were pouring freely down his face, and it took
a lot to make Severus lose control of his emotions - not even when Harry had been injured had he given way to the turbulent emotions swirling inside of him. His stomach also rebelled dangerously, and before he could even think of moving from his position on his knees on the floor - he was regurgitating the contents of his stomach onto the rug. Which might not be much, since he hadn’t eaten since breakfast that morning, but that didn’t stop the smell from being atrocious. He had thought the horror of finding out about the Horcruxes would be the worst thing he could know…he had been such an insipid fool to think that.

Shakily banishing the puddle on the floor, he weakly got to his feet, stumbling slightly until he found purchase when he sat down on his office chair. The sick feeling continued to churn in his stomach, as the acid burnt his mouth and throat. He’d assumed he would be able to take whatever he saw.

This wasn’t the kind the grief one usually gets to witness; you shouldn’t get to see the horror of what your loved ones were going through when they lost you. His mother…he had never seen her like that, never in all his years. Closing his eyes in a futile attempt to get rid of the images flashing across his mind, he had known if anything happened to him Harry would take it hard…but to the extent he’d been nearly catatonic for a week? Not even his friends or his mother had been able to rouse him for long. Not until he’d found out he was pregnant then this obsession of putting things ‘right’ had begun - and here he was - partially thanks to James Potter, he didn’t know how he felt about that titbit of information yet so he chose to ignore it for now.

Feeling something wet, he reached out and touched his cheeks, Severus’ eyes widened in disbelief, turning his hand over then back again, unable to believe there was wetness there. He couldn’t remember the last time he’d truly cried over something. Swallowing thickly, he hastily wiped his eyes and cheeks, getting rid of all trace of tears. Then the memory of Harry defending his actions - especially to their baby crossed his mind.

Clenching his fists, he gritted his teeth, he’d had no idea just how little self esteem Harry had. Not until he saw Harry speaking to their unborn child, he didn’t think he was good enough…Merlin that hurt on a very deep level. How did he help Harry overcome what his family had done? It was the only explanation he could think of that would have Harry feeling insecure, unworthy, incapable. How could his partner create potions like it was nothing yet not believe in himself? A shudder ran through him as he remembered the look of utter devastation on Harry’s face when he saw he was down. The words ‘You promised’ echoing like an unending drum beat. Despite the fact they were filled with despair he could only see Harry’s eyes glaring at him spitting those words at him in his minds eye as if he had done the most despicable thing in existence.

The dome of magic, pure magic, stopped anyone from getting near them. Even Cedric Diggory hadn’t been able to get near Harry, and that was one of the few people that he actually trusted. Unable to sit alone in his office right now, he stood up abruptly, becoming dizzy in his attempt. Grasping a hold of the arms of the chair breathing evenly, he should probably eat…but the thought of consuming anything right now made his stomach lurch even more unpleasantly. What Harry had been through was tearing him up inside, he left his office…completely distracted - so much so that he had forgotten to put the pensive away like he did every other time he used it.

He made his way on shaky legs back down the hall, slightly surprised his mother wasn’t nosing around trying to find out what was going on. She wasn’t nosey per se, it was more she was concerned about both of them. She felt it was her god given right to make sure they didn’t do anything silly, like split up. He didn’t think anything like that was possible - not with what he had just found out. He needed no further proof that Harry loved him completely. He had risked everything to come back and save him. Risking his sanity, his life, the time-line…and potentially their child. How could he be angry? Perhaps if something had happened he would be, but it hadn’t,
they were all safe and alive and out of harms way.

Finally back in the room, he made his way over and sat on the edge of the bed on his side, not that he had that side either - Harry was sleeping from side to side instead of down one side. He didn’t look good, he realized when he saw Harry’s face, it was tense, he was sweating and it wasn’t even that hot. Was he getting sick? Had he been hit with a curse or spell that they didn’t know? Pressing his hand to his forehead he relaxed, while it was hot and sweaty it wasn’t anything to be immediately concerned about. He had been seen by Andy, she’d done a thorough diagnosis, and if something had been there she would have known it.

Unhooking his cloak, he let it fall to the floor beside the other one Dobby had dropped off in his room when he’d demanded it of him. He must have nudged it onto the floor earlier at some point. He couldn’t lose it, so he picked it up and put both of them in the bedside cabinet, it held a time-turner for Merlin’s sake it wasn’t something he could risk being misplaced or having the House-Elves lose for him. Unbuttoning his shirt, he winced at the redness that stood out against the paleness of his skin. It was still very tender, he realised as he touched it, it hadn’t seemed that bad earlier, and Harry had been pressing against it using a great deal of strength. Shaking his thoughts off he grabbed a t-shirt and slid it over his wiry frame. His trousers were next, using his legs to kick them off before he concentrated on Harry.

Levitating him just inches of the bed, he moved him into a more suitable position where he could actually get into the bed. Severus almost jumped when Harry shouted no at the top of his lungs before lurching up into sitting position before he was even properly awake. Cursing inwardly and nastily when he saw the tears running down his face, he knew it was his fault and it was eating him up inside. Harry was terrified that he would end up alone because he had lost concentration on the battle when Harry had almost been possessed. That was the beauty of having a pensive; you didn’t just see things from one point of view, but rather saw everything that went on around you.

“Hey, hey, hey, it’s okay, I’m here, I’m fine, and you did it.” Severus said immediately, wrapping his arms around him, continuing to talk to him to bring him out of whatever horror he was staring unseeing at. “You’re safe, we’re safe, open your eyes Harry and look around, it’s over now.” rocking slightly, he knew as soon as he had gotten through to Harry since the tense body in his arms literally melted into his embrace. Unsurprisingly the tears followed, and Severus could do nothing but comfort him, suppressing his own devastation and anger. This was his fault; if he had just trusted that Harry would be fine, and concentrated on his battle none of this would have been necessary. He could have spared Harry all this pain, unfortunately there was no point to this useless thoughts since it had happened, all he could do was help him through it.

“I thought it was a dream,” Harry managed to choke out through his tears, Merlin he’d thought for a moment there he had dreamt it all and he had still been alone…those arms around him were the best thing in this world. As long as he had Severus he would be fine, the tears continued to come, but Harry had calmed down - he just lay against Severus enjoying the feel of having him close after losing him.

“Sshhh,” crooned Severus, “It’s over, its done.” but a bitter thought wondered if it ever would be… how long would Harry carry this around before he was able to let it go? He had been through so much as it was, with an uncaring family, having to kill a wizard to survive without all this. He doubted either of them would be getting much sleep tonight. It was an awkward time to be pregnant, since he couldn’t give Harry a Dreamless Sleeping Draught, and he wouldn’t take one and leave Harry to a night fraught with nightmares. That and the fact Cedric had taken the curse meant for him, he must be on the mend otherwise Harry wouldn’t have come back when he had.

“Are you mad at me?” asked Harry, his tone pleading for it not to be the case.
“No, never, do not think that.” reiterated Severus adamantly.

“I couldn’t do it without you,” he said quietly, his tone resigned and tired.

“You could have done, and would have done brilliantly. Do not think on it, Harry, its no longer a concern, we will do it together.” Severus told him firmly. He would get to see his child brought into the world, would get to raise him with Harry and they would fight whatever came their way as they always did. How could Harry possibly think he was angry after what he’d done for him? He did concede he had been furious when he found out, but only for a brief moment. He wanted to think if only he could go back…but seriously…it just held a sense of ironic disbelief right now. If he ever thought those words it would be too soon, it wasn’t just a saying any longer but a real thing that Harry had done.

The minutes slowly ticked by, neither of them in the mood to talk much, just sat there but Severus’ back and neck was beginning to ache something fierce. The stillness made him suspect that Harry might be sleeping, Harry didn’t snore so the quietness was the only indication he possessed to tell whether his lover was asleep. His stomach growled reminding him that it was empty and he was hungry, despite the fact he didn’t think he would be able to keep it down. The taste of sick still lingered in his mouth that probably had a lot to do with it.

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“Do you think you could eat something?” asked Severus, keeping his tone quiet just in case he was asleep.

Of course Harry’s stomach chose that exact moment to rumble as if answering Severus’ question.

“A ham sandwich sounds good,” confessed Harry, he hadn’t been eating properly, and if not for his sake then the baby - he had to eat something even if only a little to get himself used to it again. He was so tired through he didn’t think he could force the muscles in his jaw to chew the food, it was worth a try at least. He would never get to sleep with how loudly his stomach was complaining at this rate.

“Dobby,” started Severus only to stare bemused at the House-Elf already standing at the bottom of his bed staring enquiringly at him.

“Can Dobby help?” he asked his tone earnest.

Severus flashed to the House-Elf in the pensive; even Dobby had been affected by his demise. He didn’t know why, he didn’t have a connection to Dobby the way Harry did. Yet the evidence was lying in his pensive, he made a note to himself to be just a bit kinder to the elf, it was the least he could do. “Dobby, bring up some ham sandwiches, pickles on half of them and a side of crisps. Also bring up something to drink, ginger ale for me please.” said Severus, ginger ale was great when you were feeling sick.

“That sounds nice,” agreed Harry, well not the crisps, the ginger ale. Severus had only really had it once, when he’d felt ill for two days, one of those two day bugs that had gone around. He’d drunk some of it, not his cup obviously, he hadn’t wanted to end up sick after all, when it was mixed with lemon or honey it was lovely. In fact his stomach was coming around to the thought of eating.

“Dobby will be right back,” said the House-Elf his beaming features disappearing as he left.

“Do you think they’ll accuse us of using their money for our own gain?” asked Harry out of the blue.

“That sounds nice,” agreed Harry, well not the crisps, the ginger ale. Severus had only really had it once, when he’d felt ill for two days, one of those two day bugs that had gone around. He’d drunk some of it, not his cup obviously, he hadn’t wanted to end up sick after all, when it was mixed with lemon or honey it was lovely. In fact his stomach was coming around to the thought of eating.

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“Do you think they’ll accuse us of using their money for our own gain?” asked Harry out of the blue.

“There’s hardly been any money removed from their vault, I have only accessed it twice and that
was for thirty galleons in total for herbs to experiment with.” explained Severus thoughtfully. “I think they will just be extremely hopeful that what happened to you can be replicated.”

“Do you think it will?” questioned Harry, “I mean there isn’t much left,” at least not enough to experiment with to the extent of finding out if it will work.

“It took only a single drop for it to work with you,” Severus pointed out adamantly.

“Yes, but what if it was a combination of the exploding potion and the unicorn blood, Sev?” wondered Harry.

“It’s possible,” mused Severus thoughtfully, “it’s a simple enough potion…although both ingredients do not react well together I’m sure we can come up with a way to make it less volatile. Trying the unicorn blood first and foremost will probably be for the best, I’m sure healer Walsh will help us if we ask.”

“I can perform the spells,” stated Harry, “I know my runes, so it would be a straight forward procedure.” he needed to do something when he couldn't brew for seven months.

“Healer Walsh has the experience; she would know what to look for.” Severus argued. “However, if you wish to do it then very well.”

“You’ll need to get in touch with them soon, before anyone finds out…” a shiver went through Harry at the thought. He knew better than to think for a moment that he could go through this without people knowing. He’d been stupid enough to think he could go through the battle without anyone finding out he was the Boy-Who-Lived he wasn’t about to delude himself otherwise this time.

“I intend to some time tomorrow,” agreed Severus, the sooner the better. He wasn’t going to America, although it sounded like a good idea, getting away from all the publicity he just wanted to be here, home, with Harry. So both wizards would have to come here, and if they were too busy well they obviously weren’t desperate enough for a child of their own. They couldn’t use the fact there was a war ongoing either, since it had been ended this night, and all Death Eaters captured.

“Food for Master’s Severus and Harry,” said Dobby cheerfully as he placed the tray of food on the bed before he left again.

Harry shifted reluctantly so both of them could sit and eat, but as soon as he was done he vowed he would go back. He had been very comfortable sitting there. Severus’ arm hadn’t left his stomach until he moved, he was going to be a very good dad, and nothing like James, and Sev wouldn’t let him be like that either. He grinned and accepted the goblet of ginger ale that Sev passed him, taking a drink he sighed definitely what he needed right now - it was refreshing. He did lean against him again, he just couldn’t stop himself, an entire week felt like years to him - he had a lot of catching up to do after all.

“We will get through it together.” stated Severus, bringing Harry closer, but not too close so he could still eat his food.

“Together,” agreed Harry, and any doubts he had that Severus was even the slightest bit with him washed away. As he said they would do it together. He found once he started eating he was actually able to do so and did it with relish - sleep would come soon enough. He could feel it creeping up on him as he ate.
Next morning

Surprisingly Severus was awake before Harry, sliding out of bed he left him to sleep as he got dressed and made his way down the stairs. Even being able to sleep on this new information…it still didn’t make it any less mind-blowing. James Potter obviously wouldn’t know what he’d done, the time-turner they had would either remain as an extra in this world…or one from the Ministry would disappear. He couldn’t help but hope it remained an extra, the entire world and his wife would end up under suspicion if a time-turner disappeared from the Ministry without leaving a single trace. The world had just gotten over a threat; he didn’t want them fretting over a nonexistent one.

He asked for breakfast, but the House-Elves told him that they were already cooking it and it would be ready in a few minutes. Asking for a coffee, he sat down and took the time to write a letter to Alec Selwyn-Warren and Daniel Fawley explaining a few things to them. He left a great deal out, he just wasn’t in the mood to confide in anyone today - Harry would find these first few days increasingly difficult so it was him he wanted to spend his time with. It would take nearly a day for the letter to reach them, and what they did next was entirely up to them.

While he was writing he noticed his mother was being extremely squirrelly. Frowning in annoyance, he signed his name and called for Dobby. “Take this up to the Owlerly and send it off please.” asked Severus, handing over the small missive. A lot of people were no doubt sending letters back and forth to all countries to let their loved ones know the worst was over. Hopefully it wouldn’t hinder the owls speed in getting to the couple. He had chosen the owl he had for its speed, so he would be quite quick at getting to its destination.

Turning his chair around, he narrowed his eyes at his mother, wondering what was wrong…he just had a feeling there was something not right. Then it dawned on him, she hadn’t asked even once what was going on. He’d barely gotten home from a battle when she was demanding answers, quite incessantly as well. She hadn’t said a word today, either she was just glad they were alive and well…or she already had her answers. “Alright, mum, what have you done?” he demanded of his mother who had just sat down the look on her face was one you saw when children were found with their hands in the cookie jar.

“What do you mean?” asked Eileen, her face going smooth, her forehead wrinkling in obvious feigned confusion. Severus’ lips twitched as he gave her a look that said ‘Do I look stupid to you?’ he wasn’t about to give in either - this was ridiculous. He began to understand where his bull-headed stubbornness came from; honestly his mother could be extremely irritating when she wanted to be. Then he remembered last night, he’d left the pensive lying out… closing his eyes horrified he ground you harshly, “You didn’t!” gritting the words out, finding it difficult to not scream or rage at her.

The guilty look on her face said it all. “I’m sorry, Severus.” she said quietly.

Severus inhaled sharply, never before had he been so pissed of at her, not in a long time and never at the fact she’d invaded his privacy. “Until now I’ve never regretted asking you to move in. How dare you invade my privacy? You should have known better.” Severus told her with deceptive mildness. Standing up he moved out of the room without looking at her. He was too afraid he would say something he’d regret, and he would regret it.

Eileen watched her son leave the room, the guilt beginning to fester in her stomach; she knew if she let him brood it would be ten times worse. Standing up she moved after him, knowing without needing to see where he was going. She was much slower than him so he was already gone by the time she properly exited the living room. She made her way to his office; she had to explain
everything to him now before it got strained. The door was open, so she slid inside seeing Severus placing the pensive in its normal hiding place that nobody could get into.

“I did not see all the memories,” she said quickly, “Only a few of them, I wasn’t prepared for the memories but I did it, and I regret it.”

“Why?” demanded Severus bitterly.

“You came home from a battle without Harry, and then Harry returned twenty minutes later looking just as shaken as you. Neither of you would explain what was going on, I thought you and Harry were having some troubles.” admitted Eileen.

“That’s because it had nothing to do with you!” Severus told her still cross.

“I should have realised it was none of my business…forgive me, son?” pleaded Eileen.

Severus sighed; this was supposed to be a happy time for all families wasn’t it? When a baby was on the way it gave them all a reason to celebrate. She obviously hadn’t gone in far enough to realize that or she would have been over the moon. She must have only seen enough to deduce Harry had used a time-turner to save him nothing further. “In future stay out of it.” he told her determinedly.

“I will,” she promised quietly, she just wanted what was best for both of them. “I just don’t want to see either of you becoming unhappy.”

“We won’t and that is a promise that will be kept.” said Severus adamantly. “Harry and I have other news to share with you today.” hiding a smirk that was slipping onto his face, he was going to let her stew on that for a few hours. Maybe longer, it depended on how long he could keep Harry on his side. Harry would have wanted her protected from the truth, he would be just as angry at her but wouldn't be able to stay mad long.

“What?” asked Eileen, both astonished and curious. It wasn’t like her son to give in so easily or forgive for that matter.

“Later,” he added, this time making no attempt at covering his supreme satisfaction.

"Severus!" cried Eileen, how could her son tease her like this? It wasn't very fair...and wasn't Severus' usual character either...she was right something was going on and it hadn't been what she had seen after all. Although nothing in this world would compare to what Harry had done for her and her son. He had saved him, and for that Harry would have her eternal gratitude and love no matter what happened.

"Later," he added before nodding in satisfaction, now she wouldn't be able to get into the damn thing again. It was partly his fault; he shouldn't have left it out in the first place - very remiss of him.

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Later That Evening

As it so happened Harry slept until well after lunch time, the House-Elves were in the process of beginning the perpetrations for dinner before Harry asked them for something to eat. They had preserved his lunch under a heating charm, per Severus’ request knowing Harry would eventually wake up. Harry wasn’t surprised to see a wad of letters beside his plate when they brought through his late lunch, but he was anxious. He trusted them all with his life, hopefully they knew that, but he hadn’t told them one of the biggest facts about himself - that he was the Boy-Who-Lived. What
if they didn’t forgive him for his deception? It wasn’t a deception though, not really, just a really big omission. His stomach was a bundle of nerves as he braced himself despite the fact he should already know the outcome and then picked them up.

“These are just from people you know,” said Eileen quietly, still feeling out of sorts for invading her son’s privacy despite the fact he’d already forgiven her. “The rest have been bundled together and placed into boxes, they’re all in the spare bedroom, which is nearly filled to capacity.”

“They’ve sent money, gifts, the ones with edibles are in the red boxes and should be opened and dealt with first.” said Severus. The House-Elves were extremely smart and efficient; he would have to think of a way to thank them for being able to deal with it all. Apparently many had come into their bedroom during the night, but the elves had redirected the mail, and sorted it out through the kitchen where it wouldn’t disturb anyone. He rather hoped they had taken shifts; otherwise they were bound to be utterly exhausted.

Harry nodded not surprised, although most of the things that had come last time were for Severus. Eileen had said she would ask the press to leave him alone, but he wasn’t sure whether she had or not - he’d just not been interested in anything. Despite the fact he’d done this week before… it would be a new experience. There were flowers in the house, nowhere near as many as last time; they were really expensive bouquets too. He didn’t know much about flowers, especially ones that weren’t considered ‘herbs’ but he knew enough to know certain kinds were a lot of money. They weren’t saying I’m sorry but thank you, they were thanking him for ending the war…and suddenly Harry felt as though he could live with it - just as long as Sev was in his life.

“Well I’ll see if I can drag Cedric into helping,” mused Harry, smiling slightly, he would be sitting down so nothing too strenuous. The smile slipped away when he noticed the letters were far too thin, Merlin what if they didn’t want anything to do with him? With Severus alive they might concentrate on the anger instead of his loss. Ripping it open he felt the air leave his lungs in shock, Merlin they hadn’t half scared the crap out of him. His own doubts continued to put him through strain that wasn't necessary.

“How is he doing?” asked Severus, his tone slightly cautious.

“He’s fine, they gave him Eileen’s Potion, he should be out already in fact, he’s coming over after dinner.” replied Harry, and for that he was very grateful. He was worried about Luna’s words still…unless him killing the Death Eater meant the scores were evened out…maybe since Moody hadn’t killed that one he had killed another one? He wasn’t sure but he definitely couldn’t complain about the outcome. “I think the others might be coming as well.” he added when he opened Viktor’s letter, it looked like the gang was getting back together again for the night. It was a couple of weeks early; they had all been invited to Neville’s graduation. With his parents in St. Mungo’s well he wanted someone who cared to be there, so Luna and the gang would be there to support him on his graduation day.

“That’s a relief,” said Eileen, it would have hurt Harry deeply to have lost a friend.

“Are you okay?” asked Harry, frowning at Eileen.

“I’m fine,” she said immediately, “You both said you had some news to share?” she asked changing the subject.

“We do?” teased Harry, grinning wryly, seeing the smirk Severus was supporting. He hadn’t told her she was going to be a Granny in seven months time.

“Yes, what is it?” asked Eileen, wondering why all the mystery? Had they invented a new potion?
Had the one on the Longbottom’s worked? She wished she knew - she hated being in the dark.

“In seven months time…you’re going to be a granny.” Harry told her causing Severus to shake his head in amusement.

“You are adopting?” gaped Eileen, her gaze sliding to Severus in shock she’d never thought in a million years Severus would want a child. Has someone Harry knows gotten pregnant and decided to let them have the child? Or was Harry the biological father of the child she wasn’t sure what would shock her more.

“No,” denied Harry, “The child is your blood; he or she will have the Peverell, Prince and Snape bloodlines going through them.”

Okay, now she was just plain confused. “I don’t understand…you completed the potion? But that was…it would have had to have been completed two months ago!” she was utterly flummoxed.

“The unicorn blood has a very….interesting side affect that non of us could have anticipated.” explained Severus, while he enjoyed his mother being utterly confused, he would rather see the look on her face when she realized that he and Harry had actually created a child that was currently living inside of his partner…his very male partner. “It has magically created everything Harry needs to give birth figuratively speaking since he won’t be giving birth naturally, to a child of his own blood.”

“You mean you both…” gaped Eileen, joy spreading through her like wild fire.

“In seven months time we will both be fathers yes,” stated Severus wryly.

“Oh Merlin!” exclaimed Eileen, dashing up she brought Harry into a hug, being careful of course. She was going to be a grandmother; oh it was more than she’d ever dreamed of. Sure she had gotten her hopes up when they had requested the potion, more to do with having belief in Severus’ potion abilities than ever seeing it really happening. Yet here it was, they were going to have a baby, and they’d found a way to give the American couple what they desired more than anything else as well. “Oh I am so happy for you both!” tears welled in her eyes, no wonder Harry had wanted to come back and change everything…he’d been pregnant. She hoped the strain hadn’t been too much for the baby. Moving away from Harry she brought her son into a hug, squeezing him tightly, the tears still coming utterly overwhelmed by what she’d been told and what she’d seen earlier. She could have lost all three of them, and the thought was enough to nearly bring her to her knees.

“Do you want to see?” Harry had a smile on his face watching Severus and Eileen, they looked very alike tall, pale and black haired although Eileen’s had gone a bit peppery he still wondered to this day how he hadn’t figured out who her son was. It wasn’t as if he’d hated ‘Professor Snape’ in fact he’d rather liked him he unlike everyone else didn’t think Nick was anything special. So there was no reason for him not to have joined the dots. “It’s a bit blurry though, Andy thinks it might be the magic that’s causing it.”

“I’d love to!” she exclaimed moving back over beside him, eyes eager to see.

Harry murmured the scan spell ‘Pellego’, showing the granny-to-be a blurry picture of the baby.

“Oh, I’m so proud of you both!” she said, in awe over this.

Harry grinned and Severus just arched an eyebrow but his eyes were soon drawn to the scan as well, drinking up the sight in front of him. No doubt his mother had grown used to the idea of
never being a grandmother; after all he was attracted to his own gender, that didn’t give the impression that there would be children in the future. So like her he had never pictured children, it was going to take some getting used to but there was never any doubt that he wanted the child. It was miracle really, and he wasn’t used to being privy to a miraculous moment…but he knew it would be a long stressful seven months. The unknown was quite frankly a scary place to be, and he was a practical wizard, he preferred knowing the what, where, how and when even the why, but with this…it was a completely new concept. Everything about this was going to be guesswork, totally unacceptable when it was his child and partner on the line.

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James, Nick, Lily - Potter Manor

“Hey, dad, where’ve you been?” asked Nick, from where he sat eating his breakfast. He’d asked Tish but the House-Elf hadn’t known, so he’d settled for something to eat while he waited. He wanted to be out before his mum came down stairs; she was really freaking him out. Growing up his parents had never shouted or yelled at each other, but last night it was like seventeen years worth being spewed out. His dad had been furious with her, yelling that she couldn’t keep her head buried in the sand, that he’d found Harry’s unicorn in the crib that Voldemort had attacked - that Harry had never gone anywhere without the damn thing and then yelled ‘so it was obviously Harry’. You can’t even say his name had cropped up dozens of times, but at some point they must have realized they hadn’t put silencing spells up after an hour of yelling matches since it went silent abruptly.

“St. Mungo’s,” answered James, and the ministry he thought to himself, nabbing a piece of toast and a sausage from his sons plate.

“What do you mean? I thought Sirius and Remus got out alright?” asked Nick swallowing thickly; no he had seen Sirius at the Ministry so he was definitely alright. “Were you visiting some of the other Auror’s?”

“Something like that,” murmured James, through the food, talking through his teeth so he didn’t end up spitting food everywhere.

“Dad don’t you go odd on me as well,” stated Nick, giving him a look.

James started laughing but it was abruptly cut off, both father and son jumped as if they’d just been electrocuted when they heard a scream of utter agony from up the stairs - from Lily. The food fell from their hands as they bolted up the stairs, James taking two steps at a time to get to her. Both of them ran down the hall, and burst into the bedroom both of them had their wands out and found nothing there…absolutely nothing.

“Lily!” called James, trying to get her to stay still but she continued to wreathe in agony, her head banging against the floor. “Hold her legs!” he ordered Nick, the Auror in him coming out. James grasped a hold of her head, wincing at the heat that was radiating from her - she was burning up. Flinging cooling charms at her, trying to ease the heat somewhat to see if that had any affect on the uncontrollable spasming. Nothing worked, the cooling charms, nor cold water seemed to have any affect, she was still hotter than ever screaming in agony.

“What’s wrong with her?” called Nick wide eyed.

James shook his head wordlessly; he didn’t know…he honestly didn’t know. “TISH!” demanded James, heart pounding - his head as well come to that. It had already been thumping before he’d had to sit next to someone who was screaming their lungs out.
“Yes sir?” said Tish, appearing in the bedroom.

“Take us to St. Mungo’s NOW!” James told her firmly.

Nick took a step back, watching his parents disappear not sure what to think or what to do. One part of him was glad she was no longer spewing nonsense at him - on the other he feared that there had been something wrong and they’d ignored it. Only time would tell, St. Mungo’s would know for sure. He’d eat breakfast, take some for his dad and some clothes for his mother and find out what was going on. He doubted she’d be out, it didn’t seem like normal methods on getting her cool were working.

James struggled to hold Lily down as everyone jumped when they appeared with the House-Elf, the screaming could quite literally wake the dead. “I need help here!” he shouted, still casting cooling charms at her. They couldn’t bind her; otherwise it would cause unknown amounts of damage, with how bad she was spasming uncontrollably.

“Healers are coming,” said the receptionist wide eyed, she’d thought the drama would be at a minimum today - she’d been wrong.

True to her word, they came walking quickly towards them, a stretcher was quickly conjured and Lily was gone. Leaving James standing there, trying to regain his breathing. “Auror Potter are you coming?” asked the Medi-wizard, the door was open for him to go through and sit in the waiting area until they found out what was wrong.

Started James stared at him for a few seconds before nodding numbly as the words penetrated his spinning mind, forcing his legs to start walking he went through the doors and they closed behind them.

He took a seat not able to hear the screaming and for that he was eternally grateful, she hadn’t even been that loud giving birth to the twins. Had she somehow been cursed during the battle? Or by someone afterwards? She couldn’t have been cursed during since she was locked in St. Mungo’s… so afterwards seemed like the only other reasonable conclusion…but she hadn’t said anything and surely she would have? He didn’t understand how else it could be happening, healthy not-cursed people didn’t just scream like that for no reason.

He didn’t know how long had passed, but he wasn’t spoken to until he heard his sons voice speaking to him.

“Dad!” called Nick, “Dad! Dad! DAD!” he repeated three more times before he got through to him.

“Nick, what are you doing here? You should have stayed home,” he told his son softly, smiling at the food and coffee waving under his nose. “Thank you,” he couldn’t deny he was glad for the food though, until he smelt it he hadn’t realized how hungry he was.

“It’s alright, have you heard anything?” asked Nick.

“Nothing,” sighed James.

“Have you told your work you aren’t going in?” enquired Nick sitting down.

“No,” denied James, “How long did you take to come?” he wasn’t sure how long had passed.

“An hour, I have some things for mum in case she needs it…” said Nick, “Do you think it has anything to do with how she’s been behaving lately?” she was worse than usual and that was saying something.
“I think we want it to be more than it being the reason,” admitted James, patting his son’s shoulder. He couldn’t tell Roxy, she was in the middle of doing exams, her O.W.L exams. After this year she would only be at Hogwarts for three more years, it was hard to believe how much time had passed. No, her exams were far too important, despite the fact they’re angry at Lily, they still loved her - she was their mother after all.

At least he liked to think so since Lily’s actions were no worse than his own and he didn’t like the thought that they hated him. Although the only difference between them was the fact he had owned up to his mistakes and apologized, Lily had no. Which of course, created a whole other mess with this ‘Merlin’s Law’ it should help her realize what she did wrong…but Lily seemed to be just burying her head further in the sand.

The minutes seemed to tick on by, as both sat there, in silence as they waited. Eventually James spoke, unable to take much more silence. “Head home, there’s no point to both of us being here all day.” said the Auror.

“I’m here because I want to be, dad, for you.” said Nick, and he was curious to know what was wrong with his mother to a certain extent.

“If you are sure,” James said grudgingly, he was surprised any of his kids wanted to be near him. Roxy had become someone she wasn’t to please him and Lily…Merlin it was only last year she’d came out of her shell once sorted into Ravenclaw. The differences in the letters alone showed him how much happier she was. They’d wanted Nick to be proud and strong, but they’d turned him into a coward…but somehow despite it all…he’d grown up and become a young man he was proud to say was amazing, somehow Nick had picked himself up and turned himself into someone strong - worthy of recognition. Although that recognition wasn’t as the Boy-Who-Lived but he knew his son was secretly pleased with that. A few years ago it would have been a whole other ball game though, he knew that. Perhaps the truth had come out when they were both ready, Harry hadn’t exactly been waving his hands telling everyone he was the Boy-Who-Lived either.

James jumped to his feet when people came out of the room twice for nothing, but upon the third time it wasn’t.

“How is she?” asked James immediately.

“This is Trainee Healer Tandel, she is training to be a healer under me, would it be okay if she is in the room during the conversation?” asked Healer Woodbridge.

“No,” said James, shaking his head, he didn’t want the information to be spread out over the pages of the Daily Prophet.

“Understood, follow me,” she told James, moving off towards her office, holding the door open and closing it behind them.

“What happened to her?” asked James as he took a seat, barely looking around the office.

“I’m sorry to report…that her magical core is burning out, there is nothing we can do to stop it, and we’ve tried every conceivable way to do so. It’s unlike anything I’ve ever seen, and there seems to have been no spells placed on it to remove.” said the Healer softly, as if she could soften the blow. “We are at a loss, we are finding it difficult to keep her temperature down, it’s extremely elevated due to the stress her body is going through to retain her magic.”

James jaw dropped as he stared at her uncomprehendingly.
“I want to reassure you we are looking in every available resource to see if it will work, I have two of my best healers going through the older books to see if we missed something.” she added. “The problem is, it looks as if there was something already wrong with her magical core, and it was off-colour.”

James’ heart sank when she told him that titbit of information. “Co-co-could it have something to do with Merlin’s Law?” he managed to get out.

“Merlin’s Law?” Woodbridge’s eyebrows shot right up, she’d heard of it, everyone in the professional magical community had. “How long has she been suffering from it?” already realizing there was nothing she or anyone else could do. Magic itself was punishing her for her crimes of harming an Apprentice.

James stared at the floor as he admitted this, “Since she attacked our son.”

“Three years? Nearly three years? Why is this the first we’re hearing of it?” she asked aghast. How could she have hidden the loss of her magic for three years - it was inconceivable.

“To start with she just couldn’t cast anything remotely harmful, even a levitating charm… something changed since last night and then she just started screaming before I brought her in.” confessed James.

“It’s taking her magic,” summarised Woodbridge.

James merely nodded, “Will she…you know, be able to survive this?” he’d never heard of anyone losing their magic, having it bound yes, temporal core split yes, but losing it? No.

“I honestly do not know, right now our biggest concern is keeping her temperature down,” said the Healer honestly.

“Can her magic failing cause mental instability?” questioned James.

“If she knew I could see it causing a breakdown of sorts…but no not the sort your wife has been suffering.” confided Woodbridge, everyone knew it had been in the newspaper - Lily Potter was being utterly trashed by the press for her behaviour.

“My son has some clothes and nightwear for Lily…” James trailed off tightly.

“We will get them to her, right now she isn’t aware of her surroundings, and we’ve given her a Dreamless Sleeping Draught to stop the pain she’s currently experiencing. Unfortunately at the rate her magic is fading it will be the last one we can give her, and she will need to be transferred to the Muggle division where she had receive the proper medication and treatment.” the Healer told him.

“She was scheduled to come in for a…mental health check-up today,” James said grimly.

“It will need to be re-scheduled, she isn’t fit for any check up.” replied Woodbridge.

“I know,” said James dryly, he wasn’t stupid. “I want someone to see her as soon as they can.”

“I can understand this is an anxious time for you, but we will do the best we can for her.” said Woodbridge.

“Thank you,” sighed James, giving her a grim smile although it looked more like a grimace.
“Follow me, we took her to the ICU since she will need a lot of care, we are a bit understaffed at
the moment, which is why we are using the Medi-Witches and Medi-Wizards as well as Trainee
Healers to help us with the less urgent cases.” explained Woodbridge, talking as she walked along
to the ICU ward, where the most life threatening cases were. The cases varied, from animal bites to
knife wounds and such that wouldn’t heal up, curses and hexes that they didn’t know how to heal
and were trying to figure out what it was. There was even someone in right now that had taken a
potion they didn’t recognize; they were now trying to flush the toxins out of his blood. “She’s a
little pale right now, but try not to worry too much.”

“Alright,” agreed James, turning back to look at his son who was following along with the
Trainee…he couldn’t remember her name. He honestly couldn’t care right now either, life just
went from complicated to ten time more bloody complicated in a single hour.

“Here you are,” she said opening the door and leading him towards the bed Lily lay in, pale was
right, the sheets she was under looked as if they had more colour than her. She was sleeping,
looking rather peaceful right now, he envied that. Sitting down beside her he breathed deeply
unsure of what to do or say - especially surrounded by all these people. He didn’t want the last
thing he ever said to her to be that damn argument. He just wanted her to get better, he didn’t love
her anymore, but he still cared about her.

“Thank you,” he told her, nodding firmly.

“No problem, if you need anything Healer Barnes is just over there,” Woodbridge said before she
disappeared, her Trainee Healer following silently behind her.

“So what’s wrong with Mum? Do they know?” asked Nick.

So James began to explain, thankfully he already knew about Merlin’s Law so it was one less thing
to explain.

"Harry, this is ridiculous!” said Fleur looking at him wide eyed, “I swear five more boxes have
arrived since we came in!”

Harry laughed, as he put aside yet another box of chocolates with a marriage proposal next to it.
“You think?” he muttered, “One box and twenty-nine marriage proposals and they aren’t even all
from the UK.”

“Make that thirty-nine if you add the ones from the box I’ve got.” added Cedric, waving them at
the group. “Oh, Harry I want to have your babies.” he said in a high pitched squeaky voice.

“Defeats the point that he’s having one of his own,” Viktor pointed out, “I have five here,” but the
chocolates are missing that they said they brought.

“Yep, they think I’m stupid enough to eat a love-potion laced chocolate.” snorted Harry, “I think
they’ve forgotten what I am.” he was a Potions Master he knew the smell of a love potion for
Merlin’s sake.

“I assume the House-Elves are screening them?” enquired Neville, having grown up with the
creatures he knew what they were like and the tasks they received.

“Yeah,” nodded Harry, “Feel free to take any home with you, I’m not eating them.”

“Oh, look, this is a care package from the Weasley’s,” said Cedric, handing it over; it looked as
though it had an assortment of food in it. Fudge, cakes, a jumper with an H on it, he’d heard of the Weasley’s famous care package but it was usually just the kids that got them.

Harry picked it up his eyebrows sky high, “I’ll wear that when I want to itch myself to death.”

“The colour is very unappealing,” Fleur said in disapproval.

“Indeed,” replied Severus, surprising them from the doorway. He looked around the room shaking his head, this was ridiculous, but there was nothing he could do to stop it. They could send them back, but he had a feeling the stubborn idiots would just continue to send it back.

“Hungry?” enquired Severus; “Dobby is bringing up a few platters.” they had been at this for hours now. After the news of Harry’s pregnancy had passed Harry had asked for their help. It didn’t look as if they were getting anywhere, but he knew that more were arriving by the hour. Replacing all the work they had done, he had seen all the drugged edibles and drinks. A list of items that had been charmed was also available to him and some of them made him grit his teeth.

“I’m actually thirsty,” mused Cedric, “Oh, look…another marriage proposal, they have two villas in France, a chalet in Switzerland and homes spread around the world.” as if that would make Harry want to marry them - they were utterly insane.

“Just put them in the bin, it’s not even funny anymore.” Harry told him absently, as he did just that with his pile, one by one the others all did the same.

“I think it’s funny,” giggled Luna, amused.

Harry just gave her a bemused look before getting back to the piles. “Should I just banish them all?” he groaned.

“I don’t know, some of them are really sweet,” argued Cho, “Just saying thank you.”

“Another one with money,” said Lukas, plonking the pouch into the money bin.

“At this rate I’ll need to find two different charities.” grumbled Harry, he didn’t want their money.

“Food for Master Harry and Severus’ guests,” said Dobby, popping the plates on the only empty table in the room.

“Thank you, Dobby!” they called together almost in unison.

Dobby just blushed and disappeared.

Severus stared at Harry, he had been planning on properly proposing tonight but would there ever be a more prefect time? Surrounded by his lover’s best friends, all of them in a good mood…and he didn’t have to fear that Harry would reject him and there was no war to stop him. His mind made up, he moved over towards him, his long nimble fingers already fishing the rings out of his pocket as he knelt down beside him, taking in Harry’s wide surprised green eyes. The room silenced, all of them were waiting knowing it was coming.

“I cannot think of a better time than when you are surrounded by the people who care about you most…I know I’m not the most romantic of men, but will you marry me?” he asked, finding it difficult to get the words out but succeeding.

“YES!” said Harry immediately, wrapping his arms around him, beaming with happiness.
Then the cheering started, bringing the newly engaged couple in for a group hug, not for long knowing that Severus wasn’t one for physical contact. Then they took turns in hugging Harry wishing him all the best, if anyone deserved it - it was him. None of them cared two hoots about the fact he’d been the Boy-Who-Lived all along. To them he was Harry, their best friend, and the smart one of the group.

“May I have my fiancé back?” enquired Severus silkily; laughing Luna let him go, eyes twinkling brightly not just with happiness but with knowledge. With that Severus placed the ring on his finger, it was a perfect fit - as if there had been any doubt he thought to himself wryly.

“I love you,” said Harry, giving him yet another hug, he knew that this had been for him - Sev would have preferred something much more quiet and just the two of them.

“And I you,” replied Severus, and with that he quietly joined the group, opening letter after letter, smug with the knowledge that they couldn’t offer him anything that Sev hadn’t already.

Life was good. Of course it was he was alive to enjoy it all because of this determined young man - he deserved someone who would openly show him affection. It was a vow he promised to do more often, even if it was just with these people - and he found he could tolerate that.
"Visitors at the wards for Master Severus and Harry," said Dobby, speaking to Harry, who was busy with the rest of the correspondence, Severus was in the potions lab - much to Harry's consternation and envy. Not being able to brew had been the biggest hit this far, honestly he hated it. It was like losing a limb or something, it was hard to explain but he hated not being able to brew. He'd started to stand earlier, ready to go down with him and brew when Sev's pointed look had him sitting back down extremely disgruntled. Thankfully Sev didn't find it funny, in fact he sympathised but it was for his own good…and their baby of course. It didn't make it any less annoying, he was bored out of his wits - it's why he was reluctantly going through yet another box of letters from complete strangers. Thankfully there weren't that many more marriage contracts being sent to him, he couldn't believe people were so willing to marry a stranger or marry their daughters off to a complete stranger. It was diabolical really, and it was a good job he wasn't a proper psycho or some unsuspecting female might have ended up being told they were getting married! A few of them weren't even seventeen years old yet, not legally able to marry.

"Who?" frowned Harry, coming out of his letter to stare at Dobby curiously.

"Alec Selwyn-Warren and Daniel Fawley, Sir!" explained the House-Elf. "Will Dobby ask them to leave?"

"It's that time already?" gaped Harry, looking at his watch surprised, bloody hell he'd been reading this stuff for over three hours? Well, the box was nearly empty but still, he was surprised by how quickly time had gone by. "Dobby go and let Sev know, then let our guests through the wards." Not only was it a sign of wealth and power having House-Elves invite guests in it was also quicker than him walking down to the end of the wards and inviting them up. The wards had been changed and tripled since the end of the war - they didn't want bothered by press so this was the only way to ensure complete privacy. Nobody could get through without first being invited.

"Rose?" called Harry, once Dobby had disappeared.

"Yes, Sir?" enquired the female House-Elf, answering her Master's call.

"Bring some refreshments, we are about to have two guests," asked Harry standing up, looking around making sure it wasn't untidy. Normally he wouldn't care but these two men were the pureblood's of all pureblood's. He had no idea what their personalities would be like. Although the manor was absolutely breathtaking…technically neither he nor Sev were pureblood's, and people like them were raised knowing their blood was supposedly superior. No, thought Harry to himself sternly, he couldn't think like that. It wasn't fair on them that he was judging them before even meeting them. Look at Viktor, pureblood, famous Quidditch star, and the most down to earth guy he'd ever met. Fleur was also raised with a lot of wealth and influential parents who were deep in the political world in France and had a lot of connections. Frowning, deeply perturbed by his irrational thinking. He did not care what people thought, so why was he suddenly thinking like that?
"Are you alright?" asked Severus, moving towards Harry, concerned worried about both him and the child as well as the oncoming conversation. His hand bringing Harry's face up to meet his, black eyes probing and concerned.

"I'm fine, it's just…nothing," said Harry shaking his head causing Severus to drop his hand down.

"Are you sure?" enquired Severus, Harry would tell him when he was ready, as always. He had difficulties understanding how he felt sometimes, and even worse time trying to explain them. Which would make this pregnancy worse, especially considering Harry wasn't used to the emotions that would come with it. Women weren't able to cope sometimes, but as his mother said 'she had plenty years to get used to riding the dragon' she was more used to the emotions, especially more used to such a thing than Harry would be. He had dismissed the conversation they had two night ago, while Harry was with his friends but perhaps she had a point.

"I'm fine," repeated Harry, and he was…now. Although he was a little bit tired, he hadn't been sleeping well, even with Sev with him the nightmares kept him awake. Thankfully he managed not to wake Severus up, well last night at least, the night before he'd woken him up twice.

"They're here," said Severus, his head snapping up when he heard Dobby's voice leading the two men into the manor just as he felt a shimmer indicating they had stepped through the front door. Rose appeared and clicked her fingers; two large silver platters appeared on the table, polished to perfection. Severus noticed it was his grandparents wedding gifts; the coat of arms was stamped elegantly into the handles. He had never used them; in fact anything of his grandparents had been placed in boxes and put down the basement when he moved in. He loathed his grandparents; they had disowned his mother and left him to struggle through school without a penny to his name. They had so much money, they could have spared some to make his life a little easier…he was magical after all it had to count for something, more powerful than any of the Princes had been since his great, great grandfather according to his mother. His hatred ran deep, perhaps even deeper than his mothers ran, since she hated them as much as she loved them.

"Thank you, Rose, you may go." Severus told her, absently noticing Dobby had made the elf another skirt thankfully in a rather sedate colour. Dobby for some reason enjoyed knitting and crafting clothes for the other House-Elves and himself. Harry had made sure the House-Elf was given either the material or money to buy some - Harry insisted that Dobby had help him invent Eileen's potion and since he couldn't put him down as a participant in helping create it he would give him other things instead. House-Elves were servants, belongings according to the magical world so he couldn't be put down as co-creator or helper.

"Master Severus, Master Harry, your guests have arrived," said Dobby appearing at the door with the two of them. Once that was done, he disappeared like all good House-Elves.

Harry gazed at them, they were both very different, night and day, one blonde and short the other red haired and extremely tall - Severus kind of tall, they were dressed similarly and impeccably. They bled of confidence and wealth, but he could see in their eyes that they were apprehensive about this meeting. They were curious enough to come, but worried about what they were going to be told he'd bet.

"Your home is magnificent," commented one of the wizards, his American accent noticable. "The Arabians are just stunning."

"Daniel," chided Alec, sounding very similiar in accent, "My apologies, I'm Alec and this is my husband Daniel," he introduced the pair of them, his hand out as he shook Harry hand.
"Severus Snape," said Severus, nodding his head curtly, only shaking Daniel's hands very briefly. He was not a people's person, and he was rather apprehensive about this upcoming conversation. Hence why he had chosen to have it in his home, should things go wrong, he could evict them.

"Harry Peverell," stated Harry, while shaking Alec's hand. "Sit, would you like some tea, coffee?"

"Coffee would be great," replied both men, taking a seat after staring at each other - they weren't sure what to have expected. Their greeting could have been warmer…and neither seemed inclined to touch them very long which gave them the impression that perhaps they had something against their…sexual preferences. Then again why would they agree to the project if they were so against it? Needless to say both of them were rather perplexed but the pureblood's they were - they didn't let it show.

Severus smoothly poured the coffees into three cups and tea into the fourth and passed it to Harry, who was sitting next to him on the couch across from the American couple. The other cups were swiftly picked up and the awkward silence continued until Harry broke it.

"Is this your first visit to the UK?" asked Harry.

"To the magical one yes, but we visited Muggle England five years back," said Daniel, "London is quite bustling have you ever been out of the Magical world?"

"No, I wasn't given the opportunity," said Harry, "Although I know quite a bit about it, Eileen, Severus' mother speaks of it with fondness."

"It is fascinating," agreed Daniel.

"Do you plan to visit Diagon Alley and Hogsmeade while you are here?" enquired Severus, relaxing just a little.

"We do," stated Alec speaking for the first time. "As much as I love pleasantries, please…do not go into it on our account."

Severus smirked, finding himself rather admiring Alec and his no-nonsense attitude, it reminded him of himself. "It's a rather delicate situation to broach, we certainly don't want you getting the wrong impression." he told him honestly and firmly.

"I see," said Alec, "Well we would rather the truth as it is, and not sugar coated, we understood it was a long shot probably impossible when we asked." he reached for Daniel's hand and squeezed it firmly. If anyone it was Daniel who would be hurt, he had gotten his hopes up, especially during the Portkey here.

"Yes, I wasn't making very much progress on the potion when I found something out, part of me thought I wasn't giving it my all due to the war…" confessed Severus thoughtfully.

"It's understandable," agreed Alec, "I lost my grandfather to war with Grindelwald while it's not the same I understand the worry and fear." his father hadn't been the same for years after that, who would be after seeing their father struck down? And had suffered from terrible nightmares that the magical world now identified as post traumatic stress disorder. He got better, slowly, with the help of a familiar and seeing someone.

"What did you find out?" enquired Daniel, placing his empty cup back on the tray, Darjeeling tea it had been lovely but it didn't stop his heart pounding like a drum. He fiddled with his long blonde hair absenty, unable to settle which wasn't like him but this had the potential to be life changing. Ever since they'd written to the Potion Masters he'd known deep down if anyone could do it - it
would be them. He was really worried that Alec would bow to his parent's pressure. He hadn't yet, part of him knew it wouldn't happen, but a greater part did think it might.

"My partner is two months pregnant," said Severus, watching confusion wash over both men.

"Congratulations," said Alec, his tone filled with sincerity. "But I am unsure of how this…relates to our current conversation."

"You understand that this was before I received your missive, correct?" stated Severus, so there were no crossed wires.

"Of course..." Daniel trailed off giving his partner a look that said 'What the hell is going on?' but Alec's eyes showed he had no idea either.

"I do not want the public finding out about this, at least not until they have to or find out when its over." said Severus firmly, when Harry had already had their child so he didn't end up stressed or accosted every time he stepped out the manor. "We are hoping that the situation can be replicated, but I can understand if you do not wish to risk the potential harm."

"Find out about what? The idea for the potion?" asked Alec, sitting forward his full concentration on Severus.

"We did promise that nobody would know about it, it isn't as if we sent letters to more than one Potions Master." assured Daniel, glancing at Harry to find the younger wizard asleep leaning against Severus.

"My partner is a wizard," Severus told them bluntly, watching shock bloom on their faces.

"How?" Alec asked amazed, shaking his red head in shock.

"It's Harry isn't it?" asked Daniel, he could scarcely believe the young boy next to him was pregnant! This was...life changing; he would do whatever it took - no matter the dangers to give Alec what he wanted more than anything else in this world. A child of both their blood, someone to continue on their lines. He couldn't have been more surprised that they were together, they certainly didn't give any indication that they were.

"Indeed," stated Severus calmly, "You'll have to forgive him; he's not been sleeping well as of late."

"I am not surprised if the rumours are anything to go on," said Alec, nodding his head.

"Surprisingly the rumours are extremely accurate." Severus told them dryly.

"How did it happen?" asked Daniel, "A Potion? A spell?"

"There was an accident two months ago that caused an explosion, Harry was injured as a result of it. It's not something he likes to think about often, especially considering he had just passed his Mastery." explained Severus, "The ingredient we assume made the changes to Harry is unicorn blood."

"Wait unicorn blood? Forgive me, but isn't that an extremely rare ingredient?" questioned Alec, "I only have a rudimentary understanding of potions compared to you."

"Very rare, of course there are those who sell blood on the black market but that blood is not willingly given and had turned black...most people wouldn't conceive of buying it since the
potions require willingly given silver unicorn blood." answered Severus educating them.

"If this news gets out then…” whispered Daniel worriedly.

"It would turn grave indeed," said Severus grimly, the unicorns would be massacred by idiots thinking they knew what they were doing. Not to mention the idiots who agreed to the procedure ending up with a half life, a cursed life. "This could never be published, the consequences could be dire." he felt the need to add.

"Of course," agreed Alec, unicorns were a rare species as it was without this getting out.

"Which is why I have this contract for you to sign," ordered Severus, handing over a document he took from his cloak pocket. He didn't bother telling them what it was and expect them to sign. Any pureblood worth their status would always read and check out a contract before they even contemplated putting their signature on the paper.

When he moved Harry's head slide down his back, Severus turned and moved Harry, putting his head in the opposite direction so he was a little more comfortable. He contemplated wakening him up, but he knew Harry needed his sleep so refrained - he could just tell him how it went. He looked as if he hadn't had any sleep last night, which was why he'd made an herbal remedy to help ease him to sleep - which wouldn't harm the baby of course.

Daniel watched Severus closely, seeing for the first time an indication of love between both men. The look in his eyes, it was familiar…the way Alec looked at him. They weren't just dating he realized, as he watched Severus move a stay piece of hair from Harry's face, noticing the ring on his finger…on both their fingers. It was a very exquisite design; they had contemplated something more daring like this, but decided on something less...a plain band with an inscription close to their own hearts. They were extremely lucky, was there a chance that what happened to them happening to him and Alec? Circe he hoped so! It would be a dream come true.

"Done," stated Alec, signing it with a flourish, Dan took the pen next and signed his own signature as well.

"Thank you," replied Severus, accepting it back, flicking his wand and the parchment curled up and disappeared with a quiet pop.

"You really think it can be replicated?" enquired Daniel, his tone casual. He knew he wasn't fooling this wizard a single bit; he just had that smirk on his face as if he could read his very soul.

"There is only one way to find out, but I suggest you take some time and think this through - we just do not know the consequences of this…” said Severus firmly.

"You said that an accident occurred, a potions accident, pray tell…how on earth did the ingredient survive that?" asked Alec, he was aware of the accident; he received the Daily prophet, getting a weeks worth on the Sunday from the newsagents who held them for him.

"Pure luck and the precautious we take with them." said Severus simply.

"What exactly did Harry do with the unicorn blood? Accidentally ingest it?" enquired Daniel, keeping his tone quiet not wanting to wake the pregnant wizard up.

"No, it got into his bloodstream." stated Severus.

"And there has been no other side affects?" asked Alec, gazing at the sleeping wizard, he looked normal…he couldn't help but wonder what else the unicorn blood could have changed.
"No, our healer did two thorough scans to be sure, nothing has changed except that." assured Severus.

"How exactly did the…forgive the crassness of this sperm get to where it needed to be?" Alec just couldn't conceive it, he believed him but his mind couldn't wrap the notion around it.

"Your guess would be as good as mine," Severus replied sardonically. "Magic."

"Have you tried any test subjects?" already knowing the answer.

"Not as of yet, and to do so risks what little is left." said Severus, it had been a miracle that Harry had managed to get unicorn blood the first time around - at the age of eleven no less.

"So we take a risk or the opportunity will pass us by?" summarized Daniel, nodding in understanding - he finally understood why the Potions Master had asked them to come. He didn't even think of the possibility of getting unicorn blood, the only ingredient you could get from a unicorn when they're dead and unwillingly was their horn. Blood even after they've died if taken would turn black.

"To put it bluntly, yes," Severus told them grimly.

"May I see a copy of the healer's results?" asked Alec, he would never risk Daniel's health, not even for this.

"I thought you'd never ask," replied Severus dryly, pulling out four sheets of parchment and handing them over. One was a scan done before the potions accident, one after, one with blood and of course a picture of his child as proof that Harry was indeed pregnant and they were not trying to scam the couple. "I understand if you need time to decide, it's not a decision lightly or easily made."

"So sorry, don't let me interrupt!" said Eileen, making her way into the living room with a large vase full of flowers the smell of them immediately pervaded the air. She quickly placed them on the mantel place to the left, there was another one filled on the right.

"Alec Selwyn-Warren, Daniel Fawley, my mother Eileen Prince-Snape, mother Alec and Daniel." said Severus giving a quick introduction.

"I'm ever so pleased to meet you," she said, shaking both their hands beaming at them as if nothing had pleased her more than to meet them.

"You also," said Daniel smiling kindly in turn.

"Please excuse me," she said, making her way out of the room letting them continue their meeting. She had decided to help Harry with all the mail he was getting. She had been tempted to burn five rather lewd letters, but she decided to keep them in a folder - just in case Harry continued to get the letters so that charges could be pressed if anything should occur or if the letters became threatening. She made a mental note to let Severus know, although she was worried about his reaction. He hadn't cared one iota of the marriage contracts so hopefully these letters would not cause the opposite reaction.

"I think perhaps its best if this meeting is adjourned for the moment. Perhaps tomorrow afternoon we can continue if you do not have anything to do?" suggested Alec, he had to have a private conversation with his husband about it.

"We are busy tomorrow afternoon, I'm afraid we will only be available from ten until twelve?" suggested Severus. Dom the young werewolf was coming for a visit. Harry might not be able to
brew but he can still figure out what to do about his new potion. Dom would hold the answer to whether Eileen's potion helped for more than just a single month. There was little point to putting the potions together if Eileen's potion did the trick once. Remus was also coming; he had taken Harry's new potion, the one without Eileen's potion in it. Both were going to be checked over and asked a few questions regarding the full moon night. He had no idea how long they would be busy. The day after that they would be shopping, mostly for new robes and a few things for the baby. Harry wanted new robes for graduation, having decided he wanted to get his certificate and be there for that day. So he would need graduation robes and a cap, he wondered what Harry would look like in the royal blue robes.

"I'm sure that will be doable." said Alec; they could fit their planned trips around that time. They had nothing planned today so he could have a serious conversation with Daniel in the privacy of their hotel room. If it could be called as such, he was very tempted to go into the Muggle world and find a more suitable accommodation. It was absolutely filthy in the Leaky Cauldron; it had of course got his work mind going, thinking of placing a hotel with higher standards nearby, so anyone that visited did not have to deal with such grubbiness. He was sure there would be manors that could be converted, like Prince Manor; he could imagine the people would flock all over to see it. They didn't even have a television in the room, it was barbaric and very simple - not something he was accustomed to. So, yes, he was very tempted to invest in the area and give it a bit more life.

"Fantastic, then I shall see you both then." said Severus, "Feel free to use the Floo should you wish it." giving a gesture towards the fireplace.

"Thank you," said Daniel, shaking Severus' hand again, this time he wasn't worried that he was secretly disgusted by their sexual preferences since he too went for his own gender. "Give my best wishes to Harry and congratulations."

"Indeed," said Alec, agreeing with him.

"I will," he said firmly, watching both men step into the Floo after grasping a hold of Floo Powder and disappear into the network. Only then did he give a sigh of relief, it had gone much better than expected, he was now wondering why he'd gotten anxious about, the dates proved without a shadow of a doubt when it happened - proving that it had indeed been before he received their letter.

The second they left Dobby popped back in, snapping his fingers and the platters disappeared, at the very same time food appeared on the table. Along with their mail (from people they knew) and the newspapers. Breakfast was late, but they had known it would be hence he had told the House-Elves to hold off on it.

"Thank you, Dobby," said Severus, "Let my mother know breakfast is ready." she was probably in the kitchen again or outside the back of the house with the plants.

"Dobby will do that right away," said the House-Elf disappearing.

Sitting down at the table, he opened the front page of the Daily Prophet and stared in stunned disbelief.

Lily Potter - A Squib!

Upon reading the paper he found that losing her magic due to Merlin's Law was only the icing on the cake, she had also been institutionalised at St. Mungo's. After failing a psychiatric evaluation, something of which had been started by James Potter. Potter wouldn't have wanted this published, either one of the patients had overheard something or worse a healer had revealed the information -
if that was the case no doubt someone would be losing their job soon enough. That is if Potter pressed charges, he didn't have the power he used to have so he might not even try. At least he wouldn't need to worry about her casting any spells on Harry. He had been infuriated when he learned what she had done in front of the emergency room at the hospital.

The Floo activated suddenly, causing Severus to look up from his newspaper to find Sirius Black's face floating in the fireplace.

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Do you want to see a sequel to this story? Perhaps seeing Severus and Harry's family dynamics, their potion accomplishments and life? or would you prefer to see it in the epilogue and over with? Will this be a foreshadowing of the American's moving here and helping move the British magical world enter a new age with TV and such being integrated? With less pureblood's there to prevent the ushering of a new age? involving the combination of magical and Muggle! R&R please!
"Yes?" enquired Severus, arching an eyebrow at the wizard floating in his fireplace. Placing the newspaper on the table, contemplating the idea of hiding the paper from Harry - but it would likely be a waste of time, the news would be everywhere and it would only be a matter of time before he knew what was happening. Dear Merlin, he was turning into a bloody mother hen. That would have to stop, but he didn't want Harry stressed, stress wasn't good at all for someone pregnant least of all a man.

"Can I come through?" asked Sirius, wondering if the comradeship they had built finding the Horcruxes was gone now the danger was.

"Be my guest," said Severus, "its open." just as soon as those words were out of his mouth, the fireplace became empty as Sirius withdrew from the flames.

"What's open?" asked Eileen, coming through, "Is Harry still having trouble sleeping?" she enquired quietly, not wanting to wake him up. Then again she had slept a lot when she was pregnant, but she couldn't remember it beginning so soon in her pregnancy - Harry was only two months along but they didn't know the affect it was having on Harry. Women were made with the ability and cope with it, men weren't.

"I've made a herbal remedy that should help with that," said Severus, "We are having a guest, Sirius Black will be through any second." a small ding alerted them to Sirius coming through before he was actually spitting out of their fireplace and standing in front of them.

"Good morning," said Sirius, not as awkward with Eileen or Severus as he used to be, when he realized this he wondered when he had gotten comfortable around them. Well, comfortable might be a stretch, but there wasn't the all encompassing strain there used to be.

"Have you eaten?" enquired Severus, giving a quick glance at Harry, wondering if he should wake him for something to eat.

"No, I didn't get a chance," admitted Sirius, following Severus' gaze to Harry, a small smile slipping onto his face. It was nice to see Harry so content, he had looked so pale and shaken after the battle, he had been so busy with the clean up that this morning was the first day he'd had off.

"Then sit, the House-Elves made enough to feed an army, as always," said Severus, there was little point to wasted food. "And explain what you want." he was hungry, it was improper to eat especially with a guest just standing there so at least if he sat down he could eat his breakfast in peace. He'd been up for hours, and brewing just to get Harry's potion finished. His fiancé needed sleep, only then would he feel better. The fact he wasn't getting to brew was making him feel extremely bored, which didn't help matters.

"Thank you," said Sirius, sitting down, "Is he okay?"

Severus looked at Black before opening his mouth and replying. "Do you remember the first time you had to kill a suspect?" he gave the wizard a pointed look.
Sirius' eyes glazed over as he thought on that particular day, it had been an accident actually. He had been trying to bring in a wizard who was illegally breeding dragons, and exposing the magical world at the same time. Two of the biggest rules, no wizard would willingly come in with the sure threat of Azkaban hanging over them. He had fought back, John Jahrim was his name. He had cast a blasting curse, which had the fighting wizard flying off his feet but he'd fall through a spike of upturned wood that looked as if it had once been used to keep dragons in when they were babies. This was before Crouch had declared that Auror's were allowed to use Unforgivables. The accident had haunted him for a long time, drinking had been the only relief he got before he saw the wizard again even when he closed his eyes.

"Touché," conceded Sirius, although it was a stupid question really, he was seventeen and he'd been forced to kill to stop himself being killed - him and the people he cared about.

"Ask a stupid question," stated Severus bluntly.

Sirius grinned amused watching Severus give him a weird look before plating his breakfast.

"So?" enquired Severus, as he dug into his food, as his stomach rumbled hungrily.

"Did you know?" asked Sirius, he had read the reports that came in, shocked - probably as shocked as James and Nick had been when they heard Voldemort talking about it being Harry who had defeated him that night. James had confessed that he'd suspected it after going to Godric's Hollow to tidy up and bring a few things to the manor. Explaining the toy unicorn and how Harry never slept without it. Which was true, Harry always had the toy with him clutched in his hand or mouth.

"Know?" echoed Severus, arching an eyebrow, he suspected what this was about but he wasn't going to make it easy on the wizard.

"About Harry, that he had defeated Voldemort." explained Sirius, his face a look of glumness and pain.

"Yes," he replied sharply, having no reason to keep it hidden.

"Why didn't you tell Albus? You were both close...although not so much lately." said Sirius, frowning as he remembered that Severus had rarely been at any of the Order meetings this time around. He had been at a few, don't get him wrong, but even then he had remained aloof even from Albus which was different from how they'd been during the last Order. He wondered what had happened to cause that, but there was no way Snape would tell him about that if he asked outright.

"Not lately, no, he awarded over one hundred points to Gryffindor at the leaving feast, giving no chance to my students in catching up leaving them devastated, it may not seem like much but at Hogwarts they get the chance to be a child," said Severus darkly, remembering how he felt during that brief moment. "That and I no longer wanted to teach, I had scarified my career long enough."

"I know how it is," said Sirius, sagely, "It was the same with me," he hated going home; the only time he ever did was during the summer. He'd hated his parents, still did despite the fact they were dead now. They hadn't known about him preferring his own gender, which was a good thing - otherwise he would have heard about duty and the need for an heir. Especially now since he was in fact the last of his line, to think just years ago the Black's had been everywhere.

"To make matters worse he gave points to Nick Potter for something he didn't even do," Severus added, his voice still dark and bitter.

"Wait I thought he did?" asked Sirius confused.
"What's courageous about going into the lower dungeons and looking into a mirror?" sneered Severus.

"I thought there was something about Voldemort?" asked Sirius blankly.

"He occupied the back of Quirrell's head, the new defence teacher; Harry stunned him and locked him in a room without his wand. Voldemort's spirit fled killing the wizard for failing, whatever you've heard is nothing but insipid lies." Severus told him, lips drawn back in a silent sneer.

Sirius closed his eyes, feeling sickness crawling up his spine, although it wasn't fully to do with what he was hearing. He'd drank himself silly with James last night, he hadn't eaten yet, opening his eyes, he grabbed a piece of toast and began to slowly eat it. He didn't butter it hoping that the dry toast would help calm his churning stomach. The wrongs done to Harry just continued to grow colossally bigger.

"The kitchen is through there if you are going to be sick," said Eileen, shifting her chair to the other side away from the Black heir.

"I'll be fine, thank you." said Sirius, rubbing at his stomach, breathing deeply through his nose and letting it out, he repeated it a few time between bites of toast.

"Why didn't you tell me and Remus at least? I mean we swore a Vow, and we kept it." said Sirius; obviously, he didn't fancy losing his magic thank you very much. It had been difficult keeping it from James, he was his best friend after all but conceded at the time James had enough to worry about - while he had been under the impression Nick had to take out Voldemort.

"Harry didn't tell me willingly, I pushed for a truthful answer, when I noticed he was leaving parts of what he went through out. He dreaded no, loathed the thought of anyone knowing. He begged me not to tell anyone, on the verge of a panic attack. I conceded to his demand with a stipulation that he learn defence to keep himself safe." stated Severus sharply.

Sirius quickly realized how long Severus had known, four years, when Harry had begun his apprenticeship - the 'what he went through' part must be when he'd been kidnapped by Voldemort and tortured. Merlin Kingsley was still recovering from what had happened to him and he was a grown man and Auror. Albeit he had been held much longer than Harry had but still his godson had only been fourteen. He wanted to curse, he had thought Harry was beginning to trust him, get closer but were they? It wasn't as if he told Harry everything about himself...so why should Harry do that to him in turn?

"Albus showed up at Potter Manor last night, wanting to go through Nick's memories, he wanted to be sure what happened actually happened. He spoke about Nick may have been the one to do it when they were children and that the prophecy was about both of them," said Sirius, "I could tell by the look on his face that he did not believe a word coming out of his own mouth. I think he just wanted to make sure he had the truth this time, it must be a knock to his pride that he believed something without finding out if it was true or not. I think guilt comes into it somewhere but why he feels guilty I have no idea."

Severus snorted before answering Sirius, "Albus will have suspected at some point probably quite a few times actually that Harry seemed more like 'the hero they needed' but when compared to Nick most people would have been."

"Then why would..." questioned Sirius, baffled.

"He was too heavily invested in Nick Potter at that point; he will have buried any suspicions he
had. Either that or something will have come along convincing him that his thoughts had been stupid to begin with. He alienated all the students bar the Gryffindors to get Nick fond of him so the boy would wish to train." a wry smirk on his face. He knew Albus well, and he had antagonized everyone in his attempt to get Nick to revere him. To look up to him and see him as a mentor - so when the time came the training could commence. Albus may have thought nobody could see through him, but he had, it wasn't difficult especially for a Slytherin.

"I don't know if I should give this to Harry, at least of all now...but James begged me to and well...you know him best so you can give it to him when you think he can take it." said Sirius, removing a small box and enlarging it, it was still small but not as small as a matchbox.

"What is it?" asked Severus, arching an eyebrow. Potter had no idea what he'd done for Harry, and quite frankly he was leery of letting the wizard know. He did deserve to know, Potter was bound to be confused why Harry's feelings had changed so abruptly at least to him they had. He doubted Harry would ever forget what Potter had done for him, for them.

"It's a chest of things that Lily and James saved up from when Harry was born until he was one years old," explained Sirius, opening the latch, "His first booties, his favourite toy, his birth certificate, pictures, a special rattle that I bought, a special box with Harry's first tooth, a lock of his hair, a pendant that James got from his father and wanted to give to Harry...and a bunch of other stuff. Including a book of all Harry's accomplishments recorded...his first accidental magic, his first word things like that." some of it James had actually only added lately. Included inside was a letter James had written and in his drunken state he'd gathered up the courage to give it to him.

"I see," said Severus, staring at the tiny mitts and booties, they were so small...to think he'd have something that small in his hands seven months time. A little boy or girl, oh he owed Potter more than he cared to admit.

"You alright?" asked Sirius, giving Snape a deep penetrating cautious look. If he didn't know any better he would say Snape of all people actually wanted a kid. Out of all the things he suspected about Snape - that was nowhere on the list.

"I'm fine," said Severus smoothly, averting his gaze.

"He's so cute," cooed Eileen, as she flipped through the pictures, her breakfast forgotten. There were a great many, including ones with Harry in the bath - all parents did it even she had. "I don't think I've seen any of Harry so young!" would her grandchild look like that? Or perhaps a combination of Severus and Harry? Oh she couldn't help but imagine Harry's cute button nose and face, with Severus' hair and bejewelled black eyes - what a stunner they would be as long as they didn't get too many Prince features.

"Keep doing that until he wakes up, I dare you," said Severus, smirking mischievously, Harry would be utterly mortified.

"Shall I show Harry yours?" was Eileen's' come back, wiping the smirk from his face.

"You dare," warned Severus, his eyes narrowed distrustfully.

Eileen just smiled smugly, before placing the pictures back in the chest having looked at them all. So little but she summarised it had been special pictures that were placed in there. From his birth to his first birthday, he had looked happy and doted on - she couldn't believe the attack had changed them so much. Nearly dying - shouldn't that have made them overly indulgent with both of them? There was just no point to thinking on things like that, it had happened and Harry was over it - starting a family of his own.
Sirius bit his tongue to stop himself laughing; he didn't want to wake Harry up. He was slightly envious of the relationship Snape had had with his mother. He could remember a time when he wished his own parents were like that, instead snarling and shouting like banshees at him. The only time he'd actually seen them proud and on the same page was when he and his brother displayed incidents of accidental magic. He'd been envious of the relationship James had with his parents, but he'd grown to love them as if they were his own.

"Are you working today?" asked Severus, wondering when he could get rid of Black or if he would have to put up with him all day.

"No, but I need to head off soon, Remus and I want to spend some time together." said Sirius, something they hadn't been able to do lately. Especially with all his work and Remus' work for the Order.

"Indeed," said Severus, nodding curtly. He understood that desire, which was why he wasn't going to be brewing for the rest of the day. Since the next few days were going to be busy, it would mean the rest of the day was for just them. In fact he planned on trying not to brew too much for a few months, Harry shouldn't be the only one to sacrifice what he loved most - but he knew even as he thought it that it wasn't doable. He wouldn't last long, he loved brewing too much and it let him glimpse how Harry would and will feel.

"I went to visit Frank and Alice and I swear they look better," commented Sirius, his brow furrowed. "I swear on my parent's graves that he was looking and me and understanding what I was saying!"

"That's because he does," revealed Severus, "He's shown rapid improvement since he was given Harry's potion."

"Harry created a potion to battle the insanity created by the Cruciatus Curse?" gaped Sirius, wide eyed. He'd known Harry was good, hell Eileen's Potion had done wonders for them...he'd seen them before the potion and it had made him sick. Now this? He was overwhelmed, and he knew Harry was also trying to create a potion to help with Lycanthrope or something he wasn't sure what he'd only heard Remus mention it in passing and actually take the potion instead of the Wolfsbane potion he usually took. How did he have the time? How many potions had he created in a few years? There was the water breathing potion, the teleportation potion, the Animagus potion he'd tested and of course there was Eileen's potion. Yet he had invented one to heal Frank and Alice as well as the others in St. Mungo's suffering from the Cruciatus induced insanity, and one for werewolves? "Has anyone ever created so many potions in their careers?"

"Yes, but usually only one is ever invented that people remember, that a Potions Master is known for. Such as Rubens Winikus and his Skele-Gro potion. He invented nine potions during the course of his career, none took like Skele-Gro which of course he had patented." stated Severus.

Sirius nodded, not surprised that Snape knew all this - he was a Potions Master.

"He invented ten actually, you're forgetting about the one he created as an apprentice!" said Harry quietly, as he sat up rubbing his eyes tiredly.

"Oh, of course, if you can call it a potion, it only turns water into a different colour," Severus pointed out as he figured out what Harry was talking about, not one of the finest inventions ever made.

"Still an invention," shrugged Harry, yawning as he blinked his eyes sleeping and slid into a seat giving Sirius a small smile still too tired to talk much. He immediately dug into the food, filling his
plate up until it was spilling out the sides; he was unaware of Sirius watching him perplexed. "Why are talking about potions anyway?" he asked before yawning again, he knew Sirius didn't know squat about potions.

"It seems Frank and Alice are visibly getting better," explained Severus, needing no further conversation for Harry to understand what he meant.

"They should be," he muttered, shovelling scrambled egg in his mouth, Merlin he was starving.

"They aren't talking quite yet," revealed Sirius.

"No they won't its repairing the damage done to their mind, we estimate…or rather Harry estimates that they should begin interacting with people in the last few days of the potion." explained Severus. "Thankfully due to their limited mobility, they won't need to under go rigorous physical therapy."

"But they will need some though?" asked Sirius, wondering if he understood that statement correctly.

"Of course, they've been bed bound for a long time, they'll need to get used to movement again." replied Severus, pushing his empty plate to the side and poured himself a cup of coffee.

Sirius nodded he had understood then - good. At least Frank and Alice would be getting better, they were lucky Harry had chosen to be a Potions Master by the look of things. Although if anyone else could have done it - Snape could have.

"You finished with the paper?" asked Harry, after swallowing down his bacon.

"Finish your breakfast first," said Severus, his tone serious and booking no argument.

Harry stared down at his food, before shrugging his shoulders and digging in again. Now he was curious…what was in that paper that Sev didn't want him to see until he'd eaten everything? Had the press found out about him being pregnant? No, not possible, only Healer Welsh knew and she wouldn't tell anyone, Andy was more of a friend than just his healer. "Hey, where did they go? How did the meeting go?" asked Harry, realizing he had slept through the entire meeting.

"Took you long enough to ask, it went well, they are returning tomorrow morning to discuss if further." said Severus, saying no more he didn't want anyone finding out yet.

"Hmm," was the only noise Harry, made as his fork and knife clattered onto his now empty plate. He nabbed the paper and opened it for his eyebrows to shoot up in shock.

"How did this happen?" wondered Harry curiously, not really caring for Lily but the circumstances. "Do you think it's because she threatened me again?"

"It's a high possibility," said Severus in agreement.

"Wait, she what?" cried Sirius, Lily had been the smartest of them all why would she threaten Harry after going to Azkaban? What on earth had happened to her? Well he knew what; she'd suffered a mental breakdown of sorts. The question remained was when it had happened and how she'd managed to hide it so long. People say those closest would be first to notice, but the truth was those that loved you chose to ignore it in a stupid attempt that if they ignore it long enough it would go away.

"She said Voldemort wasn't gone because Nick hadn't been the one to kill him and that he would
'be back' and I'd put everyone in danger." said Harry, rolling his eyes, he notice an entire page was dedicated to Merlin's Law and explaining it for people to understand. There was also a picture of what he assumed was a copy, since he was sure that the Ministry didn't just let everyone wander down and take pictures.

Sirius sighed, rubbing his temples; James hadn't told him that part. "Was she always like this and we were blind?" Sirius asked Severus, looking defeated.

"Don't look at me, I've rarely interacted with her since we were fifteen, as well you know." sniped Severus, although truthfully it had been on his mind as well.

"Mental illness are usually always there, just waiting to show itself, sometimes its trauma that brings it out." explained Eileen, "Or a rapid change in circumstances." he hadn't seen Lily very often, Severus always went to the park to meet up with her. He spoke of her often and with reverence, mostly because she was his only friend. There had been a time when she thought Severus loved her actually. She didn't blame him for not wanting to bring Lily to their house, not with Tobias nearby. Which was nearly all the time when he lost his job, unless he was down at the pub but they never knew when he'd return or what his mood would be like. Lily had given Severus a slice of normalcy, away from both of them.

"Hopefully the Mind-Healers can help her," said Sirius.

"I don't think there is any hope of her recovering." stated Severus bluntly. "Losing her magic will have been the last blow that broke the Hippogriff's back. I don't think anyone could recover from that, can you imagine it?"

Sirius shuddered at the prospect, "No I suppose not." conceded Sirius.

"How are the children handling their mother's second incarceration?" asked Eileen, they had a girl didn't they, Harry technically had a sister? What was her name? He'd heard it before he just couldn't remember it at all.

"Nick's taking it well; she was beginning to scare him with what she was saying. Roxy has come home for a few days, since she has only one more exam and that's in three days Dumbledore decided to allow it. I'm not sure how she feels, I don't even think she knows if I'm honest." explained Sirius, surprised that Eileen would ask.

"I think in the long run its what's best for them, who knows what she might have done if she had been allowed to continue unchecked." said Eileen, it was mostly always the people closest that ended up hurt the worst if mental illnesses was ignored.

"You think she could have hurt them?" asked Sirius, mental illness wasn't spoken about often in the magical world. It was like one of the biggest taboo's especially since most wizards were nuts, with all the inner breeding - his parents were completely nuts look at Bellatrix.

"Anything is possible," said Eileen.

"If she learns her lesson, Merlin's Law could give her it back. If it's capable of taking it away surely it can bring it back? There's nothing in the law that states anything can be permanently done - it was only to make them learn their lesson and prevent what caused Merlin's Law to intervene from re-occurring." stated Harry thoughtfully.

"Indeed," stated Severus, smirking as he nodded slowly, it was true there was nothing in Merlin's Law to indicate it was permanent. It was meant to be used as a punishment to make wizards or
witches learn from it.

"Bloody hell do you have eidetic memory? I'd been forced to read that damn thing at least five times and even I didn't even think of that!" muttered Sirius, shaking his head. Talk about thinking outside the box, yet pressed up along side it.

Harry shrugged not really interested in this conversation, the last thing he wanted to do today was talk about Lily bloody Potter.

"Damn, is that the time, I have to go, we need to meet up and have a chat, Harry. So I'll owl you alright?" said Sirius, clapping Harry's shoulder, squeezing it in comfort. "Try not to dwell on it too much, keep yourself busy." he recommended.

"Okay," said Harry nodding, "All the marriage contracts I'm getting I'll be busy for the night year." he added dryly.

Sirius gave a bark of laughter, shaking his head before he gave Snape and Eileen a curt nod and disappeared through the Floo.
Chapter 100

Invisible

Chapter 100

Potter Manor

Like all good Ravenclaw’s and that’s exactly what Roxy was, and always had been at heart, even if she had forced the hat to put her in Gryffindor for the first few years. Something she regretted immensely, since she could have had her friends back then, but there was nothing she could do about it now. She was finally happy, and in the house she’d meant to be in all along with a boyfriend to boot. When she heard what happened to her mother, she had immediately begun searching Merlin’s Law, wanting to understand it completely. She unlike her brother hadn’t been there the previous times it was discussed and didn’t know much about it. Only the very basics, it was something Merlin himself had stipulated in law, to make sure apprentices couldn’t be harmed, because their education was ensuring the survival of knowledge, to pass it on to the next generation. Something that had been extremely important back then, especially to those who were powerful and held a lot of influence. Before Merlin came along with it, many were being abused and used for their ‘Master’s’ own gain. Merlin had rescued them furious with those who were daring to harm another, and in doing so he created the law and saved the next generation from suffering the same way. That was all she knew, she had assumed like everyone else it was only the Master who was under threat from the law not everyone. And so she began to search Potter library looking for something that would aid her in her quest to get more information.

Potter Manor library was not as full as it could have been; a few of the rarer books had been sold to tide them over when Harry became the defacto Head of House and left her parents without money. Her dad had never been one for reading, but her mum used to love reading, she’d taken many of the books from the Potter vaults and read them at Godric’s Hollow, somewhere they still were to this day. From what she understood, her parents had never ventured back into Godric’s Hollow before a few weeks ago, after the attack they’d basically fled to Potter manor not able to feel safe in the small cottage.

Roxy didn’t pay attention to the newer books, if such a thing could be claimed as such, there wasn’t a single book been put in Potter Manor for the past two or three decades, not since her grandparents had lived here. She hoped one day that she could restore the library to its grandness again, like it always should have been. It would take a long time, a lot of money and patience but it was something she felt very strongly about. Finally she was at the section she required, her fingers trailing from book to book, dismissing the ones on creature laws, Wizengamot law and of course Ministry law, and finally at long last she found one book that might be able to educate her. She would have read the Daily prophet but it only contained snippets to give everyone a general idea of what Merlin’s Law was about.

“Roxy? Are you okay?” asked Remus, giving the door a knock before entering despite the fact it was already open and it being a library. His amber eyes filled with concern for the teenager, it was a lot to take, and so much change was hard for them, him and Sirius never mind Roxy.

“I’m fine,” claimed Roxy assuring her uncle, giving him a small smile as she slid into her seat. “I didn’t know you were here, is everything alright?” she then asked him, normally as of late something had happened when she saw her uncles. Although now that the war was over, maybe they would be there more often.
“Yes,” said Remus pensively, it was hard to believe that Roxy was only thirteen years old, she acted wiser than her age. She would be entering her fourth year at Hogwarts after the holidays, hell she even had a boyfriend. She was much too young to have one, in his opinion but at least he knew it wouldn’t go anywhere, a thirteen years old definition of ‘boyfriend’ was someone they liked, had a crush on and went to Hogsmeade with and…well kissed. If they had any sense they wouldn’t go further. “Interested in Merlin’s Law?” he stated, noticing the book as he wandered in further. He could remember reading to Roxy when she was younger, he had missed out on both Nick and Harry’s growth but not too much of Roxy’s. They were as close as he would ever get to having children, and wished he could turn back time and stop himself leaving them behind.

“I want to know more about it,” she said, shrugging her shoulders.

Remus moved his hand out and held onto Roxy, squeezing her hand tightly. “Merlin’s Law is impenetrable, no amount of research will help you make your mother better - she has to do that for herself.” his soothing voice filled with sadness and pity.

“I don’t want to help her, I just want to understand it,” argued Roxy.

“Really?” enquired Remus, his tone sceptical. He didn’t want Roxy telling him what she thought he wanted to hear, it wasn’t good for her if she suppressed her real feelings.

“Honestly, Remus,” said Roxy, “I haven’t really been close to mum for three years, or dad but at least he made up for it…mum didn’t.” it hurt her, she was only thirteen after all, but at the end of the day she still had her dad and her family wasn’t what it used to be - she’d had to get used to it and now she was. Hell her mother had been put in Azkaban, if that didn’t change someone she wasn’t sure what could. She was so ashamed of her family and how they had been with Harry, and most important she was ashamed at herself for how she’d been despite the fact she knew logically she had only been following the example they set. She had still noticed her brother’s absence even when her parents and Nick didn’t.

“She still loves you,” said Remus, “No matter what happens or happened.” Sirius had told him about his conversation with Severus, Eileen and Harry. How she could have always been mentally ill or how the change of circumstances could have bought it out in her. The most chilling part was the fact that she may have ended up attacking or doing something…harrowing to those closest to her. Which made sense really, after all it’s those closest to someone mentally who ended up suffering in the end. For the children’s sake he hoped she made a full recovery, although he couldn’t really call them children now could he? Nick as legally an adult and Roxy…wasn’t far off it. Four more years and she would be an adult as well.

Roxy just smiled absently as she began reading from the book.

“If there’s something you don’t understand you know where to find me,” said Remus, glancing quickly at the time - he had get going, Harry was expecting him. He wasn’t looking forward to seeing Dominic or as Harry called him Dom, they did not like each other and each of them knew that due to their senses. He hated the fact that Dominic did not take the Wolfsbane potion and put human life at risk due to his selfishness.

“I know,” said Roxy, she always went to her uncle Remus when she was perplexed and couldn’t get an answer. He was the one who had encouraged her love of books and had always spared the time to read to her whenever she asked. In fact she couldn’t remember a time when Remus had ever denied her.

“Good,” replied Remus firmly, standing up giving her one last penetrating look before he left the library. Closing the door slightly behind him then making his way to the living room, where he
would use the Floo.

“I’ll see you at home?” questioned Remus, gazing at his partner expectantly who was sitting on the sofa beside James quietly talking to him.

“Yeah, I’ll be there before you get back,” said Sirius, “I’ll pick us up something to eat at the Leaky Cauldron.” not wanting to cook today again - they’d done the same thing yesterday.

“Alright, I’ll see you both later,” said Remus, grasping a handful of Floo Powder and he shouted in his next destination. Which was of course ‘Prince Manor’ and he was thankfully permitted entry, the Floo Network must still be open either that or it had been opened for him coming. He wouldn’t be surprised if it was the latter, since Severus was very cautious when it came to his family’s safety.

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Prince Manor

“Hey, how are you doing?” asked Harry, smiling, “Come on in,” inviting the werewolf into the manor. He looked a little rugged but happy enough - if he could call it that. He never used the Floo, he didn’t have a house to use the Floo network or the money to buy the Floo powder comes to that.

“I’m good,” said Dom, wandering along with Harry, inhaling sharply every few seconds, wondering if he was getting it wrong…but he couldn’t be, his sense of smell never let him down. The boy’s scent had changed, it was co-mingled with another one, it was weak but there, it only happened to people who were pregnant. It’s probably what made being a female werewolf worse; they could sense they were pregnant before they lost it due to all the shifting innards when they changed shape and form. There were two females in his pack, and it hurt them all seeing the state they got into. Unable to help himself, he leaned over and sniffed his neck.

Harry turned around, face to face with Dom, close enough that he could smell something decidedly unpleasant on his breath. “What are you doing?” he demanded, a deep frown on his face, his hand idly clutching the door handle to the living room - puzzled by the werewolves actions. He had never acted like that before.

“You smell different, but its not possible…but I can spell it,” Dom told him, stiff sniffing the air between them. A protective growl leaving his lips, it surprised even him, if his amber eyes widening was any indication. His wolf did NOT consider this boy pack surely? That was impossible! The wolf didn’t consider anyone other than werewolves as pack! Wasn’t it? Or did it have something to do with the fact the boy had saved him despite knowing what he was. Feeling decidedly off-kilter he stepped back, face impassive waiting on Harry moving.

“Would you like something to eat?” asked Harry, finally opening the door, he wasn’t sure what to make of the fact Dom knew he was pregnant.

“Sure,” agreed Dom, Harry always gave him his favourites, liver and kidney, sure it was a bit cold but he didn’t mind. Looking around curiously, usually they went to the potions lab evidently not this time. Sitting down when he was silently gestured to sit down by the human. Why was his wolf protective of him? He didn’t understand it at all…his wolf was usually only protective of pack.

“Dobby?” called Harry, waiting for the House-elf to show up. “Can you bring Dom his usual please?”

“How can you be pregnant?” asked Dom, he knew the boy was he could smell it. Despite the fact
his mind was telling him it wasn’t possible for a human wizard to be so. Barely hearing the House-elves reply as he gazed at Harry with rapid attention.

Harry pursed his lips, glaring at Dom, not in a bad way, just assessing him wondering if he could truly trust him. Information like what he would reveal would be worth a lot of money, especially considering the presses interest in him right now. While he knew in general most werewolves lived in the wilderness and loathed wizards and witches, could he reveal it and the secret remain just that? A secret. “I am.” confirmed Harry, “The how though, I’d rather keep out of it, its not because I don’t trust you, it’s just…delicate information.”

Dom nodded his head silently declaring that he understood. He only wished it was the same for werewolves, there were only one or two werewolf cubs born each generation. Mostly by those that decide to live amongst the wizards that despised them, living in brick houses like humans…which they weren’t. Partnering with a Muggle or witch, taking the damn Wolfsbane potion that basically destroys you. Most just found cubs of their own, biting them, raising them but they soon found out it didn’t work - what child would forgive the one that had bitten them and caused them so much pain every month? Now though…there was a possibility that it wouldn’t hurt anymore. At least not for his pack, since he had been promised the potion for all his pack mates and Alpha. It was mostly the only reason he had started this, now though he liked Harry, but he was a human, a wizard.

“How was the full moon night?” asked Harry, gazing solemnly at Dom.

“It was exactly the same, I changed without any pain,” replied Dom immediately, he had expected it to come back if he was honest. He didn’t get how a potion could eradicate the pain completely with every transformation. Yet it seemed to so far, to put it bluntly he was glad he had been attacked by those damn Death Eaters.

A ding interrupted their conversation, Dom looked around for the cause of it but he saw Harry gazing at the fireplace and realized what it must be. The fireplace activated, going green before Lupin stepped out of the grate.

“Hey,” murmured Remus, speaking solely to Harry.

“Hi, sit down, do you want something to eat?” asked Harry, gesturing to the seat next to Dominic much to Remus’ silent irritation.

“I’m fine,” said Remus immediately, the last time he’d nearly been sick - Harry had brought raw food up for Dominic as if he understood him…encouraged his disgusting behaviour. He wasn’t a wolf; he was a man, a wizard who had to live with a curse every month. He shouldn’t be eating raw food like a dog, it was utterly disgusting. He loathed what he was and everything associated with it, but he could never tell Harry that - he was just mending bridges he wasn’t having something temporary like this get in the way. Sitting down he forced himself to relax, it also didn’t help that Dominic was…Fenrir Greyback's pack mate, that the man had turned Dominic and held no ill will towards him. He should be furious about what Greyback had done; he still was no matter how long it had been since it happened.

"Alright," said Harry agreeably, turning back to Dom, he continued his conversation as if it had never been paused. "So you felt nothing at all? Transforming to and back?"

"Nothing," echoed Dom, sounding thoughtful. He hadn't dared to dream that the pain would be eradicated not even with a potion. He would never take the Wolfsbane like Lupin, it was killing the wizard and he didn't seem to care. Lupin was weak, a disgrace to wolf-kind, even his Alpha was disgusted that a weak runt had lived so long on the poison he suckled down each month, had essentially came from him - he had changed him after all. Don't get him wrong, he could handle
the pain, he had been doing so for years, but it was nice to get a reprieve from it. "Is the deal still on?" he didn't like to think that Harry would go back on his word, but he was a Wizard and Dom didn't have many good experiences with them.

"What deal?" asked Remus, genuinely curious.

Harry frowned at the look in Dom's eyes, it was as though he expected him to laugh and deny him. "I know most wizards are...well, childish when confronted with someone from the Lycan community, but I am not one of them. I would never go back on my word; do you wish to have them today?"

"Yes," replied Dom, Lycan community? That was definitely a new one, his Alpha would like this wizard, and that was saying a lot since his Alpha couldn't stand any wizard. They had met before though and Fenrir had been amused with the fact that the boy had stood up for himself despite knowing who he was and he had been cautious but not disgusted by his presence. Harry was an odd wizard, there weren't many out there like him. He certainly kept odd company, and yes, he meant Lupin.

"How many are there in your pack?" asked Harry, hoping that there were enough for them all, he couldn't brew and would have to ask Sev to do it.

Dom's face went impassive; he shook his head, which was something he definitely couldn't reveal. Wouldn't reveal, he would never risk his pack for any potion in the world.

"Alright, um... will thirty be enough?" enquired Harry, he knew there were some things Dom couldn't or didn't want to reveal, for the safety of his pack. It had been made clear the first time he began asking questions, but Harry had simply said he wasn't fishing for information on his pack, the werewolf way of life, or where they stayed, he only wanted to know about his potion and how it was working.

Dom relaxed again and nodded curtly.

"Thirty? Are you paying him?" enquired Remus, it didn't sound right from his previous question but it was the only conclusion he could reach.

"No," replied Harry, frowning, "They don't need money. I thought you worked with the Lycan communities all over the world...?"

"I did," replied Remus, immediately, "They needed money but all I could give them were the potions, a safe place to sleep at night and some food."

"While it was a nice thing you did, you should have been helping your own people. The Lycan community in Great Britain. They have clinics over all over the world already, while here there are none, due to the restrictions placed on those with lycanthrope." stated Harry calmly, and he truly believed that.

"We don't need that poison," sneered Dom unable to help himself.

"Of course not," said Harry immediately, the original Wolfsbane potion poisoned the wolf within them; causing more madness and unsettlement it drained them of their life. He had created one that wasn't poison but he wasn't sure whether it prevented the werewolf from overtaking -which was why Remus was here. He had tested his new potion, and he was praying that it was successful. "I was thinking more along the lines of somewhere for lone wolves to stay, somewhere they can eat, or even packs to come and eat when the weather is too severe to hunt...somewhere you aren't going
"Well you know what they say," said Dom, "If you want anything done..."

"You do it yourself, believe me I know." said Harry wryly. "Is your sense of smell or hearing any different?" getting back on topic. His pen poised to write once more,

"Definitely not," said Dom. Twitching when the House-elf appeared inhaling sharply, definitely nothing wrong with his sense of smell. A sly smirk twitched onto his face, he knew Lupin loathed that he ate raw food; he had stank of the foul stench of disgust and shame.

"Thank you, Dobby." said Harry, giving his thanks before the House-elf disappeared.

Dom picked up the plate and quickly began eating, relishing in the organs not eating as messily as he usually would.

"Remus, your turn, how did it go?" asked Harry, holding his breath hoping for the best, he avoided looking at Dom his stomach was doing flips just looking at the food. Considering it hadn’t bothered him the last time, it must be because of his pregnancy. It was a testament to what the Wolfsbane potion did to werewolves; Remus couldn’t smell that he was pregnant like Dom had.

"The transformation was...a little painful," said Remus in awe, “I kept my mind I could even remember everything like never before.”

Harry grinned in triumph, brilliant the potion worked, “A little painful? So less than usual?"

“Yes, a lot less,” replied Remus.

“Amazing,” muttered Harry, without the Wolfsbane plant the transformation wasn’t as bad, which meant even after only one dose the poison was beginning to fade. “You might actually live to see your fiftieth birthday after all.” hopefully he would be able to convince the werewolves taking the damn Wolfsbane potion - to stop and take his new creation. To do that might mean having to give one batch away for free, but in the long run it could be beneficial not only to him but the werewolves taking it.

“What?” asked Remus, cocking his head to the side.

“Well your hearing definitely hasn’t improved overly much, are you able to smell things better today?” asked Harry. Or would that require a few more months before he was fully healed from the damage? Could he though? He had been taking it for a long time.

“No,” replied Remus, shaking his head feeling like he was at a healer’s office, especially with the way Harry was writing everything down.

Harry nodded his head, feeling better than he had in days; not being able to brew potions was killing him. He felt more useful that he was able to do some things, even if it was only theoretical work. He had to remind himself it was only seven more months then he was free to brew again - well sort of. At least two of his potions were coming together, he still needed a name for both of them, soon they would be published but he wasn’t going to another conference, not for these ones.

“How are you feeling?” asked Remus, his tone soft and soothing as if he was worried about insulting Harry.

“About what?” asked Harry, his head snapping up staring blankly at Remus, his mind still mostly on the potions?
“Everything, the battle mostly…” said Remus, sympathy written across his face.

“I would do it a hundred times over to protect the people I love.” Harry revealed seriously, “I have no regrets or concerns about it, Remus. Everyone I care about survived and that is all that matters to me.” he had absolutely no nightmares about ending Voldemort, if anything its Sev lying dead he saw only to wake safe in his arms with the knowledge he had succeeded.

Dom’ amber eyes glimmered with understanding and pride, the boy didn’t think like a wizard he thought like a wolf. It was exactly how his alpha would act and do. He could smell the truthfulness of his statement, it made him respect the wizard - a little bit reluctantly only because he was a wizard.

“Harry?” called Severus, entering the room, “You are aware that we have another commitment in less than five minutes?”

“Sev, can you get me thirty vials of Eileen’s potion for Dom to take with him?” asked Harry.

Severus arched an eyebrow; “Very well,” he conceded turning swiftly and left the room.

“Good luck and congratulations,” grunted Dom, as both he and Harry stood up.

“If you need anything, you know how to get in touch, and if for whatever reason you can’t get to me call Dobby.” said Harry, his tone serious.

“You’re an odd wizard,” admitted Dom, wryly shaking his head.

Harry laughed as they moved out the living room; he’d never considered himself odd before. “I’ll take your word for it.” Turning to the side hearing Severus returning, giving him a thankful smile, he obviously had enough to give to Dom for that he was grateful. “Thanks, Sev.” he added accepting the potions from him and passing them to Dom. Taking no offence when he checked the bag.

“They’re unbreakable, so you don’t have to worry. Do you want me to Apparate you nearer to your territory?” questioned Harry, he already suspected the answer to that one.

“It’s not too far, I’ll be fine,” said Dom immediately, giving a quick goodbye he wandered out of the manor, grateful to be out in the open again. He wasn’t used to being in houses; he preferred the outdoors, and fresh air.

“Do not take it personally, they aren’t comfortable with Wizards,” said Severus, watching the werewolf retreat hastily.

“Yeah, I can’t say I blame him,” confessed Harry, he didn’t like many people either after being secluded most of his life.

Severus said nothing to this, other than to close the front door. He couldn’t wait to see what they had decided, he was very curious about whether it would work or not. The prospect of finding out was thrilling, an experiment it might not be brewing a potion but it was still potion based. He was still trying to create a pregnancy potion; they couldn’t continue to use unicorn blood (even if it did work) so an alternative had to be found. He was much more hopeful that he could create it than he had been in the beginning when the suggestion had been made.

“Sorry, Remus,” said Harry, “Thank you for helping, I appreciate it.”

“You’re welcome,” Remus said his smile somewhat brittle.
“Really, thanks for doing it, I know you didn’t like Dom much.” said Harry, feeling a little bit bad for Remus.

Remus blinked in surprise, “I didn’t really know him,” was all he said, diplomatically.

“That is the biggest understatement I’ve ever heard,” Severus snorted in derision. He had noticed it the first time both men had come; he was surprised Harry hadn’t called them at different times to make it easier.

“That’s them coming,” said Severus, just seconds before the Floo dinged again.

Remus blinked at the two wizards who appeared; surely they weren’t friends of Harry or Severus? It just didn’t seem likely at all, although the one on the right did remind him of Severus with his stiff upper lip. He did feel decidedly uncomfortable; he could tell they did as well. Not wishing to ruin whatever that was going on, knowing they knew he was a werewolf he decided to leave as quickly as possible.

“I best get going, I’ll see you later, Harry, Severus,” said Remus, giving a small nod to each of them. “Please, excuse me.” he added to the men before he slid into the Floo and shouted in his destination - which was Grimmauld Place.

“Tea?” enquired Severus, sighing inwardly at having to play host again but he did want an answer enough to go through with all the pleasantries. “Please sit down.”

“We cannot stay long, we have tickets to see the Opera in Muggle London,” said Daniel smiling apologetically. “How are you, Harry?”

“I’m fine, sorry about last time,” Harry said, sheepishly.

“It’s completely fine,” said Daniel right away, waving it off as not important.

“So what is your decision?” enquired Severus, straight to the point.

“We discussed our options, I still have a few reservations but Daniel wishes to go ahead and I… concede point.” Alec told him. They’d argued for hours after he told Daniel how he felt, then Daniel had broken down and made him feel like shit for not realizing how he felt or how badly it was affecting him and wearing him down. He realized then that he had to give Daniel this, had to let him try and keep his own reservations hidden.

Severus nodded his head, staring at Alec, his black eyes filled with understanding. He didn’t think he would have allowed Harry to do this if their situations were reversed even with documentation drawn up in favour of it. For the first time he began to realize just how desperate they were to have a child, if they were willing to face the unknown. He actually felt the urge to tell them that it would work out, which was strange he never lied to anyone, and he couldn’t actually say with any degree of certainty that it would.

“Sit down,” said Severus, his tone professional as he took a seat and removed his potions kit already prepared - as he had been for any outcome. He opened up the sterilized brand new scalpel, and waited until the wizard had taken a seat. “Are you sure?” he then asked, giving them an out if he was in any way beginning to have second doubts.

Daniel glanced once at Alec before turning to face Potions Master Snape and nodded firmly. He couldn’t back out now, not when the potential was so close that he could smell it. He handed his arm over, watching him closely; Snape turned his hand over and pressed a cleansing swab over his palm then cut into it with the scalpel. He withheld a wince, swallowing thickly as he placed a
substance onto the wound, he knew what it was - Unicorn blood which was pure white and could probably put a dent in his fortune.

“ Aren’t you going to heal it?” Alec asked, after a few seconds had gone by.

“ Give it a minute,” stated Severus, his tone calm and precise. Harry had exploded the potion and they had gotten there was quickly as possible, which he guessed was a minute give or take. He just knew he hadn’t run quicker in his life when he heard the explosion.

Daniel closed his eyes, praying to whatever deity that looked over them to give him this one miracle. If he was able to, he swore he would give to charity, anything, even if it was only one child he didn’t care - he just wanted a child with his lover. “How long do you think it will take to notice if it’s going to happen?” asked Daniel, his heart thumping loudly.

“I can’t say, but I’d suggest giving it a week?” commented Severus, healing the wound and dropping the hand.

“Then we will be back in a week, I have some business that cannot wait in America so we have to return for a few days at least.” Alec stated he would be bringing a healer with him; he needed someone he trusted to deal with the medical side of things no matter what happened.

“I have an appointment with my healer in a week if you would like to come and be checked out by someone who isn’t going to flounder in shock for an hour?” suggested Harry, toeing off his shoes and placing them to the side as he curled up.

“Perhaps,” said Alec, not making more definitive plans, but judging by the sudden smirk on Harry’s face he already knew how he was really feeling - perhaps due to his relationship with Severus who did seem very similar to himself.

“I’m sorry that the meeting had to be so short,” said Alec, glancing at the time.

“Not at all,” said Severus, standing up out of politeness giving them access to his Floo powder. Muggle opera, he supposed there was worse things…weren’t there? He wasn’t sure but it sounded awful, he’d seen it on TV once when he was a child. The thought of even having to endure it for a moment made him feel sick, needless to say he was glad it was them not him going. “Enjoy your evening.” some of his feelings must have bled through judging by the amused look on both their faces.

“Take care,” said Harry, watching them step into the fire.

“You also,” said Alec, and the powder was flung down and they disappeared from view.

“Oh thank Merlin,” murmured Harry, leaning relaxing against the sofa, moving his legs when Sev decided to join him.

“How did the meeting go?” he asked Harry, absentely stroking up his leg causing Harry to laugh at the tickling.

“Well the new Wolfsbane potion seems to take the edge of the pain, but I’m not sure whether it’s because Remus takes the actual Wolfsbane potion which makes the transformation worse or if it’s just the way it works…I would need to find someone who hasn’t taken the Wolfsbane potion or Eileen’s potion…” Harry told him thoughtfully, his brow puckered as he thought. “I don’t know how the hell I’m going to do that. Eileen’s potion won’t be needed every month though since it’s still helping Dom.”
“That’s a good thing, we only have five left,” replied Severus dryly. Their shelf had been cleaned out, but Harry had promised Dom that if he came here and answered their questions. Brewing on his own would definitely be difficult, he had come to rely on Harry a lot more than he realized until he was no longer able to brew for the time being.

“I don’t know whether just to advertise the potion and hope for the best, I don’t really want to go to a conference… the next ones in Germany isn’t it? And it’s around the time it’s absolutely freezing.” added Harry, plus he would be four months pregnant - he didn’t want to risk anyone finding out.

“Indeed,” said Severus, confirming Harry’s thoughts.

“If I open a clinic for werewolves we might have better luck,” suggested Harry, “What do you think?”

“I know you have a soft spot for Dominic, but do you really want to deal with potential volatile werewolves? Most of them are like Greyback, they do not trust wizards.” cautioned Severus, not totally against the idea.

“I don’t want them to trust me; I just want to help them if I can.” Harry told Severus, sighing softly, turning around and snuggling into Severus. “I mean Remus went all around the world helping them opening clinic after clinic then coming back here… I don’t understand why he never did it here.” and Remus hadn’t said either.

Severus chuckled bitterly, “It wasn’t his idea in the first place, it was Dumbledore, and he was hoping to have the werewolves on his side this time around. He knew most werewolves here would never trust him; they listen to Greyback, and would follow the wolf wherever he went. The Dark Lord made a big mistake in recruiting the idiots who attacked Dom, they in one fell swoop cost him his secret weapon in the war - Greyback left and the rouges followed him.”

“Why would he even think they’d leave their country and follow Remus?” asked Harry incredulity coating his voice. “I mean if it had been Greyback I’d see it, but Remus? He hates what he is! He isn’t Alpha material and werewolves are like actual wolfs and follow the Alpha.”

“He was desperate,” guessed Severus, “As always Lupin would jump at the chance.”

“Do you think Dumbledore let Remus attend Hogwarts to try and get him to do that?” wondered Harry, he didn’t like to think so. Yet he couldn’t help but remember how he had been with Nick… and realized he would have done it if he believed it would benefit the greater good.

“It might have been a possibility, everyone Greyback turned followed him, and he took them in and cared for them. Perhaps Albus thought that the wolf would want him? In the end convince the man to change sides? With Albus there is no way to truly know, he’s powerful a brilliant strategy, thinking ahead but he’s also human and believes the best in even the worst of people.” revealed Severus, remembering his first encounter with Albus after leaving Hogwarts.

“You weren’t the worst sort of person,” snapped Harry with fire, not liking Severus thinking that of himself.

“I have a past, Harry.” said Severus, Harry knew that much but it warmed his heart that Harry never thought any less of him. Not that he would ever admit that of course, but he was sure Harry knew.

“I don’t care,” said Harry sounding petulant.

Severus laughed softly, shaking his head - he hoped Harry never changed.
“So what do you think about the idea then?” asked Harry after a few moments of silence.

“Which one?” replied Severus, the potion idea or the clinic idea.

“Opening a clinic,” confirmed Harry, his tone eager. Severus’ opinion always meant the most to Harry so it was hardly a surprise that it could be heard.

“Well you are hardly strapped for money; if it’s something you feel strongly about then do it. If you do it long term you will need to see about setting it up as a charity, you cannot pour all your money into alone. Fortunately not all wizards and witches loath werewolves as they seem to think so there will be donations. Albeit most donations will be from werewolves that are hiding what they are or living in houses such as Lupin.” Severus told him.

Harry smiled secretly, Severus hadn’t said it outright but this was his way of telling him to go for it.
Chapter 101

Invisible

Chapter 101

Graduation

“Viktor!” Fleur squealed as she saw him and brought him into a big hug, once she let go she brought Lukas into one as well. Both of them were dressed up for the occasion, in their finest black robes, three members of their group, their best friends were graduating today. Harry, Neville and of course Luna, who had worked herself to the bones the past few months to take her N.E.W.T’s a year early. “You both look very handsome.” she added giving her nod of approval, fashion was something she felt very proud of and would have loved to do something associated with it. She noticed them removing their very heavy cloaks, it must be colder where they had been - she wasn’t sure if they had been at home or on the road.

It had been Harry’s idea for Luna to take her N.E.W.T’s since Luna hated the thought of being separated from Neville for an entire year, staying at Hogwarts while Neville looked for an apprenticeship as a Herbologist. He was stuck between accepting someone close to home, Pomona Sprout or Tilden Toots, a very famous Herbologist who had his own chat show on wizarding wireless, and last but no means least Winona Wilma one of the best Herbologists out there, she was located in Wales but frequently remained in America for months at a time. Which of course is were the best ingredients came from, added to fact that some just couldn’t grow in the UK due to needing intense heat all year around - something that wasn’t freely available here. He didn’t know what to do, but he had time to decide. After all he was only just graduating today; he unlike some people wasn’t completely flustered and desperate to choose at the moment for fear of it being snatched away.

“Thank you, as do you, as usual,” Viktor teased, relaxing as he always did when he was here. He didn’t have the press hounding him when he was in Britain. It’s why he continued coming back, although his friends were a big incentive, the peace was part of the reason too. The dress was similar to what she wore during the tournament, boy did that bring back good memories, but it was light purple instead of the baby blue. She didn’t have a hat on to match it, but she still looked very striking. “Are the others already at the podium?”

“No, Harry’s gone somewhere; he said he will be back in a few minutes. Luna and Neville just started making their way up, you missed them by a few seconds.” Fleur explained, smiling secretly. She knew what he was up to, so did Luna, it’s why she’d been so quick to drag Neville towards the stage. It was Neville’s greatest wish to have his parents at his graduation, so Harry was making it a reality, pulling strings where he needed to; so they could attend.

“Where?” Lukas asked, what could be so important during his Graduation Ceremony that he had to leave? Whatever it was, it had to be imperative to Harry; he was very…punctual, in fact Lukas had never seen him late for everything.

Fleur leaned forward and whispered “To get Neville’s parents, one of the stupid student healers told Neville his parents weren’t well enough to come and he didn’t even ask a second opinion!” she revealed exasperated. “Harry just found out about it when Luna told him, he made his excuses right away.”

“Severus went with him?” Viktor asked, already knowing his answer. The pair of them was
practically inseparable; he’d always known Harry would end up with someone older than him. He might appear fiercely independent but he needed to rely on someone that wouldn’t stomp on his heart and someone to be strong when he had his doubts about everything. When Harry got an idea in his head it stuck, but there would be times when he wavered, he just needed help to remain grounded. Just like during the tournament, Harry would always have a place in his heart, he loved him but he wasn’t in love with him. Both of them had found comfort in each other, knowing it would never be long term and remained very good friends afterwards.

“Yeah,” Fleur nodded, smiling sweetly as she thought of them. Severus wasn’t the most outwardly affectionate of men, but there was no denying how he felt. He’d barely taken his eyes of Harry the entire hour they had been there, despite the fact they were at different sides of the Quidditch pitch having conversations with other people. He was better than he had been a year ago, he was making an effort and she knew it was purely for Harry’s benefit and she was so grateful to the wizard for that. Harry deserved the best and apparently he had found it.

“Where is Gary?” Lukas enquired, it wasn’t often he saw one without the other.

“He’s over there,” Fleur gestured, “Getting us some drinks, it’s a bit hot today,” nothing like France of course, but she was getting used to British weather, which meant the heat was a bit much than she was used to these days.

Lukas and Viktor nodded in agreement, they had only just used a Portkey to get here, yet they had felt the heat immediately.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, children, please take your seats, this year Graduating Ceremony is about to start,” boomed the voice of Albus Dumbledore, magnified all over the castle grounds. Almost immediately everyone began to sit down on the white chairs that had been spread out all over the Quidditch pitch for people to sit. The teachers ascended up beside the soon to be graduated students.

“Come on,” Fleur sighed, looking back towards the gates in concern before she sat down in the second row along with Viktor and Lukas, leaving a seat for her boyfriend as well as Severus and the two Longbottoms and of course Cedric and Cho - hopefully they would be there.

“Don’t worry, it will take them another ten to fifteen minutes to set up,” Lukas said to her in a soothing manner, watching as she continued to look back for Harry she presumed. “By the look of things they don’t have the graduation certifications out yet.” unless they were underneath the podium, which would be an ideal place to have them.

“Actually the Valedictorian gives a speech first,” Gary corrected Lukas in an amused voice. Handing over a bottle of Butterbeer to both men winking with a devious smile before handing a closed one to his girlfriend.

Lukas and Viktor threw him odd looks, it wasn’t until they drank from their bottles did they understand it. He had put fire whisky in it. Nodding their thanks, they sighed softly as they waited for it to start, as happy as they were to be there for their friends, it didn’t make it exciting. They’d all already graduated; they’d never thought they would be back at another one so soon. They noticed Neville looking around, probably wondering where Harry was too.

“Did Harry tell Neville he was going anywhere? He looks worried up there.” Lukas pointed out, as they all turned to see him arching his back to see over the crowd of people wondering where Harry was.

“No, but I’m sure Luna will think of something,” Fleur chortled before laughing; no doubt it would
leave Neville confused. She was good at confounding people, certainly had that affect on her a time or two.

“Thank Merlin we made it in time!” Cedric exclaimed.

“Hi, you did, come on,” Fleur said cheerfully standing up and letting them squeeze themselves in, Cho let Cedric go first not wishing for the two old flames to sit together - she didn’t like it but never dared to bring it up. She never wanted to make Cedric choose between her and his friends, maybe deep down she knew who he’d pick. They had a bond together; infused through a troubled and difficult year (Cedric’s last year actually). Especially the trauma at the end of the tournament, when they thought Harry had died, only to find out later that he wasn’t. “Did you find what you were looking for then?” she enquired.

“Yes, it was bloody difficult mind, but I got it,” Cedric revealed grinning lopsidedly.

“What did you get?” Viktor asked, curiously.

“A book Harry’s mentioned a million times, I looked all over for it but eventually found it in a small bookstore in Ireland, it’s taken me days to find it.” Cedric exclaimed quietly, but it was definitely worth it. “Got it really cheap as well, I don’t think the store owner realized how rare it was.” he added thoughtfully.

“Wouldn’t be the first time,” Viktor mused, “I’ve gotten a lot of huge deals on my travels, my family loves the books and trinkets I send home.” mostly at markets during the weekends, he had a keen eye for antiques and books.

Lukas nodded his agreement vigorously; they did find amazing deals sometimes.

“Welcome ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls to Hogwarts graduating class of 1997!” Albus Dumbledore said, dressed in bright purple robes. Beaming at everyone as if nothing gave him greater pleasure than being there to give the students their diplomas. Which was very close to the truth, he’d had a very close call with death during that battle, not that anyone knew, but thankfully they had been near St. Mungo’s and he had been very quick to get healed. He waited patiently for the cheering and wolf whistling to die down still smiling. He was grateful that it was the end of term, truth be told he needed a long holiday. “As most of you know it has been extremely difficult these past years, yet you all did everyone from your parents to your teachers proud - your grades have been exemplary despite the dark times that has been upon us.”

Another round of applause caught him off guard - he had not been finished.

“Now please help me welcome this years Valedictorian, Harry Peverell!” Albus, gazing at the students behind him, expectantly waiting on Harry showing himself.

“Did Harry tell you?” Fleur was floored by that announcement. He hadn’t been a student in how long? Two or three years probably more.

“Better question is did Harry know.” Viktor muttered uneasily. Harry wouldn’t have agreed to this, he hated publicity, loathed being in public never mind giving a bloody speech. He knew it, there was absolutely no way Harry would do anything like this, which meant Dumbledore had sprung this on Harry without even a moment to prepare. Everyone else that didn’t know Harry as well as they did, were cheering manically.

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Back to Severus and Harry
“Are you ready to go?” Harry asked as he entered Frank and Alice’s room. They had their cloaks on and were sitting at the edge of their bed. Harry had asked them if they wanted to go of course, it wasn’t as if he could force them. They did want to go, very much so, but Neville had been adamant about them getting better that ‘his graduation wasn’t that important’ as them. Needless to say when he told the head healers about what the student healer had said - they were furious. She would be getting a dressing down for overstepping her place.

“Yes,” Alice proclaimed, smiling warmly at Harry who she knew was one of Neville’s best friends. Neville had been quite a loner, never really speaking of having many friends before they were…injured. Now she and her husband were being bombarded with warm tales of the friends he’d made and how happy he was engaged to his fiancée Luna. She was a very sweet girl, perfect for her Neville although his grandmother didn’t quite agree but it had nothing to do with her. He’d grown up so much it saddened her that she hadn’t been there to see it. Yet she knew she owed it all to Harry that she was even here to see her firstborn son graduate from Hogwarts and to see her younger son graduate in a few years time.

“Let’s go, then.” Harry said, helping the woman up from the bed, and keeping a tight grip of her as she shakily began walking. She had to rebuild her muscles, and once she could perform the basic tasks she would be fine to go home. “Neville’s going to be over the moon to see you. He wanted you there desperately; it was his greatest wish when you were cursed.”

“He did indeed,” Severus stated quietly, sliding into the room he reluctantly helped Frank up from the bed - he wasn’t as bad off as his wife thankfully, and could walk practically unaided, just needed some support. The things he did for Harry! He wasn’t about to let him do it on his own, he was pregnant and he wanted nothing to happen to his unborn child. The baby according to Healer Walsh was prefect, right size for how far along he was and Harry’s vital signs were normal. Daniel and Alex had been offered to come with them, but they weren’t back from the USA yet. They had things Alex had to deal with at home before they returned, which they say could take anything from a fortnight to a month.

“Hold on,” Severus told them, as he pulled out the Portkey, which would take them straight to Hogwarts gates, they could go no further than that. The wards had been changed after Harry was taken by a Portkey; nothing got through the wards unless it was approved by Albus and he hadn’t gotten the Portkey from them but created it himself. Once he was sure they had a tight grip of it, he said the activation word and they disappeared from St. Mungo’s and appeared just outside the wards of Hogwarts.

“Alright?” Harry asked them, worried that the journey had taken a lot out of them, it might just be a Portkey but it did make you feel like throwing up and disorientated.

“I’m fine, no need to worry,” Alice told him comfortably, patting at his arm as if to prove his point, she was stronger than she looked. If anything she was excited, it was maddening being in that hospital room for her. She was an Auror; she’d constantly been on the move, never in one place very long - with the obvious exception being the Ministry - especially when she was on desk duty, which had been a grand total of twice when she’d been pregnant with her sons.

Severus looked over when he heard Harry speaking; nodding in his direction the pair began leading the two Aurors towards the sitting crowd. They were quiet, Albus was standing at the podium so he had either paused from speaking or was finished and they had missed the applause. He just allowed the silence to surround him knowing it wouldn’t last; graduating ceremonies were loud and annoying. It’s not something he had missed in his six years since he quit, deciding to focus on his career - one of the best decisions he had ever made.
“Now please help me welcome this years Valedictorian, Harry Peverell!”

“What?” Harry hissed out indignantly, jolting Alice a bit too roughly in his surprise. What the fuck? He hadn’t asked to be the bloody Valedictorian. “Why me? shouldn’t it be Granger?!”

“No,” Severus replied at once, “You have the highest grades in your year, not only for your O.W.L’s but your N.E.W.T’s as well.”

“I didn’t agree to this, Severus!” Harry said, cursing inwardly. “He has no right lobbing this at me.” he hated this, he didn’t even want to go to conferences where he was in his element talking about potions for crying out loud.

“No,” Severus said darkly, “That he didn’t.” but Dumbledore didn’t care about that, no doubt this was his attempt to make it up to him for favouring Nick for years, of course he didn’t realize he was going about it the wrong way. Albus liked to think he knew Harry, or was probably deluding himself that he did but it was so far from the truth it was almost hilarious if he wasn’t silently despairing.

“Question is - are you going to go up?” Frank asked speaking up, sweat pouring of him, he was panting every few minutes - this was taking a lot out of him. It was hardly surprising since they’d already had their Physical Therapy today.

Harry scowled darkly at Dumbledore, “I guess,” he answered, reluctance coating his voice.

“Go on then,” Alice said cheerfully, paying no mind to the bland look on Harry’s face. She turned to face the graduates looking for her son but she couldn’t find him.

“Harry?” Albus called once more, a frown creasing his old face, as everyone began to look around wondering if he was even there.

“Let’s get you seated,” Harry said, finding Fleur’s white hair, using it as a beacon to guide them to her. Harry seated her gently; Fleur gave him a nod that he would take care of her.

“Do not worry, just speak from your heart,” Severus told him quietly, giving his shoulder a gentle squeeze before he guided Frank into a seat and sat down himself as Harry made his way towards the podium his entire body stiff, showing just how much he hated this situation he’d just been thrust into. He could only imagine the look on his face, stifling a smirk knowing Harry always rose to the challenge in the most amusing way. He had taught him well it seemed, although he couldn’t take all the credit.

Harry cursed Dumbledore in his mind the entire way up, his insults becoming more derogatory as he did so - some he had learned from Severus as well. Keeping his face impassive, he smoothly stood up the few steps to get into the platform and made his way towards the podium ignoring the cheering that rose up. He knew they weren’t just cheering due to politeness but because this was the first time he’d actually been out in public properly since he had defeated Voldemort. He had been shopping of course, but under cover so nobody knew who he was - he didn’t relish this happening, he wasn’t Nick he’d never aspired to be famous, rich yes, but that’s only because he knew what it was like to be poor…sort of, and he never wanted to go back to that. Not having things he wanted or needed, it wasn’t a life he wanted.

Turning to face the crowd, stamping down the sick feeling in his stomach, he began to speak.

“Thank you very much for this unexpected honour Headmaster Dumbledore.” it was evident by his tone that he didn’t think it was an honour, he noticed everyone looking at him smiling evidently believing the words coming out of his mouth. Judging by the look on Dumbledore’s face though, he knew at least that he wasn’t happy.
“Well, the past seven years of Hogwarts has certainly had its share of highs and lows, different for each and every one of us including the teachers. From petrified students to tournaments, instead of running we stood firm and you should pat yourself on the back for that since it couldn’t have been easy.” Harry told them, wondering what on earth to say. It was supposed to be upbeat right? Something funny and encouraging? What could he say that was? “For me the happiest time in Hogwarts certainly was the Yule ball, and the tournament which allowed us to interact with other schools, gain new friends, some of them for life, and give us an understanding on what other schools did and their courses. Although I know a lot of people were disappointed by the lack of Quidditch that year.” he chuckled softly, feeling accomplished when the students behind him laughed and clapped their agreement - he obviously wasn’t doing too badly.

“It’s now time to leave Hogwarts behind, and I know people will fear losing touch with friends when they go their own way to their own career. All I can say to you is do not let it happen, sure you won’t have a huge amount of time together, but when you do it’s always interesting. Friends and family are forever, and should always be…no matter where life takes you. If you have your career choice picked out then I and everyone here wish you the best of luck do your best and have no regrets since life is filled with them. If you haven’t chosen one, do not let that deter you, if you don’t know what to do use this time to decide, for it is by far much better to know decidedly what you want to do than guess and be miserable. Life is an adventure, it should be exciting, fun and lively…make it so each and every one of you are masters of your own destiny so go out and cease it remembering that this is your life nobody else’s!”

Everyone stood up and cheered, so Harry’s sigh of relief was lost in the thundering claps.

“Very well done,” Albus said, his eyes twinkling, “Perhaps one of the best speeches I’ve heard since I became a teacher,”

“Well I was put on the spot, quite literally.” Harry stated his tone sharp.

“ABBOTT, HANNAH!” Dumbledore called, pointing out the basket of diplomas to Harry causing the teen to grimace before doing as he was told and lifting the correct one out.
Hannah stood up, and walked over to them both, shaking hands with them before accepting her diploma and facing the crowd grinning at her parents who cheered loudly over the polite applause that had started up. Pictures were being taken and Harry stepped behind Dumbledore so he wasn’t in the picture.

“BROWN, LAVENDER!” Dumbledore called the next person forward.

The hyper girl stood up simpering at Harry as she accepted her diploma, which caused Albus’ eyes to twinkle at the ignorance of youth. Simpering just wasn’t appealing, especially when the girl had way to much make up on and a pout that made her look constipated. Polite applause started up as Lavender smiled at her mother, the only one there for her on her special day, her father was no longer with them. Unable to see her mother crying, she moved down beside her soothing her though her tears. She watched the rest of the graduation from there. Terry Boot, Mandy Brocklehurst, Millicent Bullstrode, Susan Bones, Michael Corner, Vincent Crabbe, Morag MacDougal, Seamus Finnegan, Justin Finch-Fletchley, Hermione Granger, who looked decidedly put out for some reason. Oh she knew why, Hermione had been up the entire night working on a graduation speech, thinking she would be picked, and they all thought she would be. She other than Harry was the student with the best grades. It wasn’t meant to be, and Harry had given a good speech, but what else could you expect from the hero of the wizarding world and a Ravenclaw to boot? Lavender thought in amusement.

The names continued on…Anthony Goldstein, Gregory Goyle and Neville Longbottom, the look of
pride, excitement on his face when he saw his parents there... was unparalleled. He seemed to have known it was Harry, since he thanked him and hugged him tighter than normal. Harry had done so much for him, that he wished so badly that he could do something in turn but there was nothing. Harry had all he wanted, all he cared about; hopefully he would like his graduation gift though.

Luna Lovegood, Ernie Macmillan, Lily Moon, Draco Malfoy who she thought had changed the most since they were eleven years old. He was still gorgeous, still broody but the smug arrogance had been bled from him. It had been years since she’d heard ‘wait until my father hears about this’ from him. She actually pitted him at first, it was tough losing your father, and she knew that. Losing his fortune had been tough too she’d bet, but not all had been lost he still lived a comfortable life. He had lost a lot of friends a year after that, when he had declared himself neither light nor dark - remaining neutral. He was good friends with Theodore Nott (who had joined Draco and declared himself neutral) and Blaise Zabini now.

Theodore Nott, Pansy Parkinson, Sally-Anne Perks, Padma Patil, Parvati Patil. The Slytherin’s hadn’t been forced to pick sides; the war had ended before they had a chance to ruin their lives forever. For that a certain wizard called Severus Snape would be forever grateful. Just because he had left Hogwarts, it didn’t mean he had stopped caring about his snakes or worrying for their future.

“Nick Potter!” Albus called, placing himself between Harry and the inevitable approach of Nick, he didn’t want another brawl like the one in their fourth year. Although it couldn’t have been called a brawl, Nick had been beaten hands down with a few punches. He’d never seen such a disgusting display of Muggle fighting in his school and he rather hoped it would never happen again.

Nick walked forward nervously, barely able to meet his brother’s eyes, but as he stood in front of him with Dumbledore annoying close he held out his hand his breath halting wondering if he would want to. Green eyes met his with nothing but peace as they shook hands firmly.

“Harry I...” Nick started not sure what to say, how could he say anything really after all he had done to his brother?

“Not here, not now,” Harry said, shaking his head.

Okay,” Nick replied, sighing softly before accepting his diploma and giving a thumbs up to his dad and sister who were sitting at the front cheering for him. This wasn’t how he had seen his graduation all those years ago, but he had been a very shallow person back then. He had a stronger relationship with his father now that he was laying down the law, more respect too. He and his sister also spoke more, or rather wrote a lot since he hadn’t been at Hogwarts. She’d asked for his advice a few times, and he finally felt like a big brother... a better son. He had made peace with his mother’s most recent incarceration, allowed himself to acknowledge that he did love her, but he did not like who she had become and acknowledging it had made it easier to accept and understand. Now if only he could have a relationship with his twin... if he could just make up for his actions resolution would be his.

Albus sighed in relief when they both parted; it hadn’t been as volatile as he had feared.

“Harry Peverell!” Albus said smiling slightly as he turned to face the teenager and picking up the diploma and passing it over. Putting his hand around his shoulders and facing the crowd.

Light bulbs immediately began going, almost blinding Harry in the processes. Viciously yanking himself out of Dumbledore’s hold he glared at his un-repenting face.

Albus turned to the next person on the list, unperturbed by the look on Harry’s face and called the
last of the students forward. Zacharias Smith, Lisa Turpin, Dean Thomas, Ron Weasley and last but no means least Blaise Zabini. The Weasley’s were by far definitely the noisiest of them all parents and friends who had come to the graduation ceremony. They’d made enough noise to wake the dead; a few parents and students closets to them had actually flinched at the loudness.

Once it was over, Harry, Neville and Luna moved towards the group, Fleur was just sitting Alice back down on her seat; Frank was still standing and brought his son into a bear hug telling him how proud he was. Harry smiled; out of everyone Neville deserved this most of all.

“So, shall we go for a bite to eat at Madam Puddifoot’s or head to the manor?” Harry suggested, he couldn’t tolerate being here any longer - Dumbledore had decidedly ruined any good mood he had.

“You aren’t going for the boat ride?” Alice asked frowning, it was the best part of graduation, deepened the sense of nostalgia.

“No, I can’t put up with much more of this,” Harry admitted shaking his head. “If you guys want to go we can wait though,” Harry added not wanting to sour his friend’s graduation day.

“Actually going to the manor for a bite to eat sounds good,” Viktor piped in.

“I’ll meet you there in say half an hour?” Neville suggested he had to get his parents back to St. Mungo’s.

“Here is the Portkey, it will return them to their room,” Severus told him, understanding where the teenager was coming from.

“Nonsense, he’ll be right back, you aren’t spending your graduation day sitting beside us! You need to go out and celebrate with all your friends and fiancée.” Alice scolded her son firmly. Seeing that Neville was about to argue some more, “I think your father and I need some rest, we will probably sleep when we get back.” and Neville’s resistance broke as he nodded.

“Alright,” Neville agreed, they did look exhausted, and obviously coming had taken a lot out of them. The healers suggested they could be home within three weeks if their Physical Therapy continued going so well. Not that it surprised him, his parents were extremely stubborn and when they put their mind to it they could do anything. “We’ll see you at the manor go on ahead.”

“See you soon, it was lovely meeting you,” Lukas told the Longbottoms, and after they’d all said their own goodbye’s they swiftly began making their way through the crowds and towards the gates, it wasn’t easy as they began moving towards Hogwarts ready to go to the boats for one final ride.

Luna and Neville waited for the crowd to disperse before walking Frank and Alice towards the wards so they didn’t end up pushed and shoved by the crowd. James stopped briefly to speak to them, letting them know he would be by to see them tomorrow.
“How are you feeling?” Severus asked as he ventured into the living room, where Harry and his mother sat buried under what looked like a hundred documents, Harry was looking for a decent place to build a clinic for the werewolves, when he decided on something he poured his one hundred percent into it. Although he would have a few doubts here and there, he never gave in he was determined to help those that needed it. Most of the documents were land that belonged to the Peverell estate (his estate) but some were possible areas he liked the look of that was available to buy.

“I’m fine. Did you get all the potions done?” Harry asked, giving him a smirk of amusement, before going back to his work, before putting the paperwork in his hand in the non acceptable. There were enough acres he wanted somewhere secure, big, so that when they were in wolf form they won’t feel locked up. At least the Ministry wouldn’t be giving him a hard time, they would be nuts if they did. For once he wouldn’t actually mind using his fame to help someone, now wasn’t that mind boggling? He would never use it to further himself though, but his soon-to-be husband had pointed out that everyone knew, the only person suffering was himself, it was pointless, it wouldn’t change anyone’s opinion of him. That the public would think whatever they wanted to think at the end of the day. Harry knew that it was true, having seen Nick grow up in the limelight.

“This one looks good,” Eileen commented, passing one of the property documents to him. Discreetly, removing a tissue from her wrist and blowing her nose. She had come down with wizarding flu just days before Harry’s graduation. She felt so guilty about not being able to go - but there had been to many people around to risk passing it on. So she had gratefully taken Severus’ version of events and watched it in the pensive. It wasn’t the same but it was the best she could do. In fact she’d stayed well out of Harry’s way, she didn’t want to risk him getting sick and losing the baby. She was feeling a lot better now and she was no longer contagious.

“Yes, for the moment,” Severus replied wryly, picking up a wad of parchments and sitting himself down across from them. At least they weren’t buried under requests for potions any more, the Ministry had bought the rights to the teleportation potion, which Harry had managed to negotiate a much higher price (and retain the ability to brew it himself). Not that Harry cared about the money, he just wanted his fair share, and he knew he would make more brewing the potion in a year than what their first offer would have given him. Plus with all his plans, he would certainly need all the galleons he could get. Of course, there were still those that would prefer getting the potions from them, and not the inferior ones the Potion Masters at the Ministry created. “Hungry?” he asked, Harry had been eating at odd times, he suspected it was due to his lack of sleep but his mother thought it might be to do with his pregnancy. He was on the opinion that they liked to blame even the slightest change in routine on pregnancy - but he would never say that out loud.

“Starving,” Harry admitted, it was nearly time for breakfast though, so he had no qualms about waiting.

“Dobby?” Severus called immediately.

“Yes Sir?” Dobby replied his luminous green eyes gazing at Severus questioningly.

“Begin breakfast immediately, Harry is hungry.” Severus told the House-Elf firmly, he was as well
come to that, but it happened when you woke up hours ahead of your normal times. He was a slight sleeper so when Harry got up he’d reluctantly admitted defeat and began brewing the last of the potions. With Harry occupied he wasn’t missing brewing quite as much as he had as of late. This project was definitely what he needed, hence why he was encouraging him.

“Would Master Harry like some cornflakes while breakfast is prepared?” Dobby asked, aware of how pregnant people could be - just remembering what Narcissa Malfoy had been like made him shudder.

Severus turned to face Harry, his eyebrow rose in silent question, did he like the sound of cornflakes first?

“No, I’m alright, thanks Dobby, I’ll wait.” Harry said shaking his head, he didn’t eat cornflakes often, so it didn’t appeal to him at all.

“Dobby will be as quick as possible,” the House-elf replied, bowing low before leaving to make their breakfast, with the other House-elves help it would be done in no time at all.

A pop had the three of them looking over, they found the mail and newspaper on the table, the House-elves normally brought it in, but apparently Harry’s breakfast came first. Suppressing his amusement, Severus stood up and went to get the mail, absently sorting it out on the way back, handing Eileen the brown packaged box that came and Harry his own letters before reclaiming his seat.

“The rest are unsuitable,” Eileen said absently, placing the paper stack on the table, she knew what Harry was looking for and these weren’t it. Once she was done with that particular task, she used her wand to snip of the strings wrapped around her parcel, and then ripping the paper to unearth the contents within.

“Flowers?” Severus asked in curiosity, they had more than enough; there were always fresh flowers in the manor, well during the time that they flower of course. It was winter that they didn’t usually have a vase full of flowers somewhere, and then again poinsettias were hung all over during winter. Which had been a tradition of his mothers, far back as he could remember, she loved her plants and flowers. None more than herbs and her potion ingredients, when she spoke about them when he was a child, there had been reverence in her voice; it didn’t surprise him that she would take up in the green houses every day to cultivate not only magical herbs and plants but Muggle ones as well.

“Yes, hopefully they’ll bloom just in time for our new arrival,” Eileen said smugly, she had ordered plants with specific meanings, of course there would probably be a influx of them when word got out, but she didn’t care hers would be grown with tender love and care. She had gotten carnations for fascination and devoted love, Violets for modesty, faithfulness and virtue, daisies for innocence, youth and purity. Honeysuckle for devoted affection, water lilies represent purity of the heart. Gladiolas for strength of character, sincerity and generosity. Daisy would probably be the most popular choice for those sending their best wishes. If there were any left over she would make sure to preserve it for Alec and Daniel, who were confirmed to be expecting as well.

Severus shook his head in amusement watching his mother presumably make sure everything was there. His attention was stolen when he heard Harry groan in what could only be described as exasperation.

“Something the matter?” Severus enquired, leaning forward.

“Nick, he’s asked to meet me,” Harry grumbled, half tempted to scrunch up the letter and throw it
in the bin. The letter was desperate, pleading, not at all how he was used to his brother. The look on his face from graduation flashed before his eyes, the despairing look until he said not here and tentative hope had bloomed in its place. “Why won’t he just leave me alone?”

“I think perhaps…” Eileen began ignoring her son’s shaking head, Harry had to be told. “That he needs this, to move on himself, the fact he wants to get in touch conveys that he is weighed down with guilt and a deep seated need to actually apologise. I know what he did to you was inexcusable, but perhaps you should meet him and both get what you need to say off your chests. Only then will you both go your separate ways unburdened by guilt.”

“I don’t feel guilty,” Harry pointed out the flaw in her logic.

“No, but you are angry, to truly move on with your life you need to let go,” Eileen admitted softly. She’d done just that, let go of the guilt for not being a better mother, let go of the guilt she felt for staying with Tobias, forgave him for everything - for he had given her one thing she loved more than her own life - her son. She’d had to, she had been drowning in her misery, anger and guilt but slowly she had rebuilt her life and relationship with her son - which had only gotten stronger with Voldemort’s second return.

Harry said nothing, but neither Severus nor Eileen failed to notice that Harry had kept the letter instead of destroying it. Harry opened and read through the rest of his mail, some were mail orders others were from his friends. “Lukas is transferring to the main branch of St. Mungo’s; he’s going to be working closely with Healer Walsh!”

“How does Viktor feel about that?” Severus asked absently.

“Breakfast is ready,” Dobby said interrupting their conversation as the food appeared on the table.

“Thank you, Dobby,” Eileen said as the House-elf disappeared.

“Well they won’t get to see each other much, but it will only be for another month or so before the Quidditch season quietens down, I assume Viktor will join him here,” Harry said thoughtfully as he sat down at the table. “It won’t be permanent; Viktor would miss his family too much I think.”

“You’d be surprised,” Severus replied, digging into his breakfast. Harry seemed to think that any family that was close had to always be tied at the noose. The truth was there came a time when parents had to let their children go - live their own life. Fleur’s parents had already done so, since she was living here with her fiancé, nearly the whole group were engaged now, with the exception of Cho Chang and Cedric of course. Cedric seemed more interested in his career right now than anything else. Which was deserved, he was a very good Auror, and had been injured quite a few times in the line of duty already.

“Anyway, he’s asking because it would put him in direct line of mine and Daniel’s pregnancy.” Harry added.

“He’s smart so of course he would ask, what he would learn during the course of the pregnancies would allow him to go much quicker up the ladder…” Severus replied wryly.

“He spoke about that, it’s something he’d like to do, he actually wants to open his own clinic, but to do that and succeed you’d need quite a reputation, and a clean one,” Harry told them, “Healer Walsh is very good, I wouldn’t be surprised if under her he became known himself. He might just be able to open his own place one day.”

“Why doesn’t he do it regardless? Build it up; on his own, not everyone can afford St. Mungo’s.”
Eileen pointed out, she had noticed that each of Harry’s friends had high ambitions, regardless of money they seemed set on doing very well for themselves. Although Lukas didn’t have influential parents that probably attributed to his desire to have a good career.

“Experience,” Harry said simply.

“Not something that can be gotten on your own,” Severus conceded nodding. “When does he arrive?”

“He’s not coming until after Viktor’s next big game, he’s having a property bought and designed by the goblins so he has somewhere to live when he comes.” Harry answered, Merlin he was starving, even the food that had been on his plate wasn’t enough. He added more scrambled egg, as he spoke “He didn’t say where, but I’d imagine its somewhere near St. Mungo’s but in a magical area - he doesn’t know much about Muggles.” at least not enough to live successfully amongst them. That and Viktor didn’t like going to Muggle areas only because of the looks he got from them when he did have to - which wasn’t very often. Harry had thought it was probably his intimidating figure, because he could look cold and lethal when he wanted to - especially when he was scowling.

“So what are you doing today?” Eileen asked after she’d finished her breakfast.

“I have a few errands to run, primarily in Hogsmeade a few in Diagon Alley, do you want to come?” Severus enquired, focusing on Harry.

“No, I’m going to get through that pile and make a decision, and reply to Him.” Harry informed him shaking his head, by Him he of course meant Nick, maybe they were right - but he was never going to have a relationship with them he couldn’t, too much had been done and said - mostly on their part. “Fleur’s coming over to help since she had nothing to do.”

“Harry if I made you feel as if you had no choice but to speak to him…I didn’t mean it that way, I just think that negative emotions tear you apart.” Eileen said softly, patting at his hand, looking worried and sorry.

“No, you’re right, I need to get this over with I don’t want letters continuing to come…I’ll give him one thing,” Harry said grudgingly, squeezing Eileen’s hand in a way that conveyed ‘everything’s fine’ “He doesn’t give up, they don’t give up.” he’d lost count of the amount of letters filled with useless (in Harry’s book) apologies he’d gotten from the Potter family.

“I’m going to hit the shops now while everywhere is quiet,” Severus insisted, glancing at the time as he stood, and drank the remains of his coffee.

“Will you be back in time for Lunch?” Harry queried, his neck slightly arched as he stared up at Severus.

“Probably, eleven-ish is when the Alley starts getting packed with students, so I definitely want to be done by then, the trip to Hogwarts shouldn’t take me an hour,” Severus mused, it wasn’t that he hated them per se, it’s just that he didn’t like trying to make his way through the crowd, it was maddening. That and they all knew his reputation; it was admittedly amusing to see the look on their faces. Unfortunately all students that would now attend Hogwarts wouldn’t know him or recognize him. He found it hard to believe that it had been seven years since he’d left Hogwarts as a teacher. He hoped his Slytherin’s were doing well, he heard from a few of his students now and again, mostly those he had made prefects and Head boy.

“Alright, I’ll see you later,” Harry told him, knowing that Sev wanted to get going, the sooner the
better - since he’d be back quicker.
"Be careful son," Eileen said, as always still worried about her boys despite the fact the threat had been neutralized. She knew that Voldemort wasn't the only evil in the world.
"I will," Severus replied to both of them before he was gone with a pop.

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“Do you think he’ll answer this time?” Nick sighed wistfully as he ate.

“I don’t know son,” James admitted, “How are your applications going?” it wasn’t easy being a Potter these days, where years ago he would have been accepted into any course he wanted, now with the stigma attached…things didn’t go so smoothly.

“I’ve heard back from three, they’ve got their positions filled already,” Nick said sadly. “I think its going to be the same with the others. I should have sent them off earlier, I might have had a chance, but I think their answers would have been the same.”

James closed his eyes, ‘I’m sorry son,” he had brought this down upon them, if he had just been a better parent…a better dad to both his sons this wouldn’t have been happening.

“It’s not your fault,” Nick answered firmly; “I’ll find something I want to do.”

“If you want someone to help you with Mastery, there is money put aside.” James informed him, it just meant he would be getting tutored one on one instead of a course or with a class. It would leave a dent in the vault, but he was working his arse off to make sure more money was put in than was taken out. He would leave enough money for his children, but without investments it wasn’t easy to do. The only investments he could do were Muggle ones and he wasn’t comfortable investing in them - he knew next to nothing about Muggle technology and he didn’t trust the goblins after what they’d done. He wouldn’t lose what they had left, of that he was adamant.

“I don’t know,” Nick said sighing softly, he’d applied to places he really wanted to be, it was very disheartening for them all so far to tell him no. unfortunately he understood that his name aside, other people were more qualified for the positions, mostly due to their exemplary results of both their O.W.L’s and N.E.W.T’s. His were good, but nowhere near the top; he’d only started taking his education seriously the past few years. “I guess I’ll have to wait and see what the others say.” he added staring at the rejection letter beside his breakfast, ‘we are sorry to inform you’ how he hated those words now.

“How about working in the Ministry?” James suggested, already knowing the answer.

“No, I need to find my own way, dad,” Nick said adamantly.

“How do you know how proud I am of you?” James said, his brown eyes gleaming with pride. His son was going his own way, finding his own desires and wants. He had followed his father’s footsteps no questions asked, it had been expected of him. There had been once, when he had considered a different career. Just after Nick and Harry were born, being an Auror meant he couldn’t spend much time with them, so he had considered for a brief moment but he hadn’t been able to break the mould. So he had remained an Auror, he didn’t have any regrets; it was challenging work - but good work, honest work.

Nick just smiled a little brittle smile, right now things weren’t where he imagined them to be growing up, but he was determined to get his life sorted out once and for all. He wouldn’t give up, not on Harry, not on his choice of career - no matter how long it took to achieve it. “Thanks dad,”

“Maybe you should ask for more forms?” James suggested, “Mix it up a bit.”
“Not until I’ve got all their answers,” Nick replied shaking his head, “The others are in Wales so they will take a little longer.” depending on when they sent out their replies, some places only do it once a week, others twice but the bigger businesses do it five times a week. He hoped they might have more positive replies, since Wales hadn’t been involved much in the wizarding war - just Scotland and England.

“Answers to what?” Roxy enquired as she stumbled in, yawning tiredly still dressed in her nightwear.

“Work,” Nick answered, grinning in remembrance to the carefree days after school was out for the summer. Merlin it was painful to even think about to be honest.

“Let me guess…you stayed up late to do your homework?” James said gazing at his daughter amused.

“No,” Roxy denied, as she slipped into her seat, “Not all of it, just my defence and transfiguration homework.”

“That took you so long?” James asked doubtfully.

“Well I got looking at some of the subjects Hogwarts offers that I didn’t take last year,” Roxy admitted, “I was wondering if I could still get to take them? This year I mean.”

“I don’t think so, you’ll be taking your O.W.L’s in a years time, spreading yourself out will only make you exhausted and bordering on comatose come exam time.” James cautioned, against the idea.

“But I like the sound of taking care of magical creatures; this is a good way to get experience especially with the animals Hagrid likes!” Roxy argued.

“That isn’t helping me agree to your decision,” James informed her grimly.

“Fine, I’ll just take my O.W.L’s and then take an apprenticeship with Hagrid after.” Roxy said defiantly.

James refused to be bated, instead he stared with narrow eyes at his daughter angry and showing it for her words and the fact she would be willing to risk her future so recklessly.

“Roxy, a boy isn’t worth this,” Nick said quietly, solemnly shaking his head just slightly.

Roxy blushed unable to help it - she couldn’t believe her brother had just said that.

“Look you don’t need to be in the same classes, it means you’ll have something to talk about when you meet up. You also don’t need to have the same career as him.” James warned, not liking the thought but knowing he was bowing to the inevitable - his daughter was becoming a hormonal teenager.

“But I do want to take it,” Roxy groaned, lying to her dad and feeling a little bad about it but she wanted to be in his classes.

“Alright, alright. I’ll speak to Min…Filius about it,” James said giving in, it was time she made her own mistakes in life, he couldn’t protect her so if it got too much then she would just have to deal with it.

Roxy beamed in happiness, “Thank you, dad!” with that she got up and disappeared out of the room.
“I think its time I had a word with this boy,” James said his eyes narrowed on nothing in particular.

“I wouldn’t,” Nick said, now the one cautioning his dad, “She’ll just get worse, I would have.” he commented as he put the cutlery down on his empty plate.

James grimaced, oh he knew it was true, and he also knew he would have as well - but he’d been happy with dating the girls who hardly had any classes with him - it just meant they didn’t cling to him all the time. He’d changed though, had worked hard to get Lily to believe he didn’t just want to date her for a while. He had fancied her a lot, and proved himself, in the end they’d married and had three kids. Now his wife was locked up in St. Mungo’s after being imprisoned in Azkaban, certainly not something he’d envisioned on his wedding day - no he had seen them growing old together like his own parents.

“I’ll talk to her,” Nick promised.

“Thank you,” James said, knowing sometimes it was better coming from someone that wasn’t a parent. “Would you like to accompany me?”

“No, dad, I’m not interested in going to see her,” Nick said, he didn’t want to go to St. Mungo’s, knowing what was coming next.

“Are you sure?” James muttered tiredly.

“Yes,” Nick confirmed, “I don’t understand why you keep going.”

“It’s once a week, on visiting hours, nobody else is going to go,” James admitted tiredly.

“Guilt then? Dad it isn’t your fault,” Nick replied softly.

“Perhaps not,” James answered thoughtfully, “I best get going; they don’t like it when you’re late. Do you want anything brought in?”

“I’m fine,” Nick said flippantly, “I’m just going to head to the library, maybe talk to Roxy” a lot of the books were missing but there was still quite a few good books still to be read.

James nodded before Apparating away - spending yet another morning in a hospital listening to Lily lamenting. Apparently it was something her mind-healer was working on, but he shamefully hadn’t been listening, he’d been caught up in thoughts that Lily was bringing up. Which made this situation ten times worse. He felt as though all his memories were tainted somehow, dark, as much as his own mind-healer had tried to make him see that making amends was the only way forward, he felt unworthy of it. Just looking at the letter his son sent helped in that regard.

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“Ah, Severus! Come in! Come in!” Albus said, beaming at the wizard very glad to see him. It had been far too long, and his letters had been far too short, it was almost as if Severus was angry with him, but Albus couldn’t think of anything he could have done to annoy the easily irascible wizard. He had obviously been busy before coming here, since he had a few boxes tied together in his hand. “Minerva, is it alright if we speak later?” as always making it sound like a suggestion when what he really meant was leave now, I’ll talk when I have time but he was far to polite to consider saying such a thing.

“It’s good to see you, Severus, how have you been?” Minerva said, giving her version of a smile to Severus. Which was merely a quirk of her lip, she was much like the wizard standing in front of her when it came to not showing much of how she felt unless something unexpected happened.

“Very well, thank you, Minerva, I hope the students haven’t been too much of a handful,” Severus replied, a smile playing across his face. He was better than he’d ever been, would have been in fact, if it were not for Harry who had risked everything to save his life. He had a child on the way,
a baby that was somehow being sustained on magic inside his fiancé. A baby that continued to
grow, the two scans he had were on his beside table, and he honestly stared at them for what felt
like hours wondering at this miraculous happenstance. He’d never been fond of children, they were
loud overbearing and cheeky. He’d heard the saying that people changed their mind when it was
their own and he had to agree wholeheartedly. His child wasn’t even here yet and he already felt
different.

Minerva’s breathing hitched seeing that smile, never in all her years of knowing him had she seen
him so content. She caught the sight of the ring glinting in the sunlight on his finger, and she felt
barreled over. Why hadn’t Severus told her? They weren’t especially close but they had worked
together for years as colleagues. “I hope to receive an invite to the wedding,” Minerva pointed out,
some of her dismay bleeding into her voice, almost making it sound like a reprimand.

Albus’ eyes widened when he heard her proclamation and automatically gazed at the ‘ring’ finger
only to blink once more utterly stunned. He was engaged? To Harry Potter? Perhaps he and
Severus were more estranged than he first thought. He’d always considered him a son, and it hurt
him deeply that he hadn’t been told of this, had he assumed wrongly? Did Severus not care about
him at all? Had he gotten the wrong impression all these years? He just didn’t understand, so lost
in thought he didn’t hear the short conversation between Minerva and Severus. Nor did he notice
Severus sitting down or staring at him.

“Albus?” Severus said loudly, placing the items on the floor at his feet, staring at the Headmaster
perturbed from where he sat across from him, he didn’t think he’d ever seen the man space out
before - not like this.

“You are to be married?” Albus managed to speak after a short pause.

“Yes,” Severus confirmed, “There is no date set.” he didn’t want to have to defend his own actions
again, apparently not telling them made him somehow wrong.

“With Harry?” Albus questioned, sitting up straighter.

“Indeed,” Severus stated dryly, Albus and those close already knew, it hadn’t hit the paper yet but
people weren’t blind.

“Do you think that is wise?” Albus asked disapproval leaking out.

Severus arched a single eyebrow not replying to that absurd statement. Although part of him felt
extremely hurt by the words leaving the older wizards mouth. He had spent years alone, secluded,
never allowing himself to share his life with anyone never mind a significant other. He had never
planned on having one either, until Harry had wormed his way into his heart and convinced him
that he was loved. Now when he was finally living life Albus had the nerve to berate and question
him?

“Harry has the potential to do so much with his life, he is not even eighteen yet, and look at what
he has accomplished already? He could go down in the history books, be greater than Merlin
himself if he put his mind to it.” Albus said reverently.

“And what? He cannot do that with someone at his side?” Severus uttered sarcastically, how dare
he? He didn’t know the first thing about Harry and he was sitting there insisting that’s what he
would like? If he knew Harry even one iota, he would know that was the complete opposite of
what Harry wished for. Oh, he had said it often enough, that Harry could go on and do amazing
things, but to him Potions was an unequivocal representation of ‘amazing things’. Apparently
Albus didn’t, it might explain why he hadn’t advanced himself further in the field of alchemy or
potions. The ironic thing was that had had only accomplished what he had because someone
believed in him, pushed him, taught him. Something that had been sorely lacking in his life up until
four years ago.

“I just mean he could do so much better than just tinkering away at potions, not that there is
anything wrong with that, I just think he hasn’t expanded his potential that is all.” Albus told him,
it sounded much worse when he said it out loud.

“You mean become your next Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher?” Severus scoffed in
derision. “That is what you think expanding your potential is? Watching student after student learn
the basics over and over again? Stuck in an endless loop unable to do the things you really want to
do in life?” so much disgust was poured into the words, Albus watched him stunned by the
diatribe. “Let me inform you, that being a teacher is the last thing Harry will ever do. If he should
sometime in the future I will support him like I always do - in everything he does.”
“Teaching and helping the next generation is the most important thing anyone can do, Severus,
they are the most important thing we have.” Albus said, pausing briefly before pushing on. “Harry
could do a lot worse than be a teacher for the most prestigious school.”
Severs snorted actually amused by the words coming out of Albus’ mouth, “Harry hasn’t just
helped one generation but all generations with his potions, and he’s only just beginning his career.
Albus, why are you so determined to turn Harry into your version of what a hero should be?” was
he that bored he couldn’t find anything else to do with his time other than meddle in the affairs of
others? The Potters had been his main focus for all these years and now he had no reason to
meddle in their affairs.
“I’m doing nothing of the sort,” Albus insisted, “Severus I didn’t ask you here to fight,” was he
really trying to turn Harry into a hero? No, he was just trying to help him, expand his potential.

“Let me ask you, Albus, who are you trying to fool? Me or yourself?” Severus stated sharply, “Just
because you made mistakes all your life and ended up stuck here, you think you have the right to
tell everyone else how to live their lives?”
“I have no mistakes,” Albus protested, feeling frayed alive, he didn’t like to think about this.
“No? You yourself could have been Minister of magic, could have changed the world, helped
make things easier for a lot of people and those deemed ‘creatures’ you had a voice, people
listened to you. Instead you chose to become a teacher, teaching students how to turn matchsticks
into needles! Then later a headmaster who was happy to sit back and watch as events happened.
Never intervening until it suits you, then picking a student of your choosing who you think will be
the best. You did it with James Potter, you did it with Nick Potter and now you think for a second
Harry is going to let you do it to him? You are deluded old man, Harry knows what you are like
and he despises you.” Severus spat, his rage tapered off some, but not much. “You’re clinging on
to him as a way of preserving your own name, terrified of being forgotten and not wishing to
realize or think on your own failures.”
Albus sat there stunned into silence, nobody had ever voiced his worst fears out like that before.
He rarely thought about his dark thoughts, and to be told like that made him sound nefarious…
someone evil. “I’m sorry you feel that way, and you are correct, Harry will go on to do great
things.”

“He will,” Severus stated surely, still standing glaring at the Headmaster. “He will be known
throughout the world,” his words filled with fire and assurance.

Albus stared at him; he’d never heard Severus so passionate before, so sure of something in his
life. He wouldn’t speak like that unless he knew for sure it would occur. His twinkle came back,
oh; he couldn’t wait to find out what this was about. Another potion perhaps?

Oh, he had no idea how wrong he was. Unfortunately it would be a great many months before he
found out. Six months to be exact.
Harry glanced at his time for the fifth time since he had sat down, only ten minutes ago. He honestly didn't want to be here, but he wasn't about to chicken out now. He'd already written a very curt reply to meet at the Leaky Cauldron early morning, where there wouldn't be too many people around. He knew that this wouldn't go well; his brother would just try and demand from him to make himself feel better. It had been a while since he'd seen him, months, years if you didn't count the final battle, he'd had other things on his mind, like killing Voldemort to make sure his family and friends remained safe from the evil he spread.

Harry's head jerked up to face the door when he heard it open, only to be relieved and a little irritated that it was someone else, a woman carrying what looked like a dozen parcels and placing them on the counter, he didn't listen to her and Tom's short conversation. Why was he even here? He should never have listened to Eileen, he thought angrily, before a pang erupted in his heart. Eileen always had his best interests at heart, she loved him, and she would never suggest something unless she truly thought it would help. Hopefully he wouldn't show up and he could go home, at lunch he and Fleur, Cedric, Luna and Neville were going to put the finishing touches to the clinic they'd set up. He had decided on a property and paid for it that very same day, three weeks ago it was nearly four weeks now.

To his internal dismay the door opened and Nick walked through it, his face full of hope and apprehension as he looked around. Harry had to stop the grimace of distaste when he saw his face light up when Nick obviously spotted him, that look was usually reserved for whenever he used to get his way when they were children.

"Harry!" Nick exclaimed, "I…er…I didn't think you'd come." he added, staring at his brother now that he was there sitting in front of him he wasn't as brave as he had felt for what was going on nearly a month.

"I did say I would be here," Harry replied, the silence began to stretch making the uncomfortable meeting profoundly more so. "What is it that you wanted? You set the meeting, usually that means you do the talking." turning his face away, grimacing, ugh, the smell in here was utterly disgusting all of a sudden, and his stomach began to roll uncomfortably. Clutching his stomach, trying to keep his composure, he certainly didn't want to lose it in front of Nick of all people.

"Harry? Harry? Harry?" Nick asked urgently, "Are you alright?" clutching his brothers shoulder as if he was hoping to try and steady him.

"I'm fine," Harry stated almost defensively, hating the fact Nick was showing concern now. Merlin, it would have meant so much to him if that had happened when they were children. To know at least one person cared about him, loved him even. As cold and hard as his heart had been, seeing the Weasley twins and the closeness they had shared had been heartbreaking. "Just…just back off, you lost the right to any concern a long, long time ago."
Nick swallowed thickly, stepping back nodding resignedly, it was true, and he couldn't refute that statement at all. Feeling weak in the knees, he sat down on the chair opposite Harry, struck by how mature...how old he looked. Did he have that same look? How could he really? He hadn't had to kill someone, no matter how much they deserved it - he knew how it felt, and he hadn't had to strike the blow that killed him.

"So?" Harry asked, "What do you want?" his question might have seemed demanding but his tone was just filled with tiredness, as if he was fed up with thinking and talking about it.

"Harry...I...I owe you so many apologies, you know I uh, stayed up late last night writing them down, and the list just continued getting bigger and bigger." Nick chuckled humorlessly, his eyes gleaming with sadness as he stared his brother in the eye. "I know I shouldn't ask it of you, but I have to, I feel so bad all the time, every waken moment I spend wondering what you're doing, how you are, thinking on the past..." he trailed off. "I'm so sorry for all the shit I did, fuck I'm really sorry."

Harry blinked, staring at his brother as he continued to talk. He was apologising, he could see that he meant every word; he had never seen his brother this honest or open before. It was like he was a different person altogether. He couldn't help but wonder as he listened, what had caused such a drastic change in him. Maybe Eileen had been right after all; perhaps both of them needed this.

"I could say it a million times and it won't matter, I know that, I doubt if the roles had been reversed that I would accept any apology." Nick admitted bitterly, "I just had to let you know that I am sorry though, and if I could go back and change it all I would. I really would, you're my brother and I should have been better than I was instead of caring only about myself."

Harry had nothing to say, so continued to listen to Nick vent.

Nick's hands shot out and clutched at Harry's. "I don't even know why I did half the things I did, I mean I already had friends, recognition, money...I honestly couldn't say why I had to claim I did things I didn't...the things you did." Nick squeezed Harry's hands further, desperately trying to convey the depth of his sorrow. "If I was granted a single wish, it would be to go back, to change things...when I see the Weasley twins I can't help but wonder if we would have been like them...or the Patil twins."

Maybe they did think more alike than he ever assumed, scary that.

"Say something...anything!" Nick said, daunted by the continued silence on his brothers part. "I won't stop you, or defend myself...just please..."

"What changed your mind?" Harry asked after a few seconds of contemplation.

"My mind?" Nick's brow furrowed, "When I first realized I was wrong or changed in general?"

Harry shrugged; they were both the same thing in his mind. He was curious though; he didn't even know why really, it wasn't as if anything was going to change. After today, no matter what was disclosed they'd go their separate ways and probably not interact much if at all. They were never going to be brothers, too much bad had happened for that, they were too different to be friends, and he had all the friends he wanted and needed.

"Do you know I couldn't cast a Patronus charm? No matter what I did, even with Remus' help, I just couldn't do it." Nick began, seeing his brother shake his head he continued on. "Nothing was working, Remus told me to dig deep, so I did." tears were brimming in his eyes, just remembering the memory. "The memory that helped me cast the spell...was us, both of us, before the attack,
magically summoning each others toy then giving it back. I was in a trance like state, which means I felt it too, how much I loved you." he choked out, a lone tear making its way out of his closed eyes.

Harry swallowed back the lump in his throat, "Why tell me this? What good can it do?" he just wanted to get on with his life.

Nick hastily wiped the tear away, looking around self consciously, "I don't know, Harry, I don't know, I just…even just talking about it with you is helping somehow." looking down at the table, he began to play with the edge which was uneven, broken and peeled. "You won't have to worry about me being near for the next few years anyway."

"Why's that?" Harry arched a curious eyebrow.

"You remind me of Snape when you do that," Nick commented, giving a half chuckle. "I applied for apprenticeships, mostly in Scotland and England but I was denied, I sent a few others out to Ireland and Wales, and I successfully got accepted into a company in Wales."

"Doing what?" Harry asked genuinely curious.

"Inventions, they deal in primary with broomsticks, but they have their hands in other things too." Nick said enthusiastically. "I have three years as an apprentice before I can make anything or work my way up, but I'm going to prove myself, I'm going to be good at something." he would work his way up and invent things, make sure he had enough money for any family he had.

"There are no properties over there in the Potter holdings, have you found a suitable accommodation?" Harry asked, meanwhile wondering why he cared at all? His emotions were all over the place; maybe he shouldn't be here right now…who knows what he'd end up saying.

"Not yet, I'm going in two days time, hopefully I'll find something decent enough," Nick told him, relaxing slightly. At least something decent enough in his price range, he couldn't give off the Potter money; it was nowhere near as much as they used to have. That and the money they removed weren't being replenished with investments. He would change that though, he would provide his father, sister and more importantly for him and Susan to have the money they needed to get by and live comfortably.

"Which company?" Harry queried.

"Aderyn Quidditch inventions," Nick answered.

"The one in Leopardstown?" Harry guessed correctly, there were only two, one in Dublin and Cardiff but the one in Cardiff was their main shop not operations warehouse. He had interests in that business, they were very profitable.

"Yes," Nick nodded surprised that he knew.

Harry sighed, "I have a flat in Wales you can use, its in Woodside quite a bit away from where you will be going, but you will probably be Apparating anyway." he was going soft.

Nick blinked rapidly in surprise, "Why would you do that for me?"

"Look we're never going to be brothers, not after what you did sorry doesn't even begin to cover it, but you already know that. I'm merely extending a hand, go live your life, find someone to share it with, have a family a career, be happy." Harry told him standing up.
"You don't want to see me again, do you?" Nick guessed also standing, his eyes dimming in sadness.

"I'm not saying that, it's just we won't be friends ever, who knows maybe one day we will see each other again..." Harry said, "You will be back here at some point, you have to understand seeing you hurts Nick. Even now, I was tortured for three days, three days, by Death Eaters because you left me behind, because you then lied to everyone and told them I was dead, if you hadn't they could have rescued me right away. If I hadn't gotten out of there, who knows how long I would have been tortured before being killed. I wake up screaming still with those memories. I'm scarred mentally; despite the fact the scars were healed."

Nick closed his eyes in anguish at having to hear this. He had expected it, didn't make it any easier to hear. How the hell had his brother become such a good man? He'd had nobody to rely on, nobody to look up to. What would he have been like with encouragement?

"It's time we both moved on, Nick. Leave the past behind, focus on your future; it's what I'm trying to do. No it's what I am doing; I'm happy, extremely happy." Harry confided. He was pregnant with a child on the way, engaged to a man he loved more than his own life, he had put the past behind him, but sometimes when he slept it crept upon him. He had Severus to soothe away his fears, "Good luck at your apprenticeship, I'll send the documents and keys out to you after I've been to Gringotts."

Nick exhaled sharply, nodding his head, "Thank you, Harry, for seeing me, I just wished there was a way to make up for what I did."

"There might come a day when you might," Harry mused, his back ached like blazes, he was going home, and he'd get Dobby to get the documents and keys (Muggle flat) to Nick. "Goodbye, Nick." Harry added before he walked away, not turning when he heard Nick say goodbye back.

Sighing in relief, he'd gotten through it, and for the next three years he would be in Wales, less chance of him asking to meet during that time. He was half being selfish giving him the flat, the further he was away the better. The other part of him...well he was liable to blame it on his bloody wayward emotions as of late. He owed the Potters nothing, yet he continued to help them. He must be a secret masochist; he'd given James a good chunk of the family fortune back. Although he'd give it all back with the knowledge he had now, without him he would have lost nearly everything.

"Dobby?" Harry called as he moved towards the public Floo access point that the Leaky Cauldron had.

The House-elf appeared in front of him almost immediately, looking deeply concerned. "Is Master Harry alright?" he gushed, worried about both Harry and the baby.

"I'm fine, I need you to go to Gringotts for me and get the deeds to the flat in Woodside, it's in Wales there's only one so you should be able to get it without knowing the full address. If you need it I'll be back home, just come and get me if you need to. Get the keys as well and give them to Nick Potter...you can find him cant you?" Harry asked, arching his spine trying to get the pain to stop even if only for a few seconds. It didn't work, it never seemed to work.

"Nick Potter?" Dobby said, hiding his surprise, why would his Master want to give anything to him? He didn't question him, merely sought confirmation on his orders.

"Yes, now go on, he will probably still be nearby when you're done at Gringotts," Harry confirmed, "I'm going to go and sit down for a few hours," Dobby immediately nodded so Harry stepped into the fire and was quickly handed some Floo powder before he could turn to get some.
Honestly, they were all being really protective of him; he would yell he wasn't made of glass if he wasn't as terrified as the rest of them that something might happen. They didn't even know if he could carry the child to term, what would happen when the time was ready for it to come out. The unknown was terrifying them all, which meant he was rarely left alone but after all the years of being alone he didn't mind so much.

He was spat out at the other end; the warmth welcoming of Prince Manor met him, as he all but slumped on the couch. Giving a grunt of relief he relaxed back, already feeling the pressure disappearing.

"Tired?" Eileen said giving a wry chuckle as she entered the room, still dressed in her pyjamas.

"It's not funny," Harry grouched, opening one eye and giving her the evil eye.

"For centuries women have wished their men would or could understand what it was like to be pregnant, more specifically give birth. A man thinks he's known pain, but that of giving birth to a child is the most pain a human can tolerate and come out sane." Eileen said as she sat down on the chair next to the couch and Harry. "All worth it in the end, I assure you." thinking of the day her son had been born. She'd been alone, Tobias had been off drinking. After Severus was born, he had stopped drinking, for a brief while took an active interest in his son. She had thought everything would be okay; it was as if he had forgotten everything negative. Then the worst possible thing happened, he'd seen their son using magic. Merlin he'd been only a few months old, she's known there and then he would be one powerful wizard. As soon as he had been old enough she had taught him all she knew, kept it between them. She could have done more, she should have protected him. No, she didn't want to remember the bad times, they'd gotten over the past - she had a grand child on the way.

"You don't think it's weird?" Harry questioned, turning to stare at her curiously.

"Find what weird?" Eileen wondered, staring straight back.

"That I'm exhibiting all symptoms other than the main one," Harry explained, his stomach was flat, he had absolutely nothing to show other than sore ankles, back aches and a horrible bloated feeling. "That and I don't feel anything, ever. The only proof I have is when I cast the scan spell, so I can see for myself that this is real. They say in the books you should feel something, but I don't."

"You're really worried about that aren't you?" Eileen said sympathetically, hearing the tone in his voice her heart hurting for him.

"Yes," he admitted, "I worry about a lot of things, I mean I even worry about if I did something to the baby while I travelled back in time...its stupid, I know the baby is there...but there's so much different than it should be."

"Harry, your body is different from a woman's, so of course your pregnancy isn't going to be the same. There are no documented records of this occurring, it might not be the first time someone figured it out, or were gifted with such a...miracle. Maybe like Severus and yourself they kept it secret, to keep the child safe, to keep the magical world safe."

"Magical world?" Harry repeated, staring at the ceiling, chewing on his bottom lip absently.

"Some say that when the last magical creatures dies...magic dies with it. It's a superstition that is held most dear, especially in most pureblood circles. It is why there are many sanctuaries for magical creatures, even dangerous ones that we cannot hope to control. Why it is illegal to hunt them, even the most dangerous ones, such as Basilisks or Dragons, not that it stops them." Eileen
explained seriously, evidently believing every word she said. "In your case it was self defence and perfectly acceptable." she added knowing what Harry would be thinking. Thinking about the Basilisk in Harry's second year.

"I've never heard that before," Harry said thoughtfully, wondering if it was true. Would magic be unable to flourish without magical animals?

"Yes, well, that belief is dying out, like many other things; the old ways have been all but forgotten by us all." Eileen explained sadly.

"You mean the old region," Harry perking up, he'd read a few things on the old region but not much. "There was a few comments on it in the older books from the Peverell vault, but it was so sparse that I never really got answers." sitting up curious to know what Eileen did. "I had other things to worry about though."

"It used to be called that, in the beginning, when there wasn't much known about magic at least that's the assumption and belief." Eileen told him, "You wouldn't believe the knowledge the ghosts of Hogwarts have, if anyone just took the time to talk to them, learn from them they would know a great deal more."

"The Grey Lady?" Harry queried smiling, "I only ever saw her a few times, she's very reclusive for a ghost, and I saw more of the others than her."

"She's very knowledgeable," Eileen said giving Harry a secret smile, one that said she knew something he didn't. It was wiped away seeing the look on Harry's face again, she wanted so badly to reassure him that everything was going to be okay. "Oh, Harry, dear, I wish I could help you, talk to me, tell me everything - if I can't help maybe just discussing it will make you feel a little less burdened."

"I already do, I'll be fine," Harry said giving her a placating smile.

"You don't have to pretend with me, or Severus, its natural to have fears and worries and confide in people. Especially during a pregnancy, my own emotions were all over the place, doing things I wouldn't normally and of course feeling things ten times more deeply than I usually would too." Eileen admonished gently.

Harry laughed; he understood that all too well. "I know," he assured her, very seriously, and he loved her for it. He had needed her more than he could even fathom back then, she had let him into her home, into her life and trusted him without really knowing him. Gave him a guiding hand he'd so desperately needed. A mother figure.

"Good," Eileen replied, knowing Harry would talk sooner or later, just as soon as he could articulate what he was actually feeling. He'd never really been good at talking; she always had to get titbits out of him. "Now have you even eaten breakfast while you were at the Leaky Cauldron?" she stood up, bringing Harry with her as they both moved over to the breakfast table.

"No," Harry admitted, he had been too damn nervous for that, sliding into his seat, moments later food was in front of them. Only then did he realize just how famished he was, quickly digging into his food the smell not making him nauseous.

"How did it go?" she asked as she broke open her egg and dipped a strip of toast into it.

And so Harry told her everything.
"Well we did it!" Fleur said, raising her glass, "To the sanctuary! And to us for making it possible!"

"Here, here!" Cedric proclaimed, as they all clinked their glasses together, sharing a bottle of champagne together in celebration of their success. Minus Harry of course, who was drinking orange juice instead, but just as happy as the rest of them over their recent success. Everyone sat around the living room, still knackered from all their hard work.

"Thank you for helping me, I wouldn't have been able to do it without you guys," Harry said seriously, "Well I would have but I think it would have taken me seven or eight more months with you."

"It's been fun," Cho admitted, even if it was long gruelling work that she wasn't used to. Spending proper time with Cedric and the friends truly helped put her at ease completely, she actually felt as though she was one of them now. She wasn't just an interloper dating one of their friends, and she felt elated by that. It had been a long time in coming, and she was determined to make sure it lasted even now that the sanctuary had been built. "Do you think the Ministry will help us though?"

"They aren't getting their hands on the sanctuary, not even to help," Harry told her immediately, shaking his head. "It will stay independent, exactly as the name suggests a sanctuary for all werewolves, I won't have them avoiding it because they feel secluded or because the Ministry will try and force them to put their names down on the registry with or without their consent."

"There are sanctuaries all over the world, they're funded independently and survive on donations and the help of wizards and witches, and I see no reason why the Ministry would need to help this one." Viktor agreed with Harry. "It's true, I think, if the Ministry become involved then the werewolves would leave." it was best to leave it neutral ground, in his opinion, he thought as he finished of the champagne that had been opened and bought for this special occasion.

"Is the Ministry really that bad?" Cho asked, her brow furrowed, she hadn't thought about it before now.

"They're right, to most people in the Ministry they're not people...they're creatures, things are changing through but for now nothing has changed enough for the werewolves." Cedric admitted, "You said you wanted to get someone that will help the cubs with school matters...what are you going to do about their magical education?"

"Well most packs tend to do the educating themselves, but I've been told of a few that don't know how to read and write, that they were turned too young to remember any of it, and there's hardly a place for them to retain and continue their education practically living in the wild is there? I want someone in who can teach both the children and adults who are willing to learn. As for magical education I don't have a clue. I'm not sure Dumbledore would let them attend, I don't know why he did with Remus, and I think he's the only one who's had the privilege of an education." Harry admitted the problems weren't over just because the construction and everything was done. Yet
they were problems that could be solved quite easily.

"Well if they need a healer, you know I'm up for it," Lukas informed him. He had made Harry a promise and he would keep it, although Harry had learned a lot of spells in regards to healing to know what he was doing himself. It was part of the package that came with being a Potions Master really.

"I can make them their wands, I'll just take it off my own commission, it's the least I can do to help them," Gary imputed; Harry had helped him open his own business, which was thriving. Ollivander stuck to two or three woods and cores, he was a little more flexible in his creations, and he hadn't let down a customer yet. Giving his fiancée a smile when she cuddled into him, beaming in pride.

"I will make sure to speak of the sanctuary, that will help word spread, maybe help with donations coming in," Viktor suggested.

"That's a great idea, Viktor!" Luna said eagerly, "I'll do an interview with you for the Quibbler, that's if you don't mind," which was selling more these days, it had done well ever since she started giving her dad advice on what to put on. It had begun during her third year, Harry's fourth year and the whole tournament. When she had seen the newspaper going on mostly about Nick she had sent a picture of all five of the champions to her dad and advised him to put it on the front page - it had been done. Viktor wasn't one for giving interviews but she hoped he would make an exception for the Quibbler; it would spread the word quicker than word of mouth could.

"Only one," Viktor conceded, "And you do the interview, the editing of the interview and publishing it."

"Don't worry, people will love it," Luna promised, her bright blue eyes twinkling brightly with otherworldly knowledge only she knew and was privy too. "And Harry? Speak to Daniel about the project and what you hope to do, he will help you,"

Harry blinked, how could Daniel help? He nodded immediately, knowing better than to doubt her by now. He was curious though, what Daniel could do, it obviously wasn't him, since he was pregnant, and currently on cloud nine, both he and Alec were, they'd gone so far as to buy a property in England somewhere, an old Manor and were currently staying in the only useable wing as the rest of the proper underwent renovations. They corresponded quite often, but he had never brought up sanctuary, they mostly spoke about their fears and worries, as much as their partners tried…they couldn't understand how worrisome it was…how different it was from a normal pregnancy made them feel as if something was going to go wrong any moment. Daniel wasn't as far along as him and was only beginning to worry about the things that plagued him.

"How is he doing?" Fleur asked, she, Luna and Lukas were the only ones in the group who had met Daniel so far.

"Excited, worried and afraid he keeps going back and forth, he's feeling it more…emotional than I have," Harry confessed grinning wryly.

"It's to be expected, everyone's pregnancy is different," Lukas replied, "It's fascinating being able to study it though, I just wished I could publish it," he admitted, already knowing that he couldn't, he would never do that to Harry and Severus.

"You might be able to," Harry said, "Sev is getting close, either that or its beginning to frustrate him," seeing Fleur looking at him not really understanding, Harry added, "He's spending a lot of time in the lab, the only time he does that is when he's close to a breakthrough or if he's getting
frustrated by the lack of progress he's making."

"You think he'll be able to make a Male pregnancy potion?" Cho asked from where she sat.

"Sev can do whatever he puts his mind to," Harry said immediately, defending his fiancé even if Cho hadn't meant it in a disrespectful manner. "Potions are just in its adolescence, we are coming up with more important things that potions can do, more than we in the potions community ever suspected back when they first began brewing. I have every confidence that he will succeed, he's brilliant." and he meant every word. Severus had made him what he was, without him; well it didn't bear thinking about.

Luna just sat there with a smile on her face, she knew alone just what Harry and Severus was going to do for the magical world. To think it wouldn't have happened if Harry hadn't gone back and made sure he survived? Harry would never have brewed again; all the potential would have been lost. She had seen both worlds, she suspected that this was always going to happen, Harry going back, as if it was meant to be. The small paradox that had been created was already dealt with.

"Oh, by the way, the seeds you gave me, Harry, they're blooming, I'll send some cuttings over," Neville told him, as he filled everyone's glasses back up. He would need to visit Egypt himself, perhaps Luna would like to go there for a holiday or maybe honeymoon. He definitely planned on bringing back some seeds, no matter how long it took him to find the market Harry went to.

"Just call on Dobby, he'll be glad for something to do," Harry replied, grinning.

"Alright," Neville replied smiling back.

"How's your apprenticeship coming along, Nev?" Cedric enquired, he hoped it wasn't as difficult as his Auror training, which had been hellish. It had been worth it though, and he was proud to be an Auror, despite the Ministry not being what he wished it was.

"Difficult," Neville decided on, "But I had no illusions about it being easy, despite it being something I enjoy. At least I won't have to come up with three potions like Harry had to in order to pass."

"Yes, but you'll have to work at it for three years, there's no getting qualified early," Harry pointed out, "Plus I had an added reasons for wanting to pass early, it had nothing to do with being the youngest potions Master." he didn't need to tell them why, they already knew. He kept nothing from his friends, he had wanted to be with Severus, but he had drawn a line and wasn't going to give in. He respected him for that, keeping his word, and for thinking about him. Although nobody seemed to think for a second anything untoward had occurred and it was a good thing - Severus would have gone nuts if they so much implied anything.

"How about Remus? He's a good teacher, and he would be perfect for the werewolves, they would actually trust him," Gary jumped in enthusiastically as he realized something.

"I don't know." Harry mused thoughtfully. "It's true that they would, especially with him being Greyback's cub, they would have one problem with that - Remus is disgusted by what he is, the children would pick up on that and it would grate on the adults nerves."

"Or it could have the opposite affect and help him realize that there's nothing horrible about the affliction." Lukas added thoughtfully, "He could teach them magic, he's really good at that, it would mean only finding someone to help with the primary education."

"Guy's, guy's come on, this is a celebration!" Cedric shouted, "Let's celebrate one thing before we
worry about the next thing on the list." before adding in an exasperated tone, "And yes, Harry I know it's impossible for you." he couldn't let something go until it was done. He was looking for the perfect time to propose and that had come and gone now. Cursing inwardly, he couldn't help but think perhaps it would be best over dinner...or get Fleur and Luna to help plan something really nice that girls liked.

Harry laughed in amusement, giving Cedric an almost sheepish look before he turned when he heard urgent knocking on the door. Frowning in confusion, why would someone be knocking on the door? If it was so bad why hadn't they used the Floo network? "Just a minute," Harry said to his friends and he hoisted himself off the couch and left the living room, making his way to the door as the pounding continued. "I'm coming!" he yelled still mystified, he grasped a hold of his wand as he warily opened the door.

"Don?" Harry muttered in confusion as he opened the door further, he looked like hell. "What's going on?"

"We need your help," Don managed to pant out though ragged breaths, "Please, you promised to help us if we needed it,"

"Is someone hurt?" Harry fired off immediately, still keeping his wand in hand. He heard his friends venturing out of the living room curious to know what was happening. "Kneel down, breath steadily," he added, before turning to his friends, "Accio potions bag!" he had a feeling someone was hurt, he couldn't think of any other reason why they would. Turning back around to face Don who had done as asked, and by chance he happened to look up at the sky and noticed the moon was rather full…which could have meant someone had been hurting during the full moon.

"Do you need a calming draught?" Lukas asked, checking his pulse trying to make sure he was actually alright.

"No, we need to go," Don rasped out, he'd been running for an hour to get here.

"Alright, just think of the area where your pack is right now and look at me, I'm going to use Legilimency I wont dig into your mind you have my word." Harry swore. Seeing Don look him over for a few seconds, judging his sincerity he nodded albeit somewhat slowly.

"I'm coming," Lukas declared, "I'm a healer," he added so that Don wouldn't protest at the thought of someone else coming.

"Be careful," Fleur said, as Harry did his thing.

"Are you alright with someone else coming?" Harry asked, getting what he needed and exiting Don's mind.

"Hurry," Don replied strained, "Just hurry." they had no idea what was happening and that was terrifying for them.

Harry grasped a hold of Don, as Lukas held onto Harry, one nod to his friends he Apparated the three of them away from Prince Manor and to a forested area, immediately he noticed the pack surrounding someone. Fenrir's presence was the most noticeable, he was much larger than anyone there but he wasn't an Alpha for nothing. Running towards them, making sure to hold on to the trees - he didn't want to fall and hurt himself of potentially his child, no matter how much he wanted to help.

"What happened?" Harry asked kneeling down beside who he realized was a female werewolf,
who was shifting from human to werewolf screaming in agony apparently unable to control her phasing. He had never seen anything like it before in his life, and it was quite frankly scary.

"We phased back, Amelia didn't, not at first then this started happening," Fenrir stated his tone clipped, but Harry could see the worry in his blue eyes. "She was pregnant, we noticed it weeks before…we knew what was going to happen," his tone strained.

"Yours?" Harry enquired loudly, his wand out casting a diagnostic at Amelia despite the screaming.

"Yes," Fenrir admitted grimly, not once meeting Harry's eyes, in the first display of vulnerability he'd ever encountered in Fenrir Greyback.

"She's still pregnant," Harry shouted, gazing at the results, somewhat surprised, he didn't understand how.

"You're lying! That's not possible, the change should…" spat one of the werewolves Harry wasn't familiar with.

"Enough!" Fenrir roared, glaring at the werewolf who had spoken. "He is helping us," he said nothing after that but he was obviously conveying something to the entire pack without saying it out loud. Then he went back to staring at the shifting woman in worry, she went from screaming to howling in her wolf form before repeating the process over and over again.

"There's some sort of protection over her womb, magical protection, it's keeping the foetus alive, it's strained, and it might not last for much longer." Harry said after scanning yet again, Lukas was doing the same thing nodding along with Harry agreeing with him one hundred percent.

"Harry, if she stays in her wolf form…it might just be possible…" Lukas shouted, "I mean there won't be any strain if she's in wolf form…it's a long time to remain as an animal but…she should be given a choice at least."

"You mean lock her form? When she changes into the wolf that might end up with her having her think like a wolf act like one for what…eight months? That won't be easy, especially not for the pack." Harry said pensively.

"Pregnancy never is, but a decision needs to be made, the magic won't hold forever," Lukas shouted.

"I'll need to go into her mind," Harry said, speaking to Fenrir this time, "I have to know it's what she wants."

Fenrir nodded dumbly, unable to believe what they were suggesting…that he could potentially have a child in eight months. With both parents being werewolves, any child would be like them both, but it is said in legend that moon children born with the ability could turn into a wolf that they didn't find it painful. It was just a bedtime story that was fed to them; he didn't believe it was true even though part of him wished it was.

"Legilimens!" Harry muttered, delving into the woman's mind, which was just as pained and chaotic as the rest of her. He quickly eased her pain, bringing her consciousness closer to him so he could speak to her. "Hello, Amelia, my name is Harry Peverell, I was sent to aid you. Did you hear anything of what was said just moments ago?"

"No, it hurts too much," she admitted, "Not anymore."
"I'm shielding you from the pain as much as I am able, I need to speak with you since this decision affects you most of all." Harry informed her. "Now, you knew you were pregnant they tell me."

"Yes, I could sense it, my magic began to change, adapt," Amelia replied saddened by her most recent loss. It wasn't the first time and she doubted it would be the last.

"You are still pregnant," Harry said, not leaving her hanging, "The problem is the shield is causing some sort of flux that's making you change between two forms. We don't know why, but I will do everything within my power to give you an answer. Now the shield around your womb won't hold forever, there is one of two things you can do."

"I'm WHAT?" she shrieked out in shock.

Harry winced in agony, "Please don't shout, you're giving me a headache," Harry admitted, "I know this is a shock but you need to make a decision, I can either remove the foetus and the pain will stop."

"Or?" she asked, hope seeping into her voice against her will.

"Or I can lock you in your wolf form for the next eight months until you're ready to give birth." Harry told her.

"Is it…you know…human?" Amelia asked.

"Yes, it has to be, if you had gotten pregnant during the full moon you wouldn't have changed back anyway, not until you gave birth to wolf cubs." Harry explained. "We aren't sure how it happened or if you will even retain your mindset, so it's truly up to yourself." either way had their own set of risks and complications. He knew he wouldn't be able to abort the child himself, not even to save her life; no Lukas had to do it if that is what it came to. Judging by the sound of hope in her voice, he suspected he already had his answer.

"Do it, lock my form," Amelia decided grimly. "And Harry…thank you," it wasn't often that wizards helped them.

"You're very welcome," Harry said, "I'm going now," warning her that the pain would come back, hopefully once he locked her form she would stop hurting so badly.

Gasping suddenly he held onto someone, he wasn't sure as he came back to himself, blinking rapidly he looked around. He found it was Greyback who had shot out to hold him up, all the while frowning for some reason. Harry nodded his thanks, turning to face the woman again, he gestured for everyone to step back, which they did, even Greyback.

"Cataracta!" Harry boomed the spell leaving his wand fast, slamming into Amelia while she was in her wolf form, pure silver with tuffs of white here and there. He saw the werewolf's tense, ready to fight instinctively, the flight or fight instincts coming to the forefront of their mind before they could stop it. He stepped back himself, he had no idea whether she had a human mentality or a werewolf one. "I have built a sanctuary, for all wolf kind, you are welcome to move there, the wards will prevent any humans stumbling upon you or wizards come to that, you'll live in peace, help the next generation come to accept their wolf without fear and prejudice of what they are. There are an abundance of wild animals so you can hunt, eat as you wish, there's also cooked food not meat, since it's known you like it raw, but food like stews and such."

"Your young will also get the chance at a primary education, as well as a magical one, we have someone who will ensure you get wands if that's what you wish, what better way to defend
yourself and your pack than knowing magic?" Lukas trying to convince them to come as well. The youngest he could see was at the very least Durmstrang age, Hogwarts age - he would estimate him to be at least eleven or twelve years of age. He kept his eye on the unconscious female wolf, he didn't want any surprises.

"It's up to you, but you will be safe," Harry finished, Greyback would be able to spread the word quicker, they would believe him he was after all the most well known (not to mention notorious) werewolf in Britain.

"It is an independent sanctuary, not government run," Lukas added, knowing they wouldn't want anywhere near somewhere the Ministry had control over.

"You know where I am if you decide to do it," Harry said, knowing they would need time to think it through, giving a nod he grasped onto Lukas and Apparated them away from the forest and surrounding areas and back to Prince Manor, straight into the living room.

"Are you alright?" Severus immediately demanded, coming over checking Harry himself just to make sure for his own piece of mind.

"I'm fine, a werewolf needed our help, that's all," Harry said, leaning into Severus, content just to stand there with the man he loved beyond all reason.

"I see," Severus replied, relaxing in relief, he had been told immediately by Harry's friends when he had disappeared to aid Don. He knew he was the only one that would have come here, he and Remus were the only werewolves that knew this location, and Remus would have used the Floo network, so Don was the only logical conclusion he could reach. "You need to slow down," Harry was doing too much, he was now nine months pregnant, and he really shouldn't be going anywhere without him. He had promised he wouldn't too; needless to say he wasn't too happy.

"I know," Harry admitted,

"Have the others gone?" Lukas asked, hating to break them up but feeling slightly awkward standing there.

"They have, they send their apologies, Viktor has asked you get home soon as, he wants to make sure that you are alright as well if he isn't home you know where he will be." Severus chuckled, watching Lukas flush red before nodding, silently gesturing towards the Floo Network before he grasped some powder and used it to go home. They had been gone for nearly an hour, lunch break was over, and so they'd had to go back to every day life, as it were. Viktor was due to do training with the rest of his team.

"Now must I tie you to our bed to get you to rest for even five minutes?" Severus scolded.

"Bet you'd love that," Harry said his breath hitching, "I certainly wouldn't get any rest."

Severus chuckled in amusement, "Unlike you, I have self control."

"Not enough," Harry concluded, shaking his head. "I just don't know how to rest, Sev," Harry admitted, his voice muffled slightly by the fact he'd burrowed himself further into his fiancé.

"Don't I know it," Severus admitted, Harry had kept himself busy during the entire duration that he'd known he was pregnant. The only time he truly sat down for a while and rested was when he was trying to come up with a few potion ideas and the like. The sanctuary had taken up most of his thoughts, now it was slowly dwindling down, he half wondered what his fiancé would do next. Perhaps it was his fault for taking an apprentice on at such a young age, he didn't know how to
relax and just have fun. Even on holiday he was thinking about things he could do when he got home. He was just one of those people who liked to be constantly busy and didn't know how to take it easy. Perhaps he should spend a bit less time in the potions lab this month.

"Come on, sit down," Severus said, realizing they were both still standing, just as they were both getting comfortable on the couch Dobby appeared with their mail - which was rather late today, but Severus quickly accepted the pile.

"Jacob and Penelope have sent a baby gift," Severus said, his voice filled with awe, moving slightly he returned the cot to its original size mesmerised.

Harry gasped, "Is that hand…"

"It is, Penelope is a master at her craft, this is the first time she's made one using this particular wood," Severus said in admiration, running his hands over the smooth surface.

"African Blackwood, the original Ebony," Harry murmured amazed.

"Indeed, it's not the easiest of woods to work with," Severus said, it was beautifully designed, he was honestly quite speechless by the thoughtfulness behind it.

"I'm glad we didn't buy one yet," Harry admitted, they hadn't been able to decide, and he was quite thankful for that.

"I'm afraid I did order it," Severus admitted, "It's bought and paid for." they would just need to sell it on again or decide what to do with it later - they weren't tight on funds.

"Oh," Harry muttered surprised, "Um…I suppose we can keep it to give as a gift to one of my friends…one of them might need it in future."

"Indeed," Severus replied, leaning back, bringing Harry back with him, as they stared at the masterfully created baby cot. "Will you tell me what happened? Is Don alright?"

"Oh, I didn't tell you, well..." and Harry told him absolutely everything that had occurred. Even the fact he had used Legilimens successfully twice, and about the female werewolf that was pregnant and how they'd told them about the Sanctuary.
Severus stirred the potion absently thinking on the last month, which had been chaotic to say the least. At least Harry had finally began taking it easy although he spent quite a bit of time at the sanctuary, with him of course, he wasn't going to allow Harry to go alone, not when he was so far into his pregnancy. Harry had commented on his surprise when he was contacted by Narcissa Black (who was no longer using the Malfoy name which had been reduced to shame and disgust) who was a healer and expressed interest in working at the sanctuary. She wasn't the only one Harry had put an advert in the paper, but most had been told no upfront before even getting an interview. In fact Severus had had to convince Harry to give Narcissa a chance.

With so much of the Malfoy family fortune given to Harry in compensation, and his godson's over indulgences when it came to getting whatever he wanted whenever he wanted, the remaining fortune was dwindling very fast. He had spoken to Draco when Narcissa asked it of him, but apparently it wasn't making a difference. Narcissa only had her Black vault and it was enough to see her living comfortably, but not with the usual extravagance she was used to. That and her so called 'friends' weren't associating with her due to her decline down the social ladder. She was lonely, not that she'd ever admit that, and she wanted to make changes to her name before it was too late. St. Mungo's wouldn't hire her, she didn't have the 'experience' required, since she had taken her healing course but never used it after finishing it. Harry was unable to deny him his request and so interviewed her.

Harry had found her very different from what he saw of her during the trial, she had been straightforward and honest. She wanted to help the Black name, help bring some of the tarnish of the Malfoy name for her son, all the while making some money so that her son didn't end up penniless, she felt at blame for his ways, due to the fact she had spoiled him so much. So she would do what was required of her, and admitted she'd never had a problem with werewolves and would gladly and happily help them. The fact she had called them werewolves helped Harry warm further towards her, the others always called them creatures as if they were beneath them. Which had caused the immediate dismissal of their application in his mind immediately.

Harry had decided to let Narcissa stay on a trial basis working under Lukas while he took a fortnights holiday from St. Mungo's and worked at the sanctuary. For the first few days it was mostly just refreshing her knowledge on healing, since it was very quiet to begin with until Fenrir Greyback made an executive decision to get his pack to safety, especially with pups on the way. As much as he loathed relying on anyone, none of his pack was equipped with the knowledge on what to do to help Amelia, he pushed his pride aside to keep his alpha bitch and pups safe.

Considering Fenrir Greyback had remained there for two weeks, and showed no sign of leaving it was safe to assume he would be staying at least until his pup was born. The pack was mostly healthy given their lifestyle, but they were lucky, something that became all too apparent when Cedric had come across a young child in the woods, terrified and practically feral in trying to get away from the Auror. He had been hunting for a werewolf, who had killed a few unsuspecting
homeless Muggles - the Muggles believe it was simply an animal mauling but Cedric had been dispatched to bring in the werewolf and get her or him on the registry. Cedric had defied his orders from the Ministry and taken the ten year old boy to sanctuary.

To say Narcissa had her work cut out for her was putting it mildly, but Severus knew she was enjoying the challenge and being able to get out of Malfoy Manor and do something productive for the first time since her son was eleven years old and no longer needed her full time. With help from the other wolves the boy was healing, but it would take a year to get the child healthy but at least during the full moon he would have the aid of others of his own kind. It was mostly Fenrir that was able to control him and stop him from hurting himself (or others) further. That was solely due to his wolf counterpart sensing the Alpha in Greyback. Narcissa theorised that he had spent at least three years on his own in the wild. His reaction to magic also told them he was either a muggle-born or a half-blood unexposed to the magical world on a whole. It had been nothing dramatic, after all he had spent three years turning into a werewolf (or so they were assuming) normal had probably thrown itself out of his mind by this. The only time there wasn't someone human around was the night of the full moon; they had the run of the entire place without fear of infecting or killing another person.

Harry received updates on everyone every second day, he took a genuine interest in them all and was constantly figuring out ways to make their lives better. When Harry did something he did it so completely that nothing was left to chance. He had the biggest heart yet refused to let anyone see it, except those close to him. Although everyone knew really, the speeches he'd given it away. Severus absentmindedly added the next ingredient, not even having to look to see it was the correct one by its texture. He could brew in his sleep, he was just that good but as a Master of his craft, it was expected.

The male pregnancy potion was coming along; in fact it was in the animal stages since theoretically it would work. Everyone knew just because it made sense in theory - it didn't mean it would be a success. Something he was familiar with, especially with this particular creation, twice he had thought he had it but twice it had failed. This was his third time and he was hoping it was the charm, they couldn't keep the child a secret forever, it wasn't the life he wanted for the baby. So it was vital that it worked, it was the sole reason he was spending so much time down here just to perfect it. He couldn't fail, his child's future was riding on this, and to him this would be the most important potion in all of creation.

Harry understood his reasoning's and was just as desperate if not more so than him that this went right.

He had a week (he gave the cat the potion a fortnight ago) to wait before he could get confirmation on whether the cat was indeed pregnant and if it was holding up. It was a Kneazle, a magical cat which he had to use since the potion was meant for those with magic in them. The spell to determine a pregnancy was a human one, it didn't read animals well. So he had to examine the cat thoroughly for outside indications that it might in fact be pregnant. Its' gestation period was around sixty-two days, which was around 9-10 weeks then he would definitely have his answer. Although if he (the cat) was pregnant then his theory was already proven all that needed determined was if the pregnancy could hold.

Severus cocked his head to the side, listening up the way, as apposed to side ways; he could have sworn he heard something. Perhaps it was his mother back? She had been spending time with old friends lately, Minerva was one of them, Andrea Crabbe was another (thankfully not directly related to Vincent Crabbe) and Cathy something he wasn't sure of her last name, he was admittedly only half paying attention when she blathered on about them. They were friends from her school times, and since her return had been published in the paper they had been writing back and forth.
The stirrer dropped out of his hands when he heard Harry bellowing for him sounding in agony. He paused for only a second to banish the potion before bolting from the lab extremely concerned. He couldn't leave the potion to simmer and bubble up before exploding that was just at the height of carelessness, he was just glad he had the forethought to do it as he made his way to where he was sure Harry's voice had come from. He had help by the occasional grunting Harry was doing, he could hear them getting closer and he skidded around the corner and straight at Harry.

"What's wrong?" he asked in concern, his black eyes filled with worry and concern or both of them. Bloody hell, Harry was drastically pale; sweat was already beginning to appear all over his forehead. This was bad, nobody went into such pain during labour so quickly, it was usually built up, but this wasn't normal, so they had no idea what to expect. He tried to calm himself down some, after all there was no saying that Harry was in labour, and he could have simply hurt himself. He knew he was just being disingenuous, no this was it he could feel it in his bones.

"Severus…get the baby out! NOW!" Harry yelled out, before a tortured scream left his lips, he felt as though a tonne was being dropped on his stomach, this surely couldn't be normal could it? The pain had hit him so unexpectedly that he'd just managed to stop himself from crumbling to the marble floor in agony. Instead he slid down the wall, to where he currently half sat half lay on the floor in utter agony.

"Dobby! Get Andy NOW!" Severus demanded his own face paling at the prospect of him having to deliver his own child. No, that wouldn't be necessary, Andy would be here any moment now and dealing with it. Severus summoned a cloth and spelled it cool before wiping Harry's forehead, his cheeks were deeply red tinged or maybe it seemed that way since he was so pale. Paler than him at any rate, what if this delay could cost him his fiancé and child? There was no natural way for the child to come out, what if it was meant to be delivered immediately? He had never thought about it before, and he felt such a fool right now for not thinking on it further. He'd just been more concerned about covering Harry's unexpected and unexplainable pregnancy - he would never let the world know about the unicorn blood, he couldn't the outcome would be horrific.

Dobby popped back in looking extremely worried, "Andy is very busy Master Severus, she's in theatre and Dobby can't get in there." the new wards were extensive and even House-elves couldn't get around the new wards on the theatre and secured wards.

"Shit!" Severus hissed furiously, "Go and wait for her, get her here immediately. GO!" he repeated urgently when he still saw the House-elf standing there. "ROSE!"

"Yes?" Rose said without her usual fawning seeing the direness of the situation. Just standing at attention, ready to do whatever she needed to do help her Masters and the litter Master or Lady.

"Bring me a sterilised scalpel, warm water, covers and something temporarily to place the baby in and every potion I might need!" Severus said, as he wiped Harry's brow. He never expected to have to do this, and he could feel his stomach quivering dangerously at the thought. He was going to have to cut Harry open to retrieve the baby himself. He wasn't going to risk waiting. Harry was in agony, so much so that he had his jaw clenched so tightly that he feared Harry would break his teeth if he wasn't careful. Swiping his belt from his trousers he bent it in half before silently urging Harry to bite down on it. "It will be better to have something to bite on," he told Harry, watching him as he literally had to force his jaw open a gurgled scream rasping through his throat. Pressing against Harry's stomach, he could feel it quivering in tension; he cursed his shaking hands and nerves.

"You understand why I can't give you anything for the pain don't you?" Severus said softly, concern and worry still written on every line of his face. He wished he could do something for
him, but there was nothing that could be given over. It would be worth it when it was over, hopefully, with both his child and Harry intact. Child birth was always painful, but it was definitely not something men had to endure before.

Harry grunted, he wasn't interested in anything other than getting the baby out, never having felt much, this new pain and tension was utterly horrible. Was it normal pain women felt during labour? Or was there something wrong? The thought that anything would happen to his baby at the last hurdle terrified him, he'd rather die than anything happen to his and Sev's baby. There was nowhere that wasn't thrumming with strain or in pain right now. Even his feet were killing him, and was that even possible? His feet weren't giving birth after all! His eyes met concerned black ones, he didn't think he'd seen so much worry on Sev's face - not since his potions accident...he nodded grimly just the once but it was enough to placate Severus and give him the courage he needed to do this by the look of determination on his face. He couldn't say anything for the life of him, but the belt was much better to bite down on than his teeth - at least it ached less. Not that he noticed it overly much, the overall pain was immense.

Rose returned with more than she had been ordered to get, but Severus was thankful for that, it would at least allow Harry to be more comfortable - he was lying on a marble floor after all. He didn't dare move him; he wasn't waiting any longer, damn Andy to hell for making him do this. The House-elf placed the necessary items just out of Severus' reach before placing the pillows behind Harry helping him prop up without aid.

There could be no more delaying, it was obvious Dobby wasn't going to show up with Andy, the timing couldn't have been any more terrible. Breathing raggedly, he picked up the scalpel, determined to do this, his steady hand attested to that. Glancing up at Harry in concern, before he exhaled sharply before moving into position. "Hold his legs down, do not let go whatever you do," if Harry kicked out at him with a knife in his hand...he dreaded to think on what could possibly go wrong. Hopefully she would have the strength to hold him down, he was going to be in agony, so of course he was going to kick out - it's the only way he could express his much pain he was in.

Harry complained loudly, but his voice was muffled by the belt, so nobody not even Severus could guess what he said. It was probably nothing nice, all things considered so perhaps it was for the best that they couldn't decipher it. He glared at the house-elf until his neck began to protest and then he just slumped against the pillows, the long gangly fingers wrapped around his ankles felt very weird.

Of course, the tip of a scalpel being dug into his skin made that thought leave his head, very, very quickly as he screamed in agony. He didn't want this, he thought in panic, it hurt more than anything else in the world - please, please just be over with. Yet the pain continued on relentlessly from one side of his stomach to the other without much of a pause. The pain blazed on like a raging inferno, and he began to lose sense of time and himself, he could think of nothing but the pain and the feeling of sickness crawling up his throat. Minutes or hours could have passed, but Harry was oblivious to it all.

Unfortunately for him, it was only seconds that had crawled by.

Severus grimaced in guilt as Harry screamed; Rose was having difficulty keeping Harry from flailing out at hurting them all. Yet so far she was succeeding, he couldn't dwell on that, he had to get the baby out of Harry so he could give his fiancé pain relief. He had to slice through three layers; it wasn't as easy as it looked, especially with the blood and ooze coming from the wound, making the scalpel extremely slippery in his grasp. Just as he felt it was getting too slippery, Rose clicked her finger, how she did it holding onto Harry was anyone's guess, but the blood and ooze immediately disappeared from his hand and the knife was once again sturdy in his grip. He threw
her a look of gratitude and pride for her forethought, as he finally made a big enough hole to take out the baby, their baby. He was officially a dad, Merlin it was so weird to think like that, he prayed that his baby was alive and well, just waiting on its entrance into the world.

It would devastate them both if they'd come this far only to lose the baby.

Severus let the scalpel drop to the floor, grabbing a towel he wiped his hands before screwing his nose up lightly, before sliding his hands inside. He had done a lot in his life, but this, this was completely different he was inside his fiancé's bloody stomach, it didn't take him long for his nimble fingers to feel the slippery baby, and he grasped a hold of its neck and legs before slowly withdrawing it. Severus would have cried in relief when he heard the loud wail of the new born child's cry but he was distracted by the final and inevitable appearance of Andy.

Ever the professional she immediately dropped her cloak and moved to the opposite side letting Severus deal with the child, since he now had it in his hands. She knew the magical sack would need to be removed as well; otherwise it would cause a serious infection and probably kill Harry. without even so much as blinking her hands slid under the wound, not concerned by Harry's screaming, only to jerk her head back towards Severus as if suspecting she had been seeing something. Surprise flicked over her eyes, the womb true to her suspicions was magical, she had more than she should be able to fit into the small area, and Harry hadn't outwardly gained any weight or appearance of being pregnant.

"Well we have a bit of a surprise," Andy said, nothing had been detected in the scans but they weren't as good on male pregnancies, it was the same with Daniel, you could only see an outline of the child, not properly, she was definitely certain that it had more to do with the magic around the sack keeping the baby safe - obviously a woman's womb wasn't magical so it would be easier for a scan to show everything. When she eased the second baby from Harry's body Severus looked ready to pass out, but by the look of sheer will alone he remained conscious. "Twins, you'll both have your hands full."

Severus was absolutely stunned, the loud piercing cries of his children brought him back to the present, checking the warmth of the water, and he nodded in satisfaction and dipped the baby - towel and all - into the water and began to clean the boy, which became all too apparent as Severus cleaned him. He had a son, a little boy of his own; he felt a small smile slipping onto his face. A family, two children, and a man he loved more than anything else in this world. He loved, and suddenly Severus had to swallow the lump in his throat, dear Merlin he hadn't felt like this before and his heart could scarcely contain the feelings. Delicately washing the baby, until he was clean, and he was able to keep his emotions in check. He accepted the second soft towel and dried the baby boy before wrapping him up in a soft cover and placing him in the mosses basket that Rose had brought down. He was afraid he would need to buy another one, with the exception of a cot, since they actually had two of them.

"Here, I'll need to stitch him up," Andy said in a non nonsense voice, as she passed the second baby over to Severus with delicate care.

Severus took the baby, and began to wash the other little boy, twins as Andy had said, the water had been replaced there was now three House-elves standing around ready to wait on them hand and foot. He washed the crying baby, noticing that Dobby had taken it upon himself to give the first born a dummy to suck on hence his quietness for the moment. He gazed at his second born, hoping that they took after Harry, he certainly didn't want any child to go through what he had. They both had a head of dark hair though, but that wasn't a surprise seeing as both families had dark hair. Another towel was passed to him courtesy of Rose; the blooded scalpel was also gone so he didn't need to be too careful. He had just wrapped the baby in a cover and conjured up a little
basket for him to lay in until they bought a mosses basket for him. He couldn't help but wonder what Harry would think of this, twins of all things.

"Are the potions fresh?" Severus demanded, as always preferring to use his own when it came to his fiancé.

"I didn't bring any, I am well aware of the fact you prefer to use your own by this Severus, I've been both your healers now for a few years." Andy said amused, placing the last stitch into Harry's flat stomach. It had been a very odd experience to be inside someone up to her elbows, she wanted to study the sack magically at least before it was banished. It seemed to act like an expanding charm with some sort of protection shield; hopefully soon she'd have her answers. She accepted the potions that a House-elf she wasn't familiar with pushed towards her and she immediately opened the box and found the ones she needed immediately.

Andy spread the salve over Harry's stomach, reducing the redness and swelling immediately, it would ease the pain he would go through considerably. That's not to say he wouldn't feel it for weeks, they'd quite literally just been inside of him, that trauma would take a while to heal from. The stitches would dissolve when it was ready, so there was no need for another trip, but she was definitely going to be keeping an eye on him for the next couple of weeks.

"I'll give them to him," Severus said as Andy picked up the potions, he took them from her and moved up towards Harry's head, wiping his forehead again as he eased the belt from between his teeth. The teeth marks were imbedded deeply into the leather, but he didn't care it was only an immaterial thing. He flung it away to the side, hoping that everything had gone well. "Harry? Harry can you drink this, come on, it will help you feel better." he said pressing the vial against Harry's mouth. Holding his head steady so he could swallow it easier, he looked completely exhausted. Tipping the potion in, he helped Harry swallow it, before easing him back down.

"How is he?" Severus asked Andy, waiting on her reading the results of the scan tests. Ready to pick him up and put him in bed, he needed to rest, to recover.

"It's the results you'd expect from a woman who has just given birth," Andy said calmly inwardly relieved, copying a set of the results for herself, and placing it in her bag. She kept anything to do with Harry's pregnancy a closely guarded secret also under lock and key. The only other person that knew was her husband and she'd made him also swear a vow before she told him, she trusted him impeccably, but she would not risk her job, reputation and life without a guarantee. She knew how easy it was to slip up, and she wasn't going to have that happen to her. "He will be in pain for quite a few days, so keep pain relievers on hand; the stitches will dissolve on their own so there shouldn't be any complications."

"I see," Severus said nodding his understanding, before placing a lightweight charm on Harry and lifting him up, his gaze snapping down when Harry's head rolled on his shoulder. He relaxed his tense shoulders, he was fine, and the scan results proved that, the worst was over with. He would recover and be back to normal soon enough, no doubt he would be spending a bit of time in the lab. He smirked to himself before turning to the House-elves, "Put the Mosses baskets in the living room, I will be back down momentarily."

"Perhaps you should keep him close by?" Andy suggested, "It will save a lot of hassle and time."

"Perhaps," Severus said thoughtfully before conceding the point, moving towards the living room and putting Harry on the couch, and just as he had their duvet and pillows appeared. Expanding it in size, he flung the duvet over him, keeping him warm, and absently slid the pillows under his head. They'd done it, against all odds they had two little babies, and it truly was a miracle. He had never thought he'd have a family, or much of a life, so much had changed in the past few years. He
could still pinpoint the exact moment it had all happened. Wiping his hair from his face, letting him sleep, he moved over to the seat and stared at the tiny things, both of them; it was hard to believe they'd been inside Harry! He was able to stop himself smiling and stroking their little faces, he'd been happy for a long time, but this feeling was new, foreign and he couldn't place it.

"Can I ask a few questions before I go?" Andy said, smiling at the picture he made, she didn't get to see Severus show emotion often, and more often than not it was negative emotions like worry and fear - not this happiness she could see twinkling in his eyes and clear as day on his face. He was smiling; she just wished she had a camera to capture this moment. Unfortunately as soon as she spoke, he turned to her impassively.

"Of course, take a seat," Severus said quietly. His fingers didn't stop stroking the hair and face of one of the twins, the quicker he got it over with the better, he wanted to be alone. Well as alone as he could get at any rate he thought with amusement, since he was definitely not alone with two children and his fiancé and he was very glad for that. He'd been alone for years and had convinced himself that he was happy to be that way, until he had fallen for Harry so completely that he'd been terrified that it was just a crush.

"When did he go into labour?" Andy asked a scribe quill and paper already scribbling everything she asked and Severus' answers.

"Immediately, there was no warning, at least Harry didn't inform me of them but he wouldn't have risked waiting." Severus informed her assuredly.

"What were the affects?" Andy enquired.

"Extreme agony, it was dilapidating he fell and was unable to move," Severus replied. "He demanded that I get the baby out immediately."

"What was his state between that demand and you doing it?" Andy then asked.

"He was extremely pale, sweating profusely and unable to talk or scream through clenching his teeth so bad," Severus stated, ignoring the quill writing away at the side of Andy.

"It's something we will have to inform Daniel, if Harry had been alone..." she trailed off, not having to say anything further. Today had been her last day at St. Mungo's having planned to take the week off to be solely on call for Harry for when he needed her. Go figure that he would go into labour on her last day, she had been slightly surprised to see Dobby waiting on her as she left the theatre with a patient she had just saved. Or was trying to, the bite wasn't healing as it should, they were giving her a potion to replenish her blood every four hours to keep her alive while they tried to find an antidote to whatever had bitten her. Fortunately Potions wasn't her deal, so the swabs taken had been delivered straight to the Potion Masters in the basement labs and it was up to them now.

"The House-elves knew what to do," Severus replied immediately paling at the thought, he did not want to think on that possibility - ever. "But yes, it's definitely something we need to keep in mind, there was only a short while between him being able to talk and being in too much pain to do anything." Harry and Daniel had struck up quite a friendship, dear Merlin he had a feeling the entire house was going to be overrun with people in the next twenty-four hours. He would also need to keep a close eye on the cat when it came near time.

"It's exactly nine months to the very day of conception," Andy informed him, "Did you know that?"
"No, actually I didn't," Severus answered bemused.

"I will leave you to it," Andy said standing up, "Congratulations, to both of you, I shall be back in a few days unless you need me before," she awkwardly handed over a small parcel and a card, "I'm afraid there's only one item...I wasn't expecting two." she grinned sheepishly as she let it go.

"Thank you," Severus said accepting it as he stood, surprise filtering across his face before he placed it on the table, he and Harry would open it together.

"It's no problem, Severus, you deserve this," she informed him, before Apparating out having said her piece.

Breathing out, surprised by her words, just as he was by her gift, was his insecurities that obvious that the healer would comment on it? He stood there for a few seconds before he brushed it off, moving the children closer to Harry so he could sit down beside him and keep an eye on him still worried despite the healer's reassurances. He lifted one up, and sat down with him safely in the crook of his arm, stroking his face (somehow that was becoming very addictive) vowing to himself he would never be his father. He would never ever lift his hand to his children. He would never ignore them, drink excessively or make them feel worthless. Staring at the small vulnerable baby, his baby, he wondered how his father had been able to dismiss these feelings. How could his mother have stayed and put him through it? He had only known his children for a few moments and he already felt so very protective of them.

Almost as if he had conjured her...speak of the devil thought Severus as his mother used Harry's teleportation potion to get into the manor. It took a few minutes before she showed up in the living room only for her eyes to widen comically and her jaw to drop in shock. She was mostly quiet when she came in due to Harry's interrupted sleeping, the only thing that seemed to have occurred at all during the pregnancy that was 'normal' in an actual pregnancy.

"Wha..." was all Eileen could articulate. Blinking rapidly at her son, unable to believe the sight in front of her, "Why didn't you get in touch? How is he? Twins?" the last word was squeaked out in shock.

Severus chuckled quietly in amusement, he hadn't seen his mother at loss for words before and it was funny. "Yes, twins, it was a surprise for us all. The healer says he's fine, hopefully he'll wake soon. I wasn't about to send you a patronus message with the news in front of strangers."

"They aren't strangers, Severus," admonished Eileen but the fact she said nothing further said she understood. "Oh, my grandchildren!" she said almost cooing as she picked up the other twin, her face glowing with pride and happiness, the more the merrier she wasn't just a grandmother to one but two beautiful babies. They were finally here; she took one of the available seats, and just gazed down in adoration. She hadn't held a child since Severus himself was one, such a long time ago. She never thought this day would come, not since Severus had came out so to speak. "Oh, Severus, I'm so proud of you, both of you." she murmured quietly, beaming at her son. She was so glad the potion had saved her life, so she could be here for this; her boys meant the world to her, now she had even more boys to love and cherish.

"It's Harry that did everything," Severus said softly, and it was true, without Harry he wouldn't even be here for this. He had carried those babies in his body for nine months and had endured agony so he could bring them into the world. He had turned his life around, he was getting far too whimsical, was that a side affect to having children of your own? He'd done nothing but think on the past since Harry had been ready to deliver. He shook his head and pinched the bridge of his nose, wishing Harry would wake up, he hated any attention being on him, then again so did Harry. He hated it that much he had feared...no dreaded the day the magical world would find out about
his true status as the Boy-Who-Lived.

"Have you decided on names?" Eileen asked, staring down at the baby again, just mesmerised. She had known Harry was pregnant, listened to his fears that something was wrong due to the fact he didn't appear pregnant nor have the symptoms but seeing this drove it truly home.

"We have a list," Severus said dryly, "We have yet to come up with a name we both agree on but we certainly won't be holding to wizarding traditions, that has been made abundantly clear. It didn't help that we had no idea what gender the baby would be, so the list has both male and female names." neither of his children would be named after their grandfathers, it didn't matter that James Potter had given him the time-turner that enabled them to come back in time. Too much had happened to even consider putting it as 'water under the bridge'. No child of his would be lumbered with the name Tobias after a drunken abusive bastard. Nor did he want his children named James after a boy who had made his Hogwarts years unbearable and as a man mentally and emotionally scarred Harry during his childhood and made him believe he was nothing. They had also discussed their child never being named after Lily either, but Eileen was probably the only grandparent who was considered, but now well...it wasn't possible due to them being boys.

"Did you get powdered milk? Or should I go and fetch some? They will be waking for food soon," Eileen said, she knew speaking from experience and there was no other possibility for the boys since Harry wasn't going to be able to express milk for them - magic didn't work that wondrous.

"I assume the House-elves would get it when I asked them to get the other last minute items," Severus said slowly, but obviously unsurely. He had asked them to get dummies, bottles and other small items when the due date got closer and him being obsessed with completing the potion.

"Dobby?" he called.

"Can Dobby help Master Severus?" Dobby asked, his green eyes glimmering with excitement.

"Did you gather powdered milk while you shopped for the baby things I asked three weeks ago?" Severus enquired, he rather hoped he said yes, but it was simple enough to go for it, that and the mosses basket, two children, yes that had been one hell of a surprise.

"Dobby did! Dobby noticed you hadn't added it to the list or bought some!" Dobby said beaming his chest puffed out in pride.

"Great, before the shops close we need to get a mosses basket, there is a money pouch on the side of my bed that should be more than enough to cover it," Severus stated, glancing over at Harry when he heard him let out a soft sound. Shifting himself slightly, he watched Harry wakening up slowly, he wasn't in pain thankfully, otherwise his face would have been screwed up, but he would need a potion soon, three hours to be precise maybe even earlier.

"Wait, Dobby, Severus did you get baby shower cards?" Eileen said, remembering to ask him, like she had been meaning to for the past few days.

"No, why bother with a baby shower?" Severus said, rolling his eyes.

"To let everyone see the baby, celebrate him, this is the only way, unless you plan on godparents," Eileen explained, she had not been able to do either; she'd had no friends in the Muggle world, so there was just nobody to invite. She couldn't regret it, not ever, she got her son out of it, and if she had to - she would do it all over again.

"We will see what Harry thinks," Severus said with finality, this wasn't his decision alone to make, plus he was pretty sure they were going to have godparents, it had been brought up once very
briefly three or four months ago. "But it wont hurt to get some," he conceded.

"See what Harry thinks of what?" Harry murmured opening his eyes, not looking any less tired but he was filled with anticipation, worry and no small amount of fear.

"Do you want to meet your sons?" Severus said, smirking deviously, he had had enough time to process and digest it.

"S-sons?" Harry stuttered, staring at Severus agog.

"Twins," Severus replied, but his smirk disappeared at the look on his fiancé's face. Moving towards him, he placed the baby in his arms, the one he had been holding trying to figure out what was wrong with him now. "Do you need the healer back?" he asked pressing a hand against Harry's forehead checking his temperature. He winced in surprised by the sudden grip Harry had on him, wasn't that supposed to happen during the labour?

"Promise me," Harry said his fear still present. "Promise me no matter what - even if ones smarter than the other we won't prefer one to the other...promise you won't let me do that..."

Severus' heart sank as he finally realized what was wrong, this should be a time of joy for Harry, yet all he was concerned about was what had happened to him...happening to their child. "Harry that wont happen, they will both be cherished and loved, we are not James and Lily, and you are nothing like them." Severus said heatedly. "Now get those thoughts from your head, look at what you did, two little boys," Severus added, wanting to get his mind off those depressing thoughts.

Harry looked down at the tiny baby, "What we did," he said softly, looking awed.

"Here we go," Eileen said, passing over the other twin, a sad smile on her face before very reluctantly making herself scarce, it was obvious Harry and Severus needed to talk. The poor boy, how he could think he'd be anything like his despicable parents - if they even deserved the title! Which they didn't. She would give them half an hour, that was long enough, she wanted to hold the babies again she thought with excitement, she was a grandmother! Of course, her excitement was tampered with the fact she couldn't tell anyone yet but it didn't deter her. She had to get her camera looked out right now, she wasn't going to miss a moment longer without capturing them in a photo that would last forever.

Chapter End Notes

There we go! so will we end the story at the baby shower or have it end in the next chapter with a epilogue of eleven years in the future? or perhaps both? everyone getting to see the kids and see them off on the Hogwarts express? or do you really want to see it continued with the sanctuary his friends marriages and all that? will they have had more than the twins? what about names? something unique and different from my normal stories hmm that's going to be fun! any you recommend please let me know :D R&R please!
"Morning Siri," Remus said softly as he entered the kitchen and took a seat, yawning tiredly it had just been the full moon and he was quite frankly exhausted. He always was after a night of running around although he was so much better now than he had ever been due to the tweaks made in the Wolfsbane potion. Sirius was always with him, but he always seemed so…awake the morning after the full moon night, even when they were at Hogwarts. Since nobody used Grimmauld Place anymore, he had free run of the place when in wolf form. They stayed the morning after before heading to the new flat they had purchased once they knew for sure that the dangers had passed.

"Morning, how are you feeling?" Sirius enquired as always concerned about his lover after the full moon.

"Great," Remus said musing thoughtfully, "Or do you doubt Harry's potions skills?" he added teasingly.

Sirius sorted, "I never have, otherwise I wouldn't have tested his Animagus potion," it was awesome being able to turn into other animals but he mostly kept to his black grim out of habit. Every time he turned into something else though, on the occasions he did, he found it just amazing that he was able to do it so seamlessly. No, he never doubted Harry when it came to his potions he was a genius really.

"Have you heard from him lately?" Remus asked they hadn't seen him in a few months.

"Yes, his letters are extremely cheerful, its not like him at all, he keeps adding that he's glad to be able to brew again…although I'm not quite sure why!" Sirius seemed bemused by this. "Maybe Snape didn't let him go back down to the lab after his accident…but I am pretty sure he brewed after the incident."

"Perhaps he's been too busy? He did have to kill someone to survive, and as strong as Harry is…it can't have been easy." Remus pointed out sombrelly.

"Yes, very true," Sirius replied grimly, as he poured Remus coffee the way he liked it, extra strong especially this morning and slid it over. "Still every time I Floo to speak to him he seems tired and elated."

"Hmm," Remus muttered noncommittally. "Has the paper arrived yet?" he gazed around for it curiously, but couldn't see it.

"No, you're up ten minutes too early," Sirius replied promptly without even needing to glance at the time. "Although you usually sleep for a few more hours, you must really be feeling good today."

"I do," Remus said, "Each month that passes…I can't believe they were right," he felt like an idiot
but he also knew he wouldn't have changed anything.

"What do you mean?" Sirius frowned not following Remus' chain of thoughts.

"The potion I took before…it was poisoning me, that's why each month was so hard, without taking it the transformations are much easier, each month gets more and more...there's just no words to describe it." he finished wryly, shaking his head. "Harry and Don tried to tell me, but I refused to listen, its partly why the werewolf community here cannot stand me." to think he spent so many years convincing others abroad to take the potion…which was slowly killing them it horrified him really. They'd known what he'd ignored.

"They don't all hate you," Sirius defended him vehemently.

Remus just smiled bitterly, Sirius didn't know what he had gone through to try and get the werewolves on their side. Keyword being try since he had failed so spectacularly, in fact nobody knew just how badly each meeting had gone - he was too embarrassed to inform them - not even Dumbledore. He had just given an embellished version and left it at that, dreading being asked again which he was over and over again. Thankfully the werewolves didn't interact with wizards so he was never found out. "How is Nick?" Remus changed the subject altogether, he did NOT want to think about this so the best possible solution was to bring up Sirius' godchildren - always distracted him.

"He's doing really well, enjoying his new apprenticeship, he's being treated fairly and Nick seems to relish in that. I think he's going to propose to Susan, he's certainly been bringing it up more often lately. I've offered him one from the Black jewellery vault, I had to convince him he was entitled to it seeing as his grandmother had been a Black. I also added that Susan deserved more than just a cheap ring that got to him so he's going to arrange a visit soon." Sirius said, "Although he wants to show off his apartment, or rather the apartment Harry gave him permanently."

"I don't think I'll ever understand him," Remus admitted shaking his head in amusement. "I mean one minute he can sound so harsh and cold the next he just turns around and does something unfathomable, did Nick ever go into details?" he had meant to ask the last time but he was honestly lost for words.

"Nick didn't say much either, now that I think about it," Sirius admitted, "Just that they met up and well obvious the flat is a result of that."

"Ah," Remus uttered, "If he gave him a flat then its safe to say they've obviously resolved their differences at least..."

"Maybe," Sirius said not fully agreeing or disagreeing for that matter. "Do you think you'll have enough confidence to stop using his place now?"

"I don't know, I've gotten so used to it - and it's safe and protected too," Remus frowned, "I guess you want to sell it?"

"Well it's going to take a while to get everything magical out of it, I'd estimate at least thirty galleons in total just for down stairs...upstairs isn't so bad so I'd say maybe only a further ten to twenty galleons for the rest of it. Once that's done I can just hire decorators to get the place in some semblance of decency so it can be sold." Sirius told him. There was so much Dark artefacts left in the house still, and they would need removed before it could be sold.

"Why not ask Molly to decorate it after? I'm sure she'd love the chance to earn money," Remus said, "And maybe Bill, I'm sure as a favour he would work for half any company or the Ministry
would take. With a kid on the way I'm sure he wants to save up everything he can."

"I don't know, it's a lot to ask anyone - especially at a discounted price," Sirius said, "Only a few rooms are actually free of the taint."

"Then give him full price," Remus shrugged, it wasn't as if he couldn't afford it, he had the entire Black estate in his back pocket. Still he was better off helping friends than the Ministry or a company. "He might not agree so there's no point to thinking about it further. If you want to sell it, Siri, then do it, I don't mind, our apartment is more than enough. If anything happens you also have the small apartment from your Uncle, I can use it until I find somewhere." Remus said always the voice of reason.

Sirius rolled his eyes, they did have their falling outs, which did result in them storming off to cool down, but it never lasted long, a few days at most. They'd never had a major argument that caused them to split up for any amount of time. Still it was probably such a Remus thing to think about, always the logical one in the group. "Can't hurt to ask I suppose," Sirius shrugged, just as loud insistent pecking was heard at the kitchen window. Followed very closely by two other owls, both also pecking to get in.

"That's the paper now," Sirius said, standing up absently as Remus poured himself another coffee. "And letters, strange…that looks like an official invite, its addressed to both of us, do you know anyone that's celebrating something?" he enquired as he accepted the bundles, leaving the window open and spreading some seed on the window sill and adding some water to the empty metal container.

"Maybe Nick's making it official?" Remus said curious himself now.

Sirius eagerly opened it up to find out, only to stiffen completely, blink rapidly as he tried to understand what he was seeing. He stood there jaw unhinged as Remus wondered whether to laugh or be cautious - Sirius wouldn't get like that for no reason after all. "Er…Sirius?" Remus said, standing up himself, trying to take the missive from Sirius but his grip was strong for someone that was practically comatose. "SIRIUS!" he barked yanking at the envelope and card - successfully getting it from Sirius' stunned grip.

Remus turned it over and read the missive, his eyes going wide, the only reason he had even a small amount of his wits around him was due to the potions he had taken earlier, the pain reliever had relaxing properties the same ones that went into making a calming draught. He blindly felt for his seat before slumping down feeling very taken aback.

"Harry had…" Sirius muttered shocked.

"Yeah, I can see that," Remus said quietly staring at the shower invite pensively.

"But Snape wouldn't stay with him if he…”

"I doubt Harry would cheat," Remus pointed out irritated, he was gay for Merlin sakes, there was no way he would have copulated with a woman.

"But Snape…” he repeated sounding like a broken record.

"Obviously loves him enough to allow it," Remus sighed shaking his head.

"But this is Snape he hates…” Sirius tried to argue weakly, Snape hates children! He couldn't even stand eleven year olds…Harry knew that so why would he even considering having a kid and having Snape help raise it? Or them as it was, since he'd had twins.
"Obviously not completely," Remus said soothingly, "It's a smart thing to do really, keeps the lines going, although you'd think Severus would do it, he is the last of the Princes."

"I wonder who the surrogate was." Sirius said, snatching the invite back, "Why did he keep quiet about it?" why didn't he tell him? Was certainly heard despite the fact it had been worded differently.

"Sirius...he's just getting closer to you now, don't do anything stupid like demanding why he didn't inform you about this development!" Remus warned him cautiously. His and Harry's relationship was amicable at best, but nothing like it should have been and he did only have himself to blame but that was life. He just accepted what he could get from the teenager, and hoped their relationship would get better with time.

"Don't worry, I wont," Sirius said sadly, a small pained smile on his face, at least he was invited to the baby shower, he could have found out in the newspaper or something when they got wind of it. They would sooner or later; hopefully they wouldn't tear into Harry over it. Considering they loved him he knew they wouldn't do anything too bad - plus Harry would sue them to hell and back for slander if they pulled anything he wasn't like the Potters who tolerated it and did nothing when less than stellar information was brought to light.

"Good," Remus said relaxing. "They're gorgeous aren't they?" he admitted, gazing at the babies in the photo.

"Yes," Sirius admitted, moving closer so they could see them, "Do you think James knows?"

Remus snorted at the question, it was the most idiotic one he'd heard from Sirius in a long time.

"Yes, stupid question I know," Sirius said bemused, of course James didn't know, why would Harry tell him? "Do you think we should tell him?"

"I don't know," Remus said after a few seconds of pause, "I suppose its best coming from us rather than the paper," what a way to find out you were a grandfather, but James had ignored Harry the majority of his childhood, part of him acknowledged Harry's reasoning on why they wouldn't be close. It didn't mean he didn't feel for his best friend, but at least he would still have two kids who'd have kids and let him be part of their lives and grandkids lives. He thought to himself; let's not forget Nick who was going to be an uncle and Roxy who was going to be an aunt...and Lily was going to be a grandmother. Roxy would understand the least, she was fourteen years old, nearly fifteen, and she was going to be an auntie and she'd never get to see them. Roxy was just as much a victim as Harry and Nick, but pointing this out to Harry would do no good. Some hurts just went too deep that it didn't matter who really was at the root of the problem.

"You're right, we should tell him," Sirius said nodding in agreement, "But first we should reply that we will be there," he slid the reply slip out and ticked the box before putting it on the table, the picture he placed in his pocket, it would go on the board in their new flat next to the other accomplishments that he was proud of his godsons. Of course, Harry's certainly outweighed Nick's by a long shot, since he had done so much in the past few years. He couldn't wait to meet them, he had to get the whole story, and hopefully Harry would tell him. "He didn't give much time did he?"

"No I suppose not, but it's not like we have a busy schedule," Remus conceded.

"No, and I'm not working tomorrow night," Sirius mused, not that it mattered if he had been, he would have just requested time off. "Come on, lets go tell him then head back to the flat." he wanted to talk to Harry and soon.
Remus just gave him a look that told him that he knew what he was thinking - he had known him since he was eleven so of course he did. With that he stood up, taking the newspaper and all as they used the fireplace to Floo over to Potter Manor to inform James of this latest surprising development.

Potter Manor

Sirius and Remus stepped out of the green flames that surrounded them and out of the living area of Potter Manor. They automatically looked over at the dining table that was at the other side of the room, and found James sitting eating breakfast as he always was with the exception of the day he visited Lily. James never ate the morning he was due to visit Lily, he always felt sick seeing what had become of the woman he had married all those years ago. Sirius and Remus had to admit, they were still dumbstruck by what had happened to her, they could only think she had either hid it well, or the attack had damaged her more than they could ever fathom. "Hey, I wasn't expecting you today, is everything alright?" he said putting the newspaper down glad for the interruption, he was still trying to get used to being on his own after his son had moved out. He'd never admit it but being in such a big place on his own was depressing, he wanted someone in his life, but he couldn't do that to his kids or Lily…it just wasn't fair whether they got divorced or not.

"Did you get any post today?" Sirius enquired, staring at the table as if it had the answer he sought.

James was immediately on guard, Sirius' voice had sounded rather guarded. He could see nothing good coming from it, not anymore at least, back in the day he knew it would have been against someone else. "Um, a few letters, why?" he asked his eyes narrowed slightly, "Have you had breakfast yet?" he knew they usually had it later than normal on full moon night.

"Not yet, we planned on going back to the flat first," Remus said shaking his head.

"Sit down, you can have some here, as always there is too much," James said wryly, having to bite down on the urge to demand answers from them both he wasn't sure he wanted to know in all honesty.

Sirius just shrugged and sat down before helping himself, it saved either of them from cooking, or rather Remus from cooking since he didn't cook - he burnt even toast, culinary skills were never going to be his. Remus followed his lead after a seconds hesitation, turning back to his other best friend he could see he was dying to know 'what was going on' but was obviously worried about the information he'd receive. He absently wondered with amusement how long he'd last before he asked. Should he put him out of his misery?

The next ten minutes passed in relative silence as they quickly polished of the breakfast on their plates, and James filled cups up with coffee, wondering if he would need something stronger. Only once Tish had removed the empty plates did James speak, "So what's going on? What should I know?"

"Did you get an invite?" Sirius asked, already knowing the answer was a resounding no.

"Sirius," James warned, "Just tell me what this about and stop beating around the bush, NOW!"

"Harry is a father, he's had twins, the invite me and Sirius are speaking about is the baby shower," Remus told James seeing that Sirius wasn't going to.

James stared blankly, wondering if this was a joke, Sirius he could suspect of doing it but Remus?
No, he wouldn't joke about something like this. "My son is gay, he's in a committed relationship by the look of things," he told them calmly, "Are you sure someone isn't yanking your chain?"

"I don't think so," Sirius said shaking his head; "It was definitely Harry's handwriting," with that Sirius removed the photo of the twins and passed it over with a solemn look on his face.

James picked it up, his breath hitching as he looked at the two beautiful babies, his face sliding over to the family portrait he had on the fireplace, the twins were just shy of four months when it had been taken. He stared at it intently, or rather the twins before glancing back at the picture once more, it was hard to say really, it wasn't as if you could tell who a child would take after when they were babies. He had liked to think Nick and Harry would take after him when they were born, but that was just expectation talking. They were just wrinkled prunes when they were born. The picture of Harry's twins they were sleeping, you couldn't see their eye colour, if it was changing yet, they looked to be a few months old so probably not. He was a grandfather he realised belatedly, and it hurt, hurt worse than anything else had ever happened in his life. He shouldn't be finding out about his own grandchildren from Sirius and Remus, but he had nobody but himself to blame he thought with bitter distaste.

"I don't understand…" James admitted, "I thought he was with Snape…" the newspapers commented on the 'couple' often enough. Unless they had gotten it all wrong and they weren't dating and Harry and Snape had just never bothered to correct them.

"Oh, he is." Sirius said firmly, he had absolutely no doubt after seeing them together. If it had been anyone other than Harry he freely admitted he would have called Snape all the lewd names under the sun especially before seeing them together, but somehow the pair worked it was rather awkward to see how they were always on the same wavelength, found the same things amusing and just seemed to click. He'd never thought of Snape in any romantic capacity, he'd never been with anyone at Hogwarts and he'd never seen him with anyone after Hogwarts but they weren't friends it wasn't as if he would be in the know.

"Surrogate?" James guessed.

"That's our bet," Remus said nodding in confirmation that this was their thought too.

James just shook his head, wondering if things could become even more strange - Snape with kids? He'd never thought he would see the day. Not just kids, raising his grandchildren with his son. Getting to see them, love them, spoil them…envy and jealousy surged through them adding to the bitterness at actually feeling jealous of Snape of all people.

"You can copy it if you like," Sirius said softly, without saying he actually wanted it back, patting him on the back briefly in comfort. "We can't stay for long, we have head back."

"If you want to go now, and then go, I'll meet up later?" Remus said he could sense James really needed someone to talk to.

"Alright, I'll see you both later," Sirius said, standing up, and twisting on the spot he Apparated out instead of going through the Floo network.

"He's going to see Harry and the children isn't he?" James sighed gazing at the place where Sirius had just been enviously.

"Yes," Remus saw no reason to lie.

"D…do…you er know their names?" James asked hopeful.
"Not yet, the baby shower is tomorrow if Sirius doesn't get it out of him," Remus chuckled in amusement; Sirius was nothing if not determined when it came to certain things.

"I can't believe I'm a grandfather," James whispered in a heartbroken way.

"Oh, James," Remus sighed sadly, not sure what he could say to help him.

Prince Manor

"Master Severus, Master Harry, Mister Black is at the wards wishing to speak to both of you."
Rose said popping in front of the pair of them.

"Told you," Severus said wryly, smirking at Harry despite the twinge of annoyance bringing Black up caused.

Harry laughed lightly not wanting to wake the babies up and rolled his eyes, "Let him in," he might as well get it over with. Its why he had waited until the last minute to send out those bloody cards, everyone else's had been sent out ages ago, especially the ones going all the way to America to the Potion Masters Severus was good friends with. He was surprised that Remus hadn't come with him in all honesty.

"Dobby?" Harry called, as always speaking lowly having gotten used to it after dozens of times where he accidentally woke his children up from their naps. "We're finished with breakfast you can take it away now." they usually sat on the sofa these days to eat, just too exhausted to want to sit on a hard chair.

"Dobby will do that," Dobby replied quietly, clicking his fingers and everything disappeared before the House-elf did after giving the babies a look of utter adoration. All the House-elves were disappointed that they didn't get to look after the twins, but at the same time they were slightly awed. It wasn't often that wizards or witches did the rearing at night; instead preferring to let the House-elves did it. Dobby had practically raised Draco Malfoy for the first year of his life. So it was such a shock to see a whole different side, even Rose and the others had helped raise Eileen (feeding every night etc…it was definitely an unexpected turn for them.

"Thank you, Dobby," Harry replied, knowing he would hear him despite not being near.

"Mister Black, Masters," Rose said, introducing Sirius before she too was gone.

"Hi," Harry said, giving Sirius an almost sheepish smile.

"Hey, can I see them?" Sirius asked excitedly.

Harry grinned his chest puffing out proudly, they were his pride and joy and he didn't get to show them off - but it was for their safety. "Of course, come sit down, they're sleeping right now so be quiet."

Sirius walked over evenly, making sure he didn't accidentally kick anything on his way and sat down, his gaze going to the baby closest to him in his mosses basket. They were adorable, even more in person than they were in a picture; the photo didn't do it any justice at all. His finger absently brushed out over his cheek. "He's adorable, what age are they? What are their names?"
Sirius asked quietly but with the appropriate enthusiasm.

"The one you're next to is Hector Severin Prince-Peverell, our second born son is Hunter Kane
Prince-Peverell," Harry said his face felt as though it was being split in two he was grinning so widely.

"You adopted them already?" Sirius said giving a quick look to Snape before staring back down at the child unbeknownst to him all his thoughts and feelings had shown on his face in that moment.

Harry and Severus shared an amused look, having to stop themselves from bursting out laughing. "I did not adopt them." Severus answered easily.

"But…they can't have your name…like legally without adopting them," Sirius pointed out baffled, sitting at them as if they were the strange ones.

"Again, I did not adopt them," Severus replied evenly, his lip twitching just so slightly that only Harry saw it.

"Severus," Harry chided his lips pursed as he tried to keep his own amusement in. "He looks ready to burst,"

Severus couldn't contain his snort of amusement, "They're mine, Black." deliberately misleading him again, much to Harry's amusement, he had his face hidden and his shoulders were shaking as he tried to contain himself.

"Yours?" Sirius croaked his eyes bugging out of their sockets sliding to Harry confused out of his wit's a little hurt that they were toying with him.

"Severus invented a male pregnancy potion," Harry finally caved in and told him, pride and love shining through his eyes. "Myself and Daniel are the testers of that particular potion. I went first obviously, Daniel is close to giving birth any day now, Sev has sent the notice to the conference, which thankfully is in Scotland this year, and so we can go without leaving the country or the twins for long."

Sirius just stared stunned beyond belief.

"I think we broke him," Harry commented, waving his hand in front of Sirius' face.

"Best look I've ever seen on him," Severus replied wryly, smirking when Sirius glared indignantly, the insult bringing him out of his shock albeit temporarily. "Y-y-you gave birth to them?" he stuttered out.

"I did, yes," Harry told him. "We don't want it getting out so I've kept them out of the spotlight,"

"That won't work forever…” Sirius said quietly and thoughtfully.

"No, but once the potion is published it wont be such a big thing," Harry said shrugging his shoulders. As long as they didn't learn the truth he didn't care, he was just so glad Severus had successfully created the potion; the timing couldn't have been more welcomed. The conference in Scotland was two days after the baby shower, so the guys were going to extend their stay then leave afterwards. Even Penelope was coming with her little one; it was going to be so great getting to see them again and in a less professional working manner. The only people who would ever know the truth were the ones that did, and they'd all sworn vows never to reveal the information.

"Hector Severin and Hunter Kane," Sirius said gazing at them again, the urge to pick them up was strong, and he could scarcely believe what he'd been told. He wondered what Remus' reaction was going to be like!
They certainly had good strong names.

Chapter End Notes

There we go the shower was supposed to be in this chapter I guess even now it goes on forever without me even meaning to - what do you think of their names? I hope they were unique enough... will Roxy, James and Nick be at the baby shower? will Harry have at least a on the front friendly relationship with them birthdays xmas' etc... letting the children see them on those days? Harry does acknowledge without him Sev wouldn't be there...will Harry confess to James why he let him come or will James and the others only ever see Hunter and Hector from afar? I honestly could go either way since neither one holds to them having a proper relationship since that's well out of the way but a little forgiveness cant be too hard :) I've been advised that the whole seeing the kids off on the Hogwarts express is done too often (and I happen to agree) so I think I know where I will leave it off instead :) but don't worry it will still be interesting! R&R please!
"What should they wear? White, blue or green?" Harry mused thoughtfully as he gazed at the outfits he had spread out on the sofa, gazing at them critically, this was the first time some of them were getting to see the twins and he wanted to make a good impression, plus a picture would probably end up on the front page of the Daily Prophet as added 'proof' of Severus' miraculous invention. The Ministry already knew and word had got out, which had dozens of letters coming this morning, quite three had been tampered with, as in magically. Not everyone was pleased with the invention, but Severus had deactivated the spells on powders on the letters, getting their names and sending them to the Ministry so they could be dealt with. They were Muggle-born's, not raised in the magical world from birth and had the Muggle outlook ingrained in their minds. They would find they had to change their disgusting attitudes or end up in Azkaban for trying to cause harm to an heir of the most ancient and noble house of Prince. Ditching the Snape name had probably been the smartest thing Sev had ever done, it gave him added power and protection.

"All are gorgeous, they will look beautiful no matter what they wear, Harry," Eileen said as she held Hector close to her chest, rocking slightly with a large proud beaming smile on her face. She hadn't stopped smiling in what felt like years, not since the babies had been born she was just over the moon really. Many of the outfits they'd bought for the baby when they thought only one was coming, had been bought again so the twins could be dressed in the same outfit. Something a mother or father with twins seemed to love doing, with the obvious exception of Harry and Nick.

"I think the blue dungarees are best!" Harry decided taking the two of them and placing them on the seat.

"Then you should use the white tops, it's to be a chilly night, perhaps their blue jumpers?" Severus gave his own opinion as he entered the living room; he was dressed for the occasion. Nothing fancy but to Harry his fiancé had never looked more gorgeous, as he gave him a look of adoration and carnal appreciation. They'd reaffirmed their feelings physically since he'd given birth quite a few times, but not as often as usual due to the fact they were just bone tired most of the time. Pepper-Up potion only went so far in helping them function. More often than not Harry would feel them two to three times in a row due to him getting up quicker, and wanting Severus to sleep so he could hopefully complete the potion that would help cover up how their babies had been truly conceived.

"Will the hall not be warm?" Harry asked naturally alarmed.

"Yes, but as you know they cannot conserve their own heat, its better safe than sorry," Severus told him, before kissing him passionately on the lips making sure not to squash Hunter that was still in his arms. He had to literally rip his lips from Harry's otherwise it would have gotten a bit too heated, considering they were going out to celebrate with the babies it wasn't the best idea to get excited. He could only imagine how the others would react! The ribbing would be unbearable; he could tolerate a lot but not that. He freely acknowledged that he was a bit too proud for anything
"Warm clothes it is," Harry nodded in agreement, the warm flush on his face making him glow beautifully.

"Go get changed, I'll dress them," Severus said, quickly gesturing towards the living room door in a way of saying 'hurry up' which was accurate they only had five minutes to Apparate to the small hall they had set up for the occasion in Hogsmeade. They'd gone by earlier and set up the balloons and the House-elves had already popped away with the food mostly just party foods they could eat while celebrating.

"Alright," Harry said in agreement before leaving the room after giving the twins one last look over.

"Pass the clothes over, son," Eileen said quietly, hand out from where she sat with Hector safely in her other arm. Severus absently floated them over as he picked Hunter up and began to dress him, his eyes had gotten darker he noticed as the baby looked at him. Merlin how was it that he could feel so proud of them? He felt like his heart was fit to burst just looking at them. Out of all his accomplishments in life, the twins were definitely at the top, along with Harry of course as he wouldn't have one without the others. Who would have thought an accident that had caused him so much grief over his worry for his fiancé would result in this?

"You two need to set a date," Eileen said determinedly, in a way that only a mother could possibly get away with.

"Perhaps when the twins can walk?" Severus suggested which would be around five to seven months if the books he read were accurate. It would mean they could participate in the wedding, added to the fact they would have to wait that length of time to get a date that suited them. "I'll speak to Harry about it." they hadn't really discussed it with everything, the war, then the aftermath and of course the pregnancy a lot to deal with over a short period of time.

"That would be so adorable!" Eileen exclaimed, "You walked rather early though, eight months old if I remember correctly," and she did, she loved her son so completely. She had stuck with him through thick and thin, even when he went through his phase of hating Muggles and joining the Dark Lord and of course when he became a spy. "There we go, all dressed up, they're going to love you, so they are, and yes they are!" she added in a baby voice cooing over the child.

Severus just made a noncommittal noise, he already knew this, usually after his mother had a few too many drinks (which was one or two since she was not a big drinker) and she used to go on and on about the past, usually things to do with him, when he was a baby and of course what magic he had cast. It made him suppress a smirk, she hadn't done it in years, the worry she felt for him had driven her to drinking while he was spying he would summarise. Pressing the boy against his chest, having finished dressing him, he sat down comfortably, waiting for Harry to return which he would - neither of them took long to dress, yes, even for a special occasion. Part of him hated the thought of celebrating but the other part was excited to see the others and show off his children, and he wasn't one to show off anything - ever.

"Right, lets get going," Harry said, coming in and collecting his son from Eileen and kissing his forehead, Merlin four months, it was hard to believe really. It wasn't pain that was easily forgotten, especially since it took a week or so to actually heal so he could bend over without it being agonisingly painful. He certainly wouldn't ever regret them; he would do it all over again if he had to. Glancing at the chair he picked up the He nappy bag over his other shoulder, it had everything the twins could possibly need for the next few hours. Eileen didn't feel comfortable in Apparating with the children, too worried she'd accidentally splinch them. She had never done so with Severus
being in the Muggle world, and despite her magical core being renewed so to speak, she wasn't exactly powerful and never would be. So she would leave the Apparating to them.

"Dobby?" Harry called cradling his son close, waiting for the House-elf to appear. "Can you take the buggy to hall for me please and set up the last of the preparations with Rose?"

"Yes Sir!" Dobby exclaimed excitedly, anything to do to help the children the slightest was met with immediate and enthusiastic replies from all the House-elves. He quickly got the double buggy which was a lovely shade of sky blue with twinkling stars on it, and popped towards the hall and quickly set it up so the children could be placed within it safely and quickly as possible. Nobody was there yet, the Portkey's were due to start coming though, with those from America that were attending, but there might be a slight delay in it.

"Ready to go?" Harry said glancing at both his fiancé and the woman he thought of as a mother. He wrapped his magic safely around both of them, making sure to put as much as possible around his son.

"Let's go," Eileen said happily, clasping her cloak around her neck mostly for extra warmth if she needed it. She had in her purse all the essentials including a camera, which she hadn't put down or stopped developing since Hector and Hunter had been born. This was one of the special occasions she was determined that would be remembered. What better way than to capture it on camera? Added to the fact she hadn't been able to do this for her own son, she was looking forward to taking part in it.

With three distinctive cracks, Severus, Eileen and Harry all Apparated, the twins safe in their fathers arms sleeping.

"Oh, it looks wonderful," Eileen said, gazing around, blue and white balloons everywhere, tables covered with white cloth with plates and cutlery and dishes lined a table at the far wall with nibbles on the middle of all the tables. The place was gleaming as if they'd gone an extra mile for them. The aroma of the dishes called to her, it was nearly dinner time, but thankfully the twins had been fed and would be fine for another three to four hours by then they'd be safely back home again.

"The House-elves and staff did a good job didn't they?" Harry said in agreement as he laid his son in one section of the buggy; it had silencing charms imbued so they weren't startled by all the noise. He gave him his plush cuddly toy with a rattle ring attached at the bottom; it was one of his favourites.

"Indeed," Severus commented as he joined Harry in getting the children comfortable.

They'd barely stood up when the first of the party began to arrive, the Portkey invitation clutched in their hands.

"Narcissa," Severus said in welcome, enduring the hug she gave him, which was very short she was very much aware of his personality and that he didn't like many people touching him. He was grateful when she let go and hugged Harry as well, they got on much better without Lucius Malfoy's trial in the way.

"Congratulations to both of you!" she said with a small smile, digging into her purse she removed two small squares and returned them to their normal size and passed one to each father. "May I hold them?" her tone filled with longing.

"Of course," Severus said in immediate agreement. Watching her pick up his son, he said to her,
"This is Hunter,"

"You are so lucky, Severus, they're precious," Narcissa said wistfully, handling him delicately as if he was the most fragile thing on earth. The camera flashed in the background, on its own, Eileen must have set it to do that he thought idly.

"You do understand the potion will work for you as well, don't you?" Severus commented quietly, "It essentially creates a magical womb, a sack in which the child develops; your own infertility does not come into consideration. Although there is one thing, you will still need to have the child removed via C-section rather than naturally, it's the only way to get the child from the magical womb it creates."

"I do not have a husband anymore, Severus," Narcissa sighed sadly, she'd divorced Lucius, hence why her decision to take on her own last name again had been so easy.

"True, but Dolohov didn't have an heir, he is concerned about that," Severus pointed out, knowing he was 'pureblood' enough that Narcissa wouldn't blanch at the thought. "Especially with his brother dead during the war, he's old and now the heir, responsible for continuing his line, and if he doesn't then the Dolohov estate falls to the Ministry." Antonin Dolohov had been the first born, the heir, he had joined the Death Eaters, but the brother Aston Dolohov had not, nobody had cared all that much thinking he was less then mediocre when it came to magic and the younger son had never dissuaded anyone of that notion. Truth was he had kept his magical abilities hidden, not wishing to join his father and brother under Voldemort's thumb.

A wise decision, from what he knew he had spent most of his life abroad and had returned five months ago, after the defeat of Voldemort.

"I barely know him!" Narcissa exclaimed but Severus could see there was no bite to her words.

"Yes, he is six years younger than you," Severus acknowledged, "Just think about it, you know where to find me if you want to talk more, now if you'll excuse me I have to fulfil my duties as host."

"Of course, Severus, I completely understand," She said in agreement, squeezing his arm in silent thanks for his kindness before she took a seat.

"Jacob! Penelope welcome to Scotland," Severus said, shaking Jacobs hand and was surprised and startled when Penelope hugged him.

"It's so good to see you again, the last time we didn't get to say a proper goodbye!" she said scowling softly, remembering the attack at the Ministry while they received their awards. "I'm just glad everything went smoothly - or as smoothly as it can get when people died." she acknowledged sadly.

"No we didn't, did we?" Severus said regretfully, "But it was for the best, who's this?" he asked, at the one year old clutched closely to her mother.

"We didn't tell you her name?" Penelope gasped in shock as she hugged Harry as well, "You've changed so much since we last saw one another, Harry, how are you?"

Jacob just shook his head; he didn't know how Penny did it - able to have two conversations simultaneously.

"I'm good, how are you? I hope the journey wasn't too strenuous!" Harry said smiling at them, "Come sit down, others will be coming right behind you." that and he didn't want to be too far
away from the twins.

"Her name is Alisha," Jacob said absently, as Penny nodded quickly in confirmation, a small blush on her face at the fact she'd forgotten.

"Beautiful name for a beautiful girl, hello little one, would you like something to eat? We have plenty here and chocolate cake too!" Harry said in mock whisper causing the red headed girl to grin shyly at him and nod.

"Would you like to help him?" Penelope asked her daughter.

Alisha's blue eyes flashed to Harry's kind face before she nodded and grasped a hold of his hand when she was let down and toddled over to the food table with him. Harry holding onto both her hands to keep her steady mesmerised, he hadn't been near many children with the obvious exception of his own and they weren't walking yet obviously. She was very delicate but gorgeous, to think in eight months his children were going to be he same - it was mind-blowing really.

"Here we go," Jacob said handing over the large blue gift with a decorative white ribbon tied onto it. He'd never thought he would see the day where Severus actually wanted children; he had changed a lot over the years. Starting with Harry, while he wasn't a Potter now, he had been when Severus had taken him on as an apprentice. Actually he realized, he was wrong, by then he'd already taken on the name Peverell. Still, he had been shocked when he saw them in the Potioneer magazine just before the conference. He was happy for him though, no doubt about it, he deserved it. Although he was so envious of the potion ideas they'd had, they were taking potions to a whole new level and he was extremely glad to be part of it.

"You shouldn't have, the cot was absolutely breathtaking," Severus admitted, "Of course I had just bought one when yours came, we planned on using yours of course, and the other to go into storage to give as a gift instead of returning. We had no idea we would need to use both of them, but everything worked out." Severus chuckled wryly as he flicked the gift over beside Narcissa's.

"Well I was being rather selfish with the gift actually," Penelope confessed, "I am hoping to expand my business overseas, in various different magical shops, while Jacob is at the conference I will be visiting ones here in Hogsmeade and Diagon Alley."

"They are beautifully crafted; if they say no then they are absolutely out of their mind." Severus told her firmly, "Go to Baby Gladrags wizarding wear, they've just recently started expanding their business, to include other items expectant parents might need, including cots. Now as you know Gladrags is an upscale place, they'll definitely want it, purebloods would fall over themselves to get them."

"I hadn't even considered them; you honestly believe my cots would work well in there?" Penelope said wide eyed in surprise hoisting her daughter into a chair between her and her husband, as the chocolate cake was placed. Smiling in thanks at Harry before he took a seat next to them again.

"May I see a picture example?" Narcissa asked, from a few seats down at the table. "Sorry I couldn't help but overhear," she added smiling softly.

"Well of course," Penelope, "I'm so sorry for making this about work, I really shouldn't have!" she added to Harry and Severus.

"Don't be, we are as well, to promote Severus' new potion," Harry said chuckling wryly, as he leaned against his fiancé. "It doesn't mean we don't love them."
"You know it's really rare that a twin would give birth to twins," Jacob commented.

"Very," Severus nodded, "Andy commented on it, it has happened only two or three times in our entire history, probably a lot more in the Muggle world due to the higher number of people."

"Andy? Your healer I assume?" Jacob asked.

"Yes," Severus answered their conversation cut short by Narcissa speaking.

"These are amazing, you craft these by hand?" Narcissa asked gasping in shocked awe.

"I do," Penelope flushing red at the scrutiny she was under.

"May I accompany you when you go to see them?" she then asked determinedly.

"Sure," Penelope, "I would like to have someone there."

"Good, I'll give you my details so we can talk about it further?" Narcissa said flourishing in social situations as always, something she picked up quickly as the daughter of a pureblood.

"Most definitely," Penelope said, hearing the cry of a child, "Oh, I must see them, excuse me!" she quickly took the crying child and began to bounce him lightly, the crying quickly tapered off as he looked around curiously. "He certainly has your nose if nothing else, Harry!" she told him teasingly, as she patted the child's cute button nose.

"Thank Merlin for that!" Severus said making it clear he was glad for it.

Eileen cleared her throat and tried to look stern but she wasn't fully capable of it. She was the one who had given her son his nose after all! It was a Prince trait, as was the dark hair and tallness and let's not forget the pale skin. Severus was a male version of her; there was nothing of Tobias in him at all. The nose at least was one thing they could strike out in the twins, but the eyes, high and hair colour were still unknown, but either way they would have dark hair.

Suddenly others began to Portkey into the building right next to each other, as the hall began to fill up. All of them picking up the twins at one point or another, commenting on how gorgeous they were, and how lucky they were. Of course it shouldn't have surprised anyone that the Potions Masters immediately began to ask questions about the delicate brew and the ins and outs of the nature of it. All of them quite frankly still looking stunned, even more so after seeing the twins for themselves.

Sirius watched them as he held one of the twins in his arms, his seat next to Narcissa who as even chatting happily enough with one of the American's he didn't know. He did know she was the only female there, if you didn't count who he would guess was the daughter. The potions talk just went over his head, honestly, he understood a few potion ingredients but other than that he just watched his godson. He was glowing, as he debated heatedly but friendlily with the other Potion Masters, his green eyes sparkling brightly, the other twin pressed protectively against his chest.

Narcissa felt herself relaxing further and further, she had been dreading this, she wasn't exactly someone anyone wanted to associate with very often anymore. Especially the pureblood's of Britain, but talking to Penny was liberating, she was actually enjoying herself. She absolutely adored her little girl, and it made her yearning stronger for her own. After they took a pause in conversation, Penny talking to a man she assumed was her husband she looked around, her grey cloudy eyes meeting the grey cloudy eyes of Sirius Black. "You seem a little lost, Sirius, everything alright?" Narcissa asked gazing at her cousin curiously, they had been close as children, but when Sirius distanced himself from the family, well she had been forbidden from speaking to him. "Isn't
your partner coming?" she knew about Remus, everyone did, in fact Voldemort had thrown it in both hers and Bellatrix's face. That and Andromeda as well, but that was nothing new they were used to that.

"Remus? Yes, just as soon as he can," Sirius said smiling slightly sheepishly at her.

"And are you both going to use the potion?" Narcissa asked a slight demand to her tone that she couldn't withhold.

"I would like one, but no," Sirius admitted, staring down at the boy, he couldn't deny the thought of having his own children was very alluring.

"I don't understand…you are still young, are you unable to father a child?" Narcissa whispered softly, her eyes wide in sympathy and disbelief tinged with a little bit of horror. Sirius was the last heir of the Black's, the last direct descendant, her son couldn't take on the name, not unless he wanted to abandon the Malfoy name but he wouldn't do that.

"It's not that, Remus would never go for it…he would be too scared that the lycanthrope gene would be passed on," Sirius admitted tiredly. He would never have a stranger's child; he wasn't that kind of man no matter what Remus said a day earlier when he'd told him the truth about the twins. He'd passed out on him, sensible headed Remus had fainted, and he'd revived him only after he managed to stop laughing.

"But there's only five percent chance of that - if that even," Narcissa stated confused.

"I know, but he's stubborn," Sirius said shrugging his shoulders helplessly.

"You are the heir, Sirius, the only one; you have to have a child to continue on the line!" Narcissa said desperately, "You have to talk to him about it, surely from a Pureblood line of his own he understands that?" she knew he wasn't a pureblood himself, but the name Lupin was well known. In fact any child of Lupin's would be considered a pureblood if they married someone with magical parents.

"No, not really, he's dead set against it, you wouldn't think so since it's only been what a few days!" Sirius admitted shaking his head.

"Well keep trying," Narcissa urged, "Maybe the idea will warm on him," just then a crack of Apparation was heard, causing them all to look around since only those using a Portkey had gotten in. Speak of the devil and he shall appear, Remus it seemed had finally arrived, Narcissa just smiled before backing off, not wishing to say anything that might anger someone - especially not here and not so soon after the full moon. She had learned a lot about werewolves since she began working with them.

"It's unbelievable!" Russell said, shaking his head awed. "Are you patenting it?" he asked leaning over to get a good look at him, determined to get an answer about that particular one. He prayed that the answer was no, for no other reason than the desire to brew the no doubt extremely elaborate and time-consuming potion, and from the potions Severus had gone on about he knew it would be.

"Actually Ray I still haven't decided," Severus admitted cautiously, "I thought about doing it for a few years then letting it go on the market. I plan on putting three percent of the potion sales into my fiancés latest venture;"

"His venture?" Russell enquired, inwardly grimacing at the use of his first name, he hated it,
preferred to be called Russell in all honesty, but he had given him permission to use his first name, just as Severus had done the same thing. It was a sign of proper respect, and he did respect Severus a great deal. Luckily Severus didn't do it too often; in fact he would say he had only ever done so three or four times. Their correspondence was always written as 'Master Russell' and Master Snape - well Prince now.

"Yes, didn't I mention it?" Severus said looking visibly startled.

"He created a sanctuary for werewolves, the first one of its kind here in the UK," Damon informed Russell, he had been told judging by the fact James and Soren were surprised he summarised he had forgotten to tell them. "It's the best way to get funds for it, three percent might not seem like much but that potion will fly off the shelves."

"It will, he's already been brewing in perpetuations for it," Harry said proudly, leaning against him.

"Give me him, and go get something to eat," Severus said his hands out in silent demand; he had noticed Harry wasn't eating as much as usual. Probably due to the shooting pains he got in his stomach when he ate a bit too much, but all reactions were being documented and he was continuously monitored to make sure he was okay.

"Still not able to eat much?" Andy asked, shaking her head in silent concern.

"Not as much as I would like," Severus admitted as he absently patted his boys back as Harry went to find something he felt he could eat. "Thankfully with potions his body is getting the nutrients he needs, I just don't like seeing him leaving a lot of food, it's decidedly not like him but I do understand why." he conceded.

"I'm concerned myself," Andy added.

"He's definitely improving," Severus answered immediately, "He can get self conscious if it's brought up." he gave everyone a pointed look before changing the subject. "But yes, I was thinking of making the potion patented, nothing is definitive, I can remember how swamped both me and Harry were with our other creations. With the twins the all nighters we pulled wont be possible, we might just end up overwhelmed with the demand, I suppose I can see how it goes, if we can keep up then fine, if not we can just publish our findings."

"Why not give it to a company? It's been done in the past? I'm sure you did as well?" Soren frowned as he tried to remember whether he was right or not.

"And let them get millions for it?" Severus scoffed at the idea, "Their potion brewers while I'd admit are good they're far from the best."

"Well of course," Eileen inputted, "They don't hire the best, they would be too expensive, especially for the amount of brewers they'd need and the value of the potion..."

"Still can't deny they've helped many budding Potion Masters," James said pointedly.

"No, no, we would never imply otherwise, but they do get the much better deal out of it full stop." Harry argued.

"They do," Jacob admitted, "I've estimated that they made roughly nearly a million galleons from my first invention, which is forty years ago."

"You're bloody joking!" Soren choked, gaping at him stunned.
"I never joke about money," Jacob replied honestly, a wry look on his face.

"Bloody hell," James uttered, a contemplative look on his face, wondering if his was anywhere near the same amount, he hadn't really thought about it.

"It's exactly why I don't want a potion that's going to be very well used to land in their hands, it's a goldmine," Severus confessed. "They'd lap it up with only a quarter of what it could make."

A small cry had them all looking up, "I think he wants his daddy," Cedric teased, as he made his way over.

"I feel like I've hardly spoken to you guys all night!" Harry said, taking Hunter and popping his dummy into his mouth quietening him immediately.

"All night? It's only been an hour Harry," Cedric told him sniggering softly. "And you spent fifteen minutes talking to us when we first came, it's fine we are used to how you get when Potions get brought up." he gave a smirk to the Potion Masters. Severus and Harry would go into a world of their own, speaking in half sentences, then arguing with each other until they compromised then created a solution. To see them at work had been truly hilarious and amazing.

"Don't I know it!" Penelope exclaimed smiling at them teasing while the others just laughed well used to the jibbing. "Oh I'm dying to see what you think of the gifts! Won't you open them?" it was customary for them to be opened during a baby shower so this one would be no different.

"I agree!" they chimed in, drawing themselves closer to the couple.

"Grandparents presents first!" Penelope, unaware of the sore spot.

"Grandparent," Harry corrected her with a smile, not at all bothered by the lack of parents in his life, he had Severus, he had his friends surrounding him at this very moment, and he had children of his own that he swore he would never allow one to be favored over the other. It had taken Severus a week to help him calm down and stop freaking out over the twins when he felt he was giving them enough equal attention. Cedric, Viktor, Lucas, Neville, Cho, Fleur and Luna had also helped immensely.

"Here you are," Eileen said with a little bit too much put upon excitement to ease out of the awkward moment - she didn't want the Potters' to diminish his grandsons or sons day. They had already stolen so much from Harry, although it burned her inside knowing that James Potter was part of the reason her son was alive - Harry's determination was the rest of the reason and the most important part as far as she was concerned!

Chapter End Notes

There we go another chapter of Invisible :) now I'm off to get some edited chapters of A New Place To Stay up before bed :) do you want to see the conference? will Severus get an Order of Merlin first class for his work towards 'humanity?' i don't know what it could be classed as...what do you think it should fall under? will that be the last chapter? them all celebrating the award fully not being interrupted by Voldemort this time around? good finish?
"They've been fed, they shouldn't need another bottle until we're back, but if they do make them a new one," Harry said rambling, as he knelt beside his twins that were quite happily gurgling softly, clutching one of Harry's fingers each. "Neither will sleep without their dummies and teddies so remember to put them in the mosses basket, there's a Portkey on the table if anything happens use it." the war might be over but the paranoia remained. "If you need me send me a patronus message and I'll be right back here right away. You know Andy's Floo address don't you?"

"I do, now Harry everything is going to be fine, I won't let them out of my sight, now go and have fun," Eileen soothed over Harry's fears. "It's only a few hours, and you're only an Apparation away." the conference was in Scotland this year, so Diagon Alley and Hogsmeade was packed with foreign wizards for the occasion, in fact she suspected due to the potion that it would be bigger than any conference they'd held or attended. Thankfully with the correct spells in place there would be no shoving or pushing leading to inevitable accidents.

"Alright," Harry said smiling anxiously, kissing the twins on their foreheads, "Daddy will be back soon," he told them, bopping them on the nose. Listening to them gurgling had him smiling a little more genuinely; he knew there was nobody he trusted to look after them more than Eileen other than Sev. He gave them one of their toys to hold on to with a regretful sigh, having to pull his hands away - he would need them after all.

"Come on, we will be late if we don't go now," Severus informed him, his lips twitching in amusement, bringing Harry into a hug, wrapping his arms around him, he was so anxious, it would have been funny if he wasn't also trying to suppress his own anxieties. They'd never been without the twins since they were born, the few times they'd made appearances in public the children had been with them. This was the first time they were leaving them, but seeing Harry say things he'd already told his mother a dozen times - now that was a little amusing.

"Then Apparate us," Harry said, leaning back against Severus, he couldn't force himself to actually Apparate.

Severus nodded, not that Harry could see, then wrapped his magic around them both and Apparated them to the conference. The first thing they noticed was that the place was absolutely packed. The doors hadn't been opened yet, and Severus wondered absently if he'd gotten the time wrong, but before he could voice it the doors opened magically allowing everyone entrance.

"I don't think we've ever been early to one of these things," Harry laughed, remaining firmly planted where he was.

"I think they're behind actually," Severus relied thoughtfully, "It must have taken them longer to set up than they anticipated."

"Did you read how many were being welcomed as Masters?" Harry asked finally walking now that
the huge lines were gone and everyone had disappeared into the building.

"Just the one, unless it has changed," Severus commented idly. "Hopefully we'll manage to find a good seat," in other words one without having to sit next to people he didn't know - nothing irritated him more than incessant chatting. He hadn't seen any of the others, but they were coming - they'd stayed in the UK longer just to attend it.

"Harry! Severus! We're sitting over there," Soren said appearing behind them his hands laden with a tray of beers. "Got one each for you both saw you earlier, so it's your round next."

Severus raised an amused eyebrow, "Very well," he replied dryly, before they followed their fellow Potions Master to the table they'd be using.

"You alright, Harry? You're awfully quiet," Soren enquired a knowing air about him.

"I'm fine," Harry replied drolly.

"No you're not, you're worried, don't deny it, its natural," Soren said in sympathy, moving to avoid someone getting out their chair. "My son was born while I was at the other side of the world. I couldn't use the Portkey to get to my wife, so I must have gone through dozens upon dozens of my contacts Floo systems to get close enough to use one that would take me home as soon as I could, but I didn't make it in time. The first time I had to leave him was the most difficult. It doesn't go away, but it gets easier, it helps that they're with someone you trust. Everyone here understands that, well…almost everyone," his gaze on Cooper, his feelings on having family were well known within the community, he felt it flung them off their game, made them sloppy, prevented them from achieving their greatest potential. "Just do yourself a favour…avoid Cooper," he added, he doubted Severus or Harry would take any remarks lying down, and it would spoil the conference.

"Always," Severus muttered sardonically, he couldn't stand him, especially how he had been with Harry that day. He slid into one of the two seats that had been left for them, sitting next to Jacob and Soren's he realized as the wizard sat down on the opposite side of Harry and began handing out the drinks. "Thanks," was murmured all around as they accepted them.

"To Severus, well done on your potion," Soren said raising his glass the others did as well, it was such an incredible achievement, it deserved better than just those words, but they all knew Severus would not like it if they went overboard. It was difficult for him not to talk obsessively over it. Their beer bottles clanged together noisily and Sev as always tried to make out as if that had been the big deal. Waving it off, shaking his head.

"You deserve this, there's no need to feel annoyed by anyone making a big deal," Harry said quietly, giving Sev a nudge with his shoulder. "They want to share this amazing accomplishment with you, let them - let us."

Severus turned to face Harry, "I am not annoyed, and I do not like a big deal being made," Severus said pointedly.

"Don't I know it?" Harry said teasingly.

Severus' lips just twitched, turning his head when he heard his name mentioned.

"What made you think of it? Was it something you've been secretly working on for years?" Taylor asked no accusation in his voice just eager curiosity. Taylor was new, not just a new Potions Master but new the sitting with the group of distinguished wizards. He had passed his Mastery under Russell for three years - the usual amount of time under an apprenticeship.
The others just looked at one another in amusement, very much aware that it definitely hadn't been something Severus had on the backburner; no this was something new, perhaps Harry's desire to have a family? Or their desire to have one or continue their combined lines? The difference in the usually severe Potions Master could be seen and couldn't be denied, he was happy, and they were happy for the couple, in fact even a bit envious, none of them had partners in the Potion industry, so these meetings could get lonely. Their wives, fiancées or girlfriends came once or twice then swore of them due to the boredom.

"It seemed like a prudent thing to do after careful consideration, and the results I cannot deny have been…life-altering and I am proud of the outcome." Severus replied, "The potion does come secondary, fatherhood first."

"You made that within a year or so?" Taylor was overwhelmed, he couldn't imagine being able to create something so complex from scratch. He'd barely managed to brew a few potions himself, and it wasn't anything noteworthy, nothing like Master Peverell had created, he'd been in his first year when he saw 'his coming out conference' as he called it.

"Less than a year," Severus replied, already memorized the dates and times he'd had to have had the potion perfected by for it to have been used on Harry. They couldn't have anyone working out otherwise, it just wasn't safe, so he would make sure they didn't know otherwise.

"Bloody hell," he muttered astonished, drinking down his beer in large gulps trying to process it all.

"Indeed," Severus replied smoothly, deeply amused by the twenty two year olds inelegant words.

"Beers again?" Rick asked standing up, noticing that all the beer bottles were empty.

"I'll go, it's my turn, I'll be too busy in half an hour to buy another round for at least forty minutes," Severus said waving Rick down.

"Bring me a shot of fire whiskey," Harry asked, as Severus left towards the bar which was the way they came in and to the left. "Watch this he won't bring it." Harry added forlorn.

"That's because you'll spend the rest of the night talking our ears off, you're a cute drunk," Damon teased joining in the conversation for the first time, grinning widely remembering the last time it had happened. It had been obvious even then that Harry had worshiped the ground Severus walked on, age didn't matter to his generation considering how long they lived as wizards.

"It was one time," Harry scowled, his face flushing red in remembrance, it wasn't the only time alcohol had gotten him into trouble either. Being pregnant he hadn't been able to drink, and he'd been too busy, even at the shower to drink, tonight as considered a night out so he wanted to enjoy it even if worry wasn't far off. Like Soren said, he would always feel it, but he knew Eileen would protect them.

"Once was enough," Rick chortled playfully.

"Funny," Harry replied wryly, shaking his head, as he finished off his beer. "Do you know who's getting their Mastery today?"

"No, whoever it is doesn't run in this circle." Damon replied shaking his head, the others all nodded their agreement to Damon's answer.

"It's either Samuel Colbert or Robert Song," Taylor piped in quietly, "They're the only ones I know close to finishing their apprenticeships."
They all looked thoughtful, wondering what potions they'd bring out - for all of a few seconds, the real reason they were here, why most of them were there was for the potion Severus had created. "By the way, has Severus come up with a name for it?"

"Um not that he's shared," Harry replied thoughtfully, he hadn't asked, although he had seen all the paperwork for it, to see it himself since Severus had required 'a fresh pair of eyes' while he believed he'd got it at long last, he was just in a sense of suspended disbelief. He ha succeeded, so the name would be just as much as surprise to him as it would be to the rest of them. "Its always difficult to come up with names, not that it matters, people outside of the community just call them close enough to what they do," he scowled at the audacity. "Something I'm a little guilty for myself especially while I was at school."

"We were all guilty of it," Rick mused, "But the written part of the test to pass knocks it right out of you. The amount you had to memorize was bloody insane, and I passed mine nearly twenty years ago, I'll bet the list is quite a bit longer now."

"It is," Harry replied, same time as Taylor, "And it's harder as well the bar has been set higher." Harry added, "The idiots at the Ministry made two glaring mistakes I had to correct while I was sitting it."

Soren's choked and spluttered as his drink went down the wrong pipe, "You're bloody joking!" he rasped out after coughing up a lung, thumping at his chest as Damon slapped his back - a little too hard as it happens.

"No, I couldn't believe it myself," Harry grinned amused.

"Unbelievable, I've never seen such a mistake happen, or heard about it!" Soren's insisted, "Those tests are written by qualified Masters! Whoever wrote them obviously didn't deserve their Potions Mastery!"

"Whoever wrote what?" Severus asked as he slid back into his seat, sliding the tray into the middle after claiming both his and Harry's letting them get their own.

"Is the UK Ministry substandard?" Damon demanded.

"Excuse me?" Severus enquired; confused at the turn the conversation was taking.

"Harry told us about his written test, how he found two mistakes on it," Soren explained for Severus seeing that he didn't understand what was going on before Harry could. "That should never have happened, and it must have been on the Master copy so the others must have been writing in it. What if they failed because of the one answer they needed was the one the plonker got wrong?"

"True, I didn't even think on that when I was informed," Severus admitted, "I would assume they went over them to correct their mistakes and try to bury it so it didn't come out. They wouldn't have risked someone figuring the mistake out and forcing their hands. This was before the reconstruction of the Ministry, which if I don't say so myself, is much more efficiently run and organized." the ministry had been built by department to department over the years, since its designation. The new building had been designed knowing exactly what they needed it and where, helped along by actually making it more secure both physically and structurally.

"I hope they did," Damon said looking affronted, he felt insulted on behalf of every aspiring Potions Master in the UK, especially considering back then the numbers had been extremely low in way of apprentices and actual Potion Masters. Although the last year they had bloomed
statistically, but they wouldn't know if any became Potion Masters until next year maybe a year longer. He suspected it had a great deal to do with Harry, whether he realized it or not he was a hero, something people aspired to be like. They probably all wanted to be like Harry Peverell - the hero who had defeated Voldemort - the youngest Potions Master ever.

"I reiterate, they most likely did correct their mistakes," Severus informed them.

"Do you know who does it?" Rick asked, scratching his arm giving off a small wince perhaps he should have taken a pain reliever, but he couldn't drink a take them - the combination wouldn't be healthy at all.

"I don't know for certain, but if it's the same wizard that did it while I took my Mastery it was Master Rogers," Severus replied, "He was on of the causalities during the attack of the Ministry." his family had been devastated, James Rogers, he had been a good man, quite renowned within the Potions community actually, and his grandson was named after him, it had been in the newspaper - the Daily Prophet if he remembered correctly although it could have been the Potioneer magazine.

"Then it definitely wasn't him," Damon said wryly, knowing like the others who he was. He was an utter perfectionist when it came to Potions. "On that we can all agree."

"If you'll excuse me, I have a conference to open," Soren grumbled as he stood up, he'd been doing it for years now and this was the first time where he actually wanted to just sit and enjoy it. Perhaps it was time to inform them that they should look for another speaker, he thought as he waved to his friends as he made his way to the front, quickly speaking to Jackson and accepting the notes before giving them a read over, as required.

"You'll be up soon," Harry said grinning; Sev absolutely hated these things especially when attention was solely focused on him. He wasn't much better himself, but at least he wasn't as bad as his fiancé. In fact before he came on the scene, Sev admitted he went to the conferences but he never endorsed his potions or advertised them at the conference just published his results.

"Don't remind me," Severus replied dryly, before turning his face to the front as he spied Soren moving from the corner of his eyes.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, esteemed apprentices and Potion Masters welcome to the seven hundred and fortieth Potions Conference and for the first time in fifty years it's being held here in Scotland." Master Soren said loudly, his voice amplified with the 'Sonorus' spell. "I would like everyone's help in welcoming Robert Song who has just gained his Mastery! Give him a round of applause ladies an gentlemen, Robert Song coming all the way from America!" with that Soren began to applaud along with everyone else as the nervous twenty-two year old joined Soren's at the podium.

"Hello," Robert said, patting at his hair, as he stared out at everyone feeling extremely self conscious.

"Congratulations on your Mastery, what have you created for us today?" Soren enquired, already knowing but repeating the questions regardless, as was customary for those here who hadn't heard yet.

"My first one is gives you a tattoo, of your soul animal or animals," Robert said proudly, rolling up the sleeve of his top before displaying the animal, which was a tiger, it moved as he flexed his arm.

"Anyone have any questions?" Soren asked after the applause died down.
"Has anyone tried it? Did they end up with more than one?" Harry asked.

"Five people tried it, they're all here today to show you, only one seemed to gain two animals," Robert explained, relaxing feeling more in control and confident speaking about his creations. He had been quite terrified that they would laugh at his potion, and find it lacking, but all they displayed was curiosity. Now Harry Peverell of all people was actually asking him about it. It had gone better than he could have ever hoped. He gestured to one of the tables at the end of the first row, and they stood and made their way to the podium. Each of the tattoos was in a different place, all quite large and extremely prideful animals. Lion, leopard, phoenix, basilisk and last but no means least a lioness (the only female in the group standing at the front).

"Are there any side affects?" a woman in the crowd asked, judging by the flashing camera she was obviously a reporter.

"None that have shown, although obviously the skin is sensitive for a while afterwards." he said before elaborating. "When the potion is drank its like pins and needles for the duration of the time needed for the tattoo to appear on your skin."

"Any other questions?" Soren asked when the silence lasted a minute at least.

"Is it patented? Are you selling it here tonight?" asked a male reporter.

"No, it's freely available to those who wish to use it." Robert replied, shaking his head to emphasis his answer. He believed it should be that way for all the potions should be. Those that kept it to themselves were just in it for the money, at least now that the war was over the patented potions should be released to the public (yes, he sort of understood why they had did it) but that reason was gone now.

"And your second invention?" Soren asked, sensing the excitement had worn off on that one. No they were really only waiting impatiently for Severus' miraculous invention.

"My second is an antidote to the befuddlement draught," Robert said, "The potion removes the affects the potion has on you immediately, instead of having to wait until the affects have worn off twelve hours later."

"Is there any side effects?" Terrance Whittaker asked, trying to be enthusiastic as possible, knowing how terrifying his own experience was - especially considering his Master hadn't been there. He could see Robert's wasn't there, but he wasn't as worried as he himself had during that time. Of course that was two years ago now, he wasn't a new Master and he had created a further two potions of his own and had respect from the Potions community.

"The expulsion of the potion is rather…messy, it induces vomiting while it goes to work in removing the effects, but within ten minutes you are back to normal," Robert insisted.

"I assume this one will not be patented either?" asked a woman in the crowd, people took note that she was a healer from St. Mungo's.

"No, definitely not." Robert proclaimed firmly.

"That concludes this portion of the evening, Master Robert Song ladies and gentlemen; his potions will be available at his booth in little under an hour." Soren said loudly, his hands clapping together, prompting the others to do the same. With that part done, Soren moved over to the same elder gentlemen he had spoken to earlier and grabbed an unopened bottle of water and drank it, grimacing, wishing it was a beer causing him to look over at his table with wistful sigh.
"Guess this conference is going to be pretty short," Harry said, and he couldn't quite hide the thankfulness either.

"It depends on how well the potion sells," Severus admitted, stretching out knowing they had five minutes before it started again.

"Do you want a hand with it?" Jacob asked, "Penelope will be away for ages anyway, she took Narcissa with her, and our daughter of course."

"Harry adores her," Severus gave a small chuckle at Harry's eager nod, she was so cute and adorable, it made him actually want a little girl of his own, "Well, the quicker I serve everyone the quicker we can get home, so yes, I'd like some help."

"Done," Jacob said in agreement, he knew both of them probably wanted to get back to the twins ASAP. It's how he felt when he had left his daughter, Alisha for the first time. He'd ended up going home early, it was nice actually having them coming with, hopefully Penelope's business would take off and she'd come with him more often.

"I'm running low on a few potions; do you think they'll have a supply here?" Russell mused thoughtfully.

"There are leaflets on the middle of the tables," it was one of the other Potion Master's that answered from behind them.

Russell looked back perplexed, before turning back to wizard. "We didn't get any but thanks," "Here," he said, handing two over.

"Thank you very much," Russell said tipping them towards him to show his thanks before putting one in the middle and reading the other. "Is Borgin and Burkes any good?"

"No, they're from Knockturn Alley and they like to con people out of their money," Severus said wryly. "Is that the only apothecary attending this?" he was genuinely surprised by this.

"No, there's another," Russell, pointed to the page he was reading, "Just says Potions apothecary, oh, from Diagon Alley."

"That should be fine, but make sure to inspect them, obviously," Harry answered, and he knew they would - they were Potion Masters.

"I think that's your cue, Soren's is gesturing for you, Severus," Damon waved over to where Soren's was standing trying to get their attention.

"Excuse me," Severus stated, barely refraining from rolling his eyes, oh how he hated being in the public eye, at least it was good publicity, and nobody was thinking of him as nothing more than a Death Eater, he would have hated that more he had to admit. He made his way through the thong of people, carefully manoeuvring so he didn't bump into anyone or touch them.

"Now on to the second section of tonight, please help me welcome a wizard who has managed to make many breakthrough potions these past years, Potions Master Severus Snape, order of the Merlin first class," Soren's said cheerfully almost laughing at the look on Severus' pointed face. The room stood up as one, standing ovation, cheering for him. "One of those breakthrough potions is why he's here tonight, why don't you tell us more, Severus?" knowing the wizard couldn't be bothered with inane questions, so he would probably tell everyone himself.
"Is it true did you create a potion that facilitates pregnancies in men?" was asked in various different ways from a few people in the crowd as the cameras went a mile a minute.

"Good evening, it is true I created it, as you all very well know," he told them coolly, gazing sharply around, "The results speak for themselves, no doubt you've all seen today's newspaper?"

"Are you patenting that one as well?" asked Robert from the front sounding just as disproving as he was.

"Most of all others are no longer patented, but this one is and will remain so, yes," Severus informed Robert coldly, his black eyes flashing in anger at the audacity of this boy's judgemental tone and eyes. A sense of satisfaction enveloped him when Robert flinched and looked away, he hadn't lost it completely then - that was good. The boy's mind was completely unguarded, he could practically hear the contempt dripping from his words, or rather had; now he was just wishing he hadn't opened his mouth.

"Did you get around to naming it for the books?" Soren heard Callum Dean ask, he never spoke at these things, well other than to him and a few of his friends - Dean had to talk to him though since he had to know who had passed their masteries before he took to the podium. He was at least ninety years old and had been coming here for they say fifty years at least - to every single one of them.

"Hunter-Hector Potion," Severus said, his black eyes gleaming with pride.

"Why that name?" one of the reporters quickly asked, looking about ready to wet himself with speculation. He already knew why or at least suspected heavily why that name in particular.

"What about the children?"

"Are the twins here today? Will we see them?"

"Can we take a picture of the children for the Daily Prophet?"

"I've named it after my and my fiancés twin sons," Severus confirmed.

"What are their official names?" another reporter asked eagerly.

"I will not answer personal questions, especially if they have nothing to do with the potion," Severus insisted seriously. He wasn't about to let his children be put in the newspapers all the time, it was just a single occurrence but if they continued to try then he would sue them. They would never be in the spotlight, not unless it was something of their own achieving and when they were older and if that was what they wanted. He could see them all grumbling, but that didn't deter him the slightest, it wasn't his job to make them happy. He was grateful though that they knew his reputation well enough to actually quieten down.

"How many do you have for sale? After tonight how long until they will be for general sale?" asked a female reporter.

"There are fifty here tonight for sale, they can be ordered as early as tomorrow afternoon for anyone else who requires the potion, but you must be warned to read the pamphlet you get with it, if you do not, it may well lead to your death is that understood?" Severus told them firmly. He would be saying the exact same thing to anyone that bought it. They couldn't leave the pregnant person alone so close to their due date, they had no idea what would happen if it did occur, probably death for both the child and the parent.
"Why?" questioned the reports all at once, learning forward eager to know more.

Severus arched an eyebrow, "The foetus forms around a magical sac in your abdomen," he explained, "That goes for both genders, when the baby is ready to enter the world, there is little to no warning, the pain is excruciating, and the baby must be removed immediately. Let's just say you're better off not knowing what will happen if the child isn't extracted immediately."

"You would say that medical help is always necessary?"

Severus couldn't see who had asked that, but the look on his face let whoever it was know they was a complete and utter idiot. "Unless you want to cut into yourself the sac and remove a child then stitch yourself back up, then yes." he drawled out ensuring maximum sarcasm coated his voice. Loud uproarious laughter followed before they quietened down to see what else Severus had to say.

"Has anyone else bar yourselves tested the potion?" asked Terrance questioningly.

"Yes, a couple have, but they don't wish to be known, it is entirely up to them should they wish to reveal themselves." Severus said firmly.

"You said both genders, does it work for witches that have trouble getting pregnant?" asked a woman sitting next to a potions Master, the look on her face was both heart-wrenching disheartened yet a little hopeful, as if she suspected the answer to be the negative but couldn't help but wish otherwise. "Or…unable to conceive?" a warble coming to her voice as she spoke.

"As long as the sperm is viable then the potion will do the rest," Severus explained. A very uncommon sight occurred as Severus stared at her softly, not something he would have done before, but he was a father himself now, he had taken his son from his fiancée's stomach, held him, sung to him at night, and there truly was no greater feeling in the world than holding his family close. He'd never longed for a child, not the way she probably had, but his children meant the world to him, so he could sympathise with her desire for a child of her own.

"So it always works? And right away?" exclaimed another voice excitedly.

"So far we haven't encountered a problem," Severus replied honestly, that didn't mean there wouldn't be, but only time would tell. "We don't predict any in future, the logic is sound and the proof undeniable."

"Any more questions ladies and gentlemen?" Soren enquired after a few moments of silence, well relative silence, since quills were still dictating everything that had been written.

"Would you ever consider sharing the recipe for the right price?" a German accented elder wizard asked, gazing shrewdly at Severus.

"To a company? No, to Potion Masters yes, be warned however, that there will be promises of an unbreakable Vow to ensure it doesn't just accidentally land in the wrong persons hands." Severus answered him, unsurprised to see him nod back grimly in understanding - nearly all Potion Masters had been had at least once in their career. Giving up the rights to a potion with a company and only realizing later just what they'd squandered away. Giving Soren a look, tiring of this and wishing for it to end.

"Severus Snape ladies and Gentlemen!" Soren shouted, his arm gesturing towards Severus, applauding as the others did the same almost reluctantly - they wanted to know more, especially the reporters. "Why don't you go and get yourselves drink while you wait? In ten minutes the conventions booths will be open for those wishing to buy and supply." with that Soren removed the
charm and sighed, "Well, it's over, and you can relax again." he said to Severus patting him on the
back with a large grin on his face.

Severus merely snorted very quietly, before stepping off the platform moving around people who
were now standing up to do as Soren suggested - get a drink or two. It was a good idea, he felt like
drinking a few shots of fire whiskey himself, but he hadn't gotten any for Harry so he shouldn't
drink any himself.

"Did you reserve a table, Severus?" Soren enquired as they moved, it got easier as they went due to
the fact everyone was quick to leave. By the time they'd gotten half way to the table the room was
all but cleared out except from a few (older Potion Masters mostly) waiting for the room to empty
first.

"Table six, my House-elf is just waiting for the call to bring them," Severus explained, "They're
already in crates ready to go, it saves boxing them individually then setting them out."

"That's a good idea, think I'll have to do it the next time there's a conference in America," Soren
said wryly, shaking his head why hadn't he thought of that before? The time alone it would have
saved was immense, never mind how long over the years. "I'm getting too old for this," he told
them as he approached the table and took a grateful seat, sighing softly.

"You aren't even middle aged yet," Damon snorted, even he was older than Soren's admittedly only
a few years.

"Where's Rick?" Soren asked, "I didn't know he ordered a booth,"

"Drinks, before the queue got too big," Damon said shaking his head. "Just as you told everyone to
get one."

"Ah," Soren nodded, "Brilliant, I'm dying on a drink."

"It's been all of twenty minutes," Russell laughed.

through the door.

"You named it after the twins?" Harry asked, all his love and passion for the austere man in front
of him showing through, and by Merlin Harry did love him more than anything else in this world.
He would go to the very depths of hell for him if he needed to, nothing and he meant nothing could
or would tear them apart - of that he was determined.

"I did," Severus replied, his lips quirking into a small smile, he'd briefly entertained the thought of
naming it after Harry, since he was the sole reason the potion had been created, that and of course
the twins primarily to keep them safe and protected. If he didn't have Harry then there would be no
twins and definitely no reason why he would work so diligently in creating the potion.

Harry leaned over and cuddled into Severus, and whispered into his ear, "I love you," he
proclaimed softly, before just laying his head on Severus' shoulder for a brief moment.

Then quieter still, Severus replied, "And I, you." they sat there for a while just listening to the
others joking, laughing with them when they found something particularly amusing. Taylor was no
longer there, Harry noticed, he must have left at some point between Severus' speech finishing and
now, perhaps he had a booth of his own? Which reminded him…

"We best drink up and get those potions out; otherwise there will be quite a stamped." Harry
muttered as he reluctantly moved off his comfy fiancé and grabbed his beer. Drinking it down in one go as he dug into his pocket before putting a few galleons on the table, explaining, "That's for my round, I won't be staying, I can't wait to get home and to be honest? I am bloody exhausted."

"Don't you take turns? A night each?" Damon enquired, accepting the money; he would get the next round for him. Unlike the pureblood's here, most people didn't actually use House-elves to look after their children.

"No, a feed each," Harry replied. "Just remember it doesn't last forever," Jacob chuckled, "Before you know it they'll be sleeping through the night, Merlin I can still remember the first full night of sleep I got," he said it almost dreamily causing the others to laugh.

"Enjoy the rest of your night; hopefully I'll see you all again before you return home, if not we'll be in touch," Severus said nodding at them, "Goodnight."

"Night, Severus, Harry," chorused the others, "Night!"

"Night," they repeated before moving away, Soren's following them still drinking one of his beers.

"Well let's get the show on the road, I have a funny feeling we won't take long to sell those fifty vials," Soren's said, and he was right, the queue was quite long - they'd piled along the only unused table knowing or expecting it to be Severus.

Prince Manor

"Hello, boys did you have a nice night?" Eileen asked them as they appeared at the living room door, having Apparated into the lobby a few seconds ago. Eileen was in her nightclothes, a purple dressing gown wrapped around her keeping her warm despite the coolness of the manor now that the fires were out.

"How are they?" Harry asked immediately, gazing around the living room but their baskets were nowhere to be seen, and all was quiet which led him to the most likely conclusion was that they were in their cots asleep.

"They're fine, I fed them fifteen minutes ago and they are asleep," Eileen said smiling in amusement. "Now you go to bed, I've got them for tonight," she showed them the small white crystal before she slipped it back into her gown pocket. "Would you like a cup of coffee or tea before you go?"

"Not tonight, mum," Severus replied, sounding just as exhausted as he felt. "If you are serious about the offer I think we'll both just retire to bed." he wasn't about to argue with her about it, a full nights sleep was very tempting.

"Have you both eaten?" she asked, "You didn't have much dinner!" concerned about both of them, especially Harry, who hadn't been eating much, although lately his appetite seemed to be coming back quickly.

"We'll be fine, I'm going to go see the twins," Harry said, suppressing a yawn, giving Eileen a quick hug and a murmured 'goodnight and thank you' later he was heading up the stairs, Harry heard Severus following behind him his footsteps was much quieter than his though but that didn't surprise him - it had always been that way.
Heading to the nursery, he peered in, walking across the carpet to the cots that were side by side, snug in their baby blue knit covers that Luna had done herself with their names embroidered on them a large ones for the cot and a smaller ones for day to day use. His friends had gone overboard, and he loved them for it. The twins already adored them all too, he sniggered softly remembering the look on Viktor's face when Hunter was sick all over him.

"See, they're both fine," Severus said wrapping his arms around Harry, his chin resting comfortably on Harry's head.

"I know," Harry said, leaning back, "I just can't help but worry."

"That will never change, no matter what age they are, its instinctual…" Severus said softly, "Well for most people." some weren't fit to be parents and should be sterilized. Here he was thinking of his own so called father, Tobias didn't even deserve that honorific. In fact his own children would never hear of him, never see a picture of him to them he didn't and would never exist.

"Do you think I should let James see them?" Harry asked cautiously.

"It doesn't matter what you promised in the other time, that timeline doesn't exist anymore," Severus said, he definitely didn't want his children anywhere near him but he understood why Harry wanted to do it. He had promised Potter he would, and against all odds, Harry was very honourable, and kept his promises - every single one of them. He'd promised Neville he would find a way to get his parents better, and he had. Harry had promised him he would wait, and he had. No, when Harry promised something he kept it. It was probably annoying him to some degree that he hadn't kept that particular one. "But if you do, take some of your friends and do it in Diagon Alley," he wasn't having Potter here nor was he going to suffer his presence, he didn't think he could do it ever for Harry. Who was he kidding? Of course he would, he just didn't want to unless he had absolutely no other choice.

"Alright," Harry said agreeing with him, but that was only if he did do it.

"We should set a date for the wedding," Severus mused his sharp gaze taking in his sleeping sons, his heart filling beyond any capacity he even thought was there.

"Luna and Neville's is in two months," Harry replied, "What about six or seven month's time?"
Harry knew Eileen (and probably Sev) wanted the twins to actually have a part in the wedding and he agreed too.

"Agreed, we'll go tomorrow and see about officially getting a date and save the day date cards." Severus grimaced at the words, he knew the wedding wouldn't be what he imagined, since they had a lot of people they'd need to invite - in other words it would be quite large not a small setting as he would prefer. He would do anything to make Harry happy though so he would persevere.

"Just something small though, nothing flashy, no lovey-dovey vows or anything," Harry said smirking as he turned to face him, looking up at Severus, carnal appreciation written across his face, "Just how ti-"

"I would rather my mother didn't overhear the words on the tip of your tongue," Severus uttered, marching both of them out of the twins room, oh it may have started out innocent but Harry would have said something eventually. They exited the room, and the glowing crystal glimmered in the night, Eileen had of course heard everything, it was a monitoring spelled crystal, Eileen had the other half to keep an ear out for when the twins needed her.

Harry devilishly licked his hand, causing Severus to let go with an eye roll of exasperation as he
wiped his hand down his cloak.

"How about a shower first?" Harry asked, as he began to unbutton Severus' shirt, not even waiting until they got to their room but he was feeling too impatient to wait.

"So impatient," Severus taunted, grasping his hair and urging his head up, before kissing him urgently, their pace never once stopped, as Severus guided him towards their room. Using his foot to close the door a little too loudly, but both of them froze nonetheless before letting out a gush of relief when no cry immediately pierced the silence.

"Shower…now!" Harry urged causing Severus to chuckle darkly causing Harry to whine slightly but a strangled moan soon replaced it as their mouths devoured one another.

Chapter End Notes

phew eleven pages for this! man I never thought this chapter would end! so what do you think? next chapter Neville and luna's wedding? or will we skip to Harry and Severus? is there anything you would like to see happen before the story ends? R&R guys :) hopefully this story will end with a bang :) hehe! you know I don't do many stories after Voldemort's so called defeat doesn't seem much left to do so I'm honestly surprised at this one and how many people still like it! :) so it is new territory for me
Chapter 109

Two Months Later - Neville and Luna's Wedding Day

"We've really left it too late to get a gift for Luna and Neville you know," Harry managed to pant out from where he lay sprawled across Severus in their new king-size bed panting and sweating from their recent activities. It was very early, but they were used to getting up at that time, despite the fact the twins had just started sleeping through the night. Jacob had been right, the first night had been amazing, but every night since then they'd woke up, they were just too used to it. Nine times out of ten they could go back to sleep for a while - today wasn't one of those. Not that they were going to get to lounge around all day, since Luna and Neville were getting married today.

"You know them better than I," Severus pointed out, and he was also the best man. They'd had a small get together in the Leaky Cauldron for a 'stag night' a few nights ago, preferring not to wait until the night before the actual wedding. Fleur had arranged a girl's night (hen night) for Luna on the same night but they'd celebrated at their wing of Longbottom manor, but they planned on moving into one of the other properties once they returned from their honeymoon. It was much smaller (only five bedrooms) than Longbottom Manor one day Neville would probably return, after the death of his parents since he was the heir and it was his, but he could end up giving it to his brother.

"I know, I've just kept putting it off, I still don't know what to get them…What's proper to give to someone when they get married?" Harry asked, shivering slightly as Severus cleaned up their mess magically.

"Back in the day you would give them something with their coat of arms on it, candlesticks, cutlery, goblets, stationary," Severus spoke up after a few seconds of thoughtful silence. "I do not think people care for items as such as those anymore, plus I think people that don't know them as well as you do will have those ideas. The gift should come from you, what you think you should get them, it's the thought that counts after all."

"I thought about something to do with Herbology but I think its too common, I mean I've gotten him so much to do with that already…I think I'd be pissed if I only got potion stuff…and Luna doesn't like plants as much as Neville so its not really doable." Harry admitted, snuggling further into the warmth of the bed and Severus. Who knew how long they had before the twins began to wake for their bottles.

"Is there an activity they both enjoy together?" Severus suggested, "With the obvious exception." he did not want to hear about Neville and Luna's love life thank you very much.

"Cooking, although Luna makes the most outrageous dishes," Harry revealed giggling slightly in remembrance. "Neville manages to calm her exuberance." only a little though.

"I'll keep that in mind," Making a mental note to come up with whatever excuse he could if he
should ever be invited to dine with them - heaven forbid.

Harry laughed very much aware of what was going on inside his fiancé's mind. "I can't just give them money, so I'm going to have to go and look around before we head off - I only have a few hours." he was so ashamed of himself for leaving it so late and worse not knowing what to get them. They were his best friends as well, but he just couldn't think of what to get them.

"I'll keep the twins occupied," Severus offered, or more like stated really.

"Okay," Harry nodded his agreement; it would be easier to look around without a fussy baby boy that everyone wanted to coo at with him. Not that he honestly minded, except when he was in a rush - and he was in one today.

"Go on then," Severus urged Harry to move, in less than two hours they would need to be ready and at the church.

"I'm too comfy," Harry whined softly, this was nice, just getting to lay in bed even if it was early. Even as he complained, he dragged himself out of bed, grabbing a pair of trousers from the pile of clothes yet to be put away on the chest at the bottom of their bed where the House-elf had probably put it for them. He would have used yesterdays clothes, since he was only going to be wearing them for an hour then it was time to suit up for the wedding but they were already gone - the House-elves didn't miss a beat. "I'll see you soon," Harry added giving him another quick kiss before forcing himself away before it got heated again, they couldn't go another round, they had too much to do today.

Severus chuckled at the pout on Harry's face, but before he knew it, he was getting a wave as Harry left the bedroom presumably to put his cloak on grab his key and go to Diagon Alley in search for wedding presents. He didn't blame Harry for not wanting to get out of bed, it was so early that the manor was still cold despite the fact the House-elves had put the fires on when they woke up. A few moments after he felt the wards shift with Harry's Apparation within the wards, soft sounds could be heard through the crystal, it seemed as if the twins were waking up as well. Sliding out of bed, grabbing his bathrobe, he slid into his slippers and made his way towards his son's room, hoping to get there before the soft sounds became outright cries and he had two hungry ones to deal with at the same time - which happened all too often.

Walking into the nursery, he bent over the crib of his wakening son, Hunter, whose entire face lit up seeing him as always. It still made something in Severus' heart clench when he saw it. His sons, his little boys loved him unconditionally; they didn't care what he looked like, how he was with others or what he'd done in the past. Glancing at Hector, only to see him sound a sleep, picking up Hunter, he let him lay against his chest as he left the room, Non-verbally summoning the crystal from the bedroom and carrying it with him.

He barely got into the living room when Rose, his House-elf handed him a bottle at exactly the right temperature. "Thank you, Rose," Severus said as he took his usual seat, his son safe in his arms, already grabbing eagerly for the warm bottle.

"Do you want a full breakfast or wait until Master Harry gets back?" Rose asked her eyes wide and earnest.

"I'll wait until Harry returns, but a coffee wouldn't go amiss," Severus replied his gaze never leaving his sons peaceful face.

"Rose will do that," she said, popping away to do Severus' bidding.
Harry sighed in frustration, two shops he'd already been around looking for something, anything to get Neville and Luna and he just couldn't find anything that spoke to him for them. Just as he was about to give in, he noticed a box on one of the shelves, wandering over, he removed it from the shelf and peered inside. It was metal, heavy and extremely intricately designed with flowers and small opals in little clusters on the corners it was unique just the way Luna would like it. On the top it wasn't designed, he could have something engraved on it?

"Can I help you with that?" the shop assistant asked, making her way over.

Harry rolled his eyes, he hated that about some of the shops, and you just couldn't be left alone to decide what to do or buy without being interrupted by nosy shop owners or workers. "I think I can manage," Harry replied with firmness, halting her in her tracks. He wasn't being horrible to her; he just made it clear he didn't want her breathing over his shoulder. Keeping the box under his arm, he wandered around the rest of the shop just in case they had anything worthwhile but he wasn't in luck, it seemed the chest was the only thing that shouted out to him. He was definitely getting the box, which to be honest looked more like a miniature chest, now to decide upon an engraving… caring or joking? No, caring, marriage wasn't the time for jokes he didn't think.

"Do you do engravings?" Harry questioned as he stepped up to the till and placed the box on the counter. If not he was sure he could find something in Prince Library to help him with that.

"That I can do," she said nodding her head, "For only three sickles extra."

"Of course," Harry muttered refraining from rolling his eyes, it was only three sickles after all, plus it saved him from searching the library for a spell that did it for him. "Write Luna and Neville: Forever. Then today's date underneath."

Harry watched her remove her wand and begin to chant under her breath, and slowly but surely, writing began to appear on the chest; little by little metal shaving covered the top until the spell stopped. She flicked her wand removing the debris uncovering the neat lettering underneath it. She stared down at her work completely satisfied giving a nod of approval before glancing up expectantly.

"Great," Harry told her, "How much is it?" he had more than enough in the pouch of galleons he had taken from Gringotts to buy whatever he needed here today. More than enough to spend on Luna and Neville at any rate.

"Ten Galleons and three sickles, please," she informed him, ringing up the cash register hand out expectantly.

Harry dug into his pouch without so much as blinking at the price, quickly gathering the required galleons and handing them over rummaging in his pocket for the three sickles, he was sure he had put there from a previous shop just last night, and he was right, he passed them over before muttering a quiet but respectful goodbye and left the premises. He wasn't sure which other shop to visit, there weren't that many here - not compared to America or Egyptian town markets and shops. He wasn't sure why Daniel and Alec wanted to stay here sometimes; it was just so behind sometimes. A couple of book stores, potion stores, and the rest were second hand shops or odds and end shops.

Speaking of odds and end stores, he popped into the one next door, he found something right away, not many people knew but Luna and Neville loved a to drink Bourbon and Whiskey sometimes, the older the better in fact. The crystal decanters and glasses encased in a blue suede box were
absolutely perfect, glancing at the price he nodded thoughtfully, nineteen galleons, surely thirty galleons was more than enough to spend for someone that was getting married? He had no idea, he hadn't seen anyone getting married this was a whole new experience for him.

Shrugging it off, he grabbed the set and made his way over, he was just glad he had gotten something. He would have felt like an awful friend if he'd handed over a gift voucher or something, he was one of his best friends after all. He put the money on the counter just before the guy asked for it, just managing to stop himself yawning - he was getting tired and he'd only been up for he'd say an hour and half.

"Thanks," Harry said, accepting the brown paper wrapped package.

"You're welcome," the shop keeper said in a deep voice.

"Bye," Harry said as he turned around, not even bothering to look at what else was available he'd gotten what he wanted. He placed the parcel in the bag he'd brought with him, joining the large chest. Now he could get home to his family, where he belonged.

Or so he had hoped.

"Harry," an unfortunately familiar voice said sounding stunned.

"Hello, James," Harry said coolly, staring at his biological father, he would need to get used to him for the day, since he was invited to Luna and Neville's wedding thanks to Frank and Alice. He couldn't fully blame them since then they'd been close since before he was born if the pictures were any indication. Even after they all had kids Nick and Roxy would be over at Longbottom manor all the time while he was left on his own. Like Sirius and Remus they'll stick by James.

"Um…how are you?" he asked his tone hopeful. "How are your…sons?" he knew their names, Sirius had shared them with him, but he didn't want to say them out loud just in case Harry got angry with him knowing.

Harry couldn't help the unconscious smile that appeared on his face with his sons mentioned, "We're good," Harry informed him, "How is Nick doing with his apprenticeship?"

"He's not on apprenticeship anymore, he has a junior job there under trial bases, he's doing really well," James told him a wide prideful smile on his face. "He's set to marry Susan Bones; they're soon to be setting a date. Roxy's doing really well at Hogwarts too; you know she has nothing to do with what happened…she misses you. Do you know she reminded us that you weren't there when we were getting Nick on the train for your first years? She cared, still does, if you can find room in your heart for her…it might help you both." it was hard to believe Roxy would be graduating soon; at least she wasn't planning on settling down any time soon. He'd met three of her boyfriends, unfortunately he hadn't been able to quite scare them away but it seems she was content to play the field and look for a real suitable match. He didn't like it but there was a time in a father's life you just had to accept that your kids were growing up.

Harry just stared at him, he had no right to even suggest a single thing about him, he knew next to nothing about him. He felt nothing for the Potters anymore, not anger, not hurt and definitely no yearning for them to love him. He had his own family now, and he was happy, the particular can of worms that had the name Potter plastered across it was firmly shut and would remain so. "I have to go," Harry said and before James could even say goodbye Harry Apparated away. He wasn't about to let his good mood be ruined.
"Did you find something suitable?" Severus asked, seeing Harry pop into the living room. They didn't normally do that either, they usually Apparated into the hall, but that was because they didn't want to disturb the twins, but considering the time it was obvious they'd be awake. The mail he had been going through before he appeared temporarily forgotten.

"Yeah, I hope they like them," Harry said smiling, his bag put aside before scooping up Hunter out of his chair, nothing could make him feel better quicker than holding his sons close to his chest.

"What did you get them?" Eileen asked from where she was keeping Hector occupied, his dark eyes observing everything around him. Both of their eyes had darkened considerably, although Harry suspected Hector would take after Severus in eye colour and Hunter would take on his own green but a little darker than his light green ones.

"Two gorgeous crystal decanters and four crystal glasses as well as a miniature trunk with an inscription on it," Harry told them, "I was thinking of adding in a bourbon and whiskey but I don't have the time to go all the way to the Muggle world to get the real decent stuff."

"Our cellar has exactly what you need," Severus pointed out as he read a letter before putting it aside, "Take two of them make it from me and I'll replace them just don't take anything from the closed cupboard." those in the cupboard were extremely rare, even he didn't want to part with them, it would require a very special occasion to open those bottles. They weren't all Whiskey or Bourbon but a lot of it was wine too. In fact that cupboard housed one of the very first bottles produced of fire whiskey that Ogden's ever made.

"That will do it," Harry nodded his agreement, at his sons fussing he looked down to find his dummy out of his mouth, picking it up he plopped it back into his mouth.

"Do you want me to wrap them for you?" Eileen asked patting at Hector's back soothingly her knee jiggling occasionally. "I have more paper than I needed for what I decided to get them." she had of course been invited, and she wasn't going to turn it down, that would be extremely rude, plus she liked them both for how they had stuck by Harry when he needed someone most. For that they would have her undying gratitude.

"I'll accept the paper," Harry said sheepishly, "I completely forgot, but I can wrap them."

"You won't have the time if you don't shower and dress now," Severus commented, opening one from the Ministry that somehow had been put in the pile of correspondences not important pile.

"True," Harry conceded looking at the time; he'd been gone longer than he'd anticipated.

"Bloody Ministry," Severus scowled at the letter in his hands.

"They're giving me another Order of Merlin first class this time for services to Wizardkind," Severus grimaced - quite possibly the only person who could turn their nose up at such a prestigious award. Nobody had received that award since the founders got one for building Hogwarts and giving Wizardkind a safe heaven. The only people that had come close were those that got Order of Merlin second class for wiping out epidemics that crushed wizard society, such as the one to stop Dragon-pox and the like.

"Oh, Severus!" Eileen said, her eyes tearing up, Merlin she couldn't be more proud of him. She knew making a big fuss about it wouldn't go over well at all either. "Don't screw your nose up at this, son; this is the legacy you will one day leave your sons, something they can be immensely
proud off. I am so proud of you, after everything that you've been through…this is definitely the top three things I'm most proud of in my life, the first one is the day you were born, the second was when you passed your Potions Mastery so young." she swallowed the lump in her throat, her black eyes glimmering with unshed tears.

Seeing Severus overwhelmed, Harry stood up placing his son in his chair, walked over, pressing himself close to Severus and just giving him silent support. Poor Eileen looked too overcome with emotion for words. "Do you want to go get ready first?" Harry asked after a few moment of silence while Eileen recovered, they weren't emotional people, but sometimes their emotions just got the better of them and they couldn't handle it they'd rather suppress it. It was extremely hard for him not to sing Severus' praises too, he couldn't have been more grateful when Severus nodded firmly, deciding that yes, he would go first.

As he stood, Harry brought his fiancé forward using his hand which was at the back of his neck and urging it towards him, giving him a long passionate kiss that conveyed all his feelings into one acceptable moment that Severus could accept. Harry had a feeling Severus was stunned by the offer of the award never mind the fact they were actually going to present it to him. He would need time to sort out his own feelings before being bombarded with theirs. Parting most unwillingly, closing his eyes and just leaning his forehead against his. In just two short months they'd be married, then Severus would be his forever. Smiling smugly, he claimed Severus' seat as his own and picked up his little boy again by the time he looked at the door, Severus was long gone. Turning back to Eileen he was surprised by the look of intense pain on her face.

"What's wrong?" Harry asked, a frown gracing his face, not sure why Eileen looked so hurt.

"It's our fault that Severus is this way, why he won't take happiness and satisfaction in what he's done." Eileen confessed sadly. "I should never have stayed with Tobias, I hurt Severus because of my weakness." because she didn't think she could do it alone, because she was scared, there were many reasons all paled in significance now especially where her son was concerned.

"It wasn't just that, you know this, it was being a spy that did most of that damage," Harry insisted, and he wasn't just saying it because he loved Eileen he truly believed his own words. "Even without that…some people are incapable of handling emotions, I'm the same." just a little bit better at showing emotions than Severus because he wasn't as old as him nor had he been through as much. "Don't worry about it, he is proud he just doesn't want a fuss made about him," he chuckled wryly shaking his head, kissing the top of his baby's head.

"I'll try," Eileen said quietly, but she knew she'd never truly stop worry about Severus, or Harry or even the twins now they were her entire world and if anything tried to hurt them Merlin help them because she wasn't that same weak girl she had been back then.

"You should get ready," Harry suggested he knew women took forever to get ready and choose what to wear - Eileen was just the same. She'd almost been late to the Ministry gathering that celebrated their Order of Merlin first class for Eileen's Potion. She had looked lovely all dressed up, especially considering he wasn't used to seeing her in evening gowns. "I'll be alright with them on my own you know," he added teasingly.

"Come on then little one, let's go see daddy," Eileen said carefully handing the little boy to his daddy. Harry was daddy for the moment and Severus was usually called dad, it was the only thing they'd been able to come up with. Harry wasn't going to want to be called mum after all and carrier wasn't a suitable term for your kids to call you so for now that was what they'd decided upon.
"Eileen you look absolutely lovely!" Fleur squealed in delight as the Prince family made their appearance at the venue, bringing the elderly woman in for a hug, completely exuberant as maid of honour, she was making everyone feel very welcome. Eileen had on a beautiful brown dress that came to her knees, with glittering sequences adorned an antiquely designed pattern that somehow didn't dazzle the person looking at it completely. If one did look hard enough they'd find it was actually designed like a snake wrapped around the dress with its head at the top left shoulder. Her salt and pepper hair was straight and tied up in a bun with a hat sitting perched on top of the bun, it was a Muggle tradition and she wished to do it without standing out too much so the hat was very small barely much larger than her bun itself.

"Thank you, sweetie, you look stunningly elegant yourself!" Eileen said, Fleur's dress was silver satin, it hugged her figure very comfortably and made her look even more gorgeous than ever judging by the looks her fiancé Gary kept giving her from where he sat, he found it to be the case too.

"Hello, Severus, Harry's with Neville but I'm sure they'll be out soon enough," Fleur greeted Severus, crouching down to see the twins, a large smile almost splitting her face in two as she spoke to them in their buggy. "They look so cute!" she added to Severus, both of them were dressed for the day in shirts, dress trousers and cloaks, handsome devils they made nothing could make them look less adorable.

"Don't they just?" Eileen said almost cooing over them again herself.

"Thank you," Severus said, his lips twitching smugly, he was more proud of them than anything else in his life.

"We're almost due to start, why don't you take a seat? I'm off to see Luna again!" Fleur told them, quickly wandering off, hopefully her teary eyes will have dried, Xenophilius had made her burst into happy tears saying how proud her mother would be, and how much she looked like her, especially in her wedding dress, he'd asked for a moment alone with his daughter so she had come out to do just that. It must be such a bittersweet day; she couldn't imagine her own mother not being here for her big day.

She waved to those she heard say her name, but didn't stop to talk to them; eventually she was away from the main crowd and in the lobby. Once she was at the double doors, she knocked a little hesitantly, not wishing to disturb their moment, but Luna's voice sounded strongly within saying "Come in, Fleur,"

"Is everything okay now?" Fleur asked, blustering in, nodding in approval when she that her makeup had been righted. Her dress had once been her mothers, it was white like traditional wedding dresses, but Luna had put her own touches to it, making it her own unique one without actually altering the dress one bit. She was wearing her cork necklace, something old, and something she and her mother had made when she was a child - one of the last things she'd ever gotten from her mother before she died. She had on a pair of blue earrings, Harry had gotten them from her, and they were in the shape of crescent moons identical to the opal pair that Harry had also gotten her at the same time.

And around her waist was something Luna had worked hard at, on her own, determined to get it just right. A daisy chained belt, with six or seven moon flower heads spelled just so when they were in full bloom, attached to the daisy stems, causing a wonderful fragrance to waft around her with a owl feather here and there adding to her unique charm that was just singularly Luna. Upon her blonde head like a halo were yet another mixture of daisy chains, moon flowers and an assortment of things Fleur couldn't identify, but it smelt divine. Luna had her hair wrapped around
it as well, and on her feet were simple flat white shoes.

"I have something for you, I saw it weeks ago and didn't think anything of it until I saw you making this and this," Fleur gestured to the belt and small halo she'd made for herself. They were two different people, when she first met Luna she didn't think she would be able to tolerate the girl, who was so strange to her. Yet once she opened up much like the moon flower…she'd finally found a friend, who yes, had different desires to her own, but Luna was smart, gifted, beautiful, warm and always, always came through for a friend in need. "It can be your something new," although Harry's earrings probably counted, nothing matched in jewellery but Luna didn't care… and Fleur why Fleur liked Luna or who she was - not what she wore. She took the case from her bag and opened the clutch and it sprang open. Nestled inside lay a silver daisy chain bracelet. "I just had to get you this; I think it goes well with the rest of the outfit! Don't you?"

Luna smiled almost mysteriously, "It's perfect," she said as Fleur picked it up.

"Ready to go?" Fleur said, as she attached it to Luna's arm stepping back to inspect her for anything amiss. "You're absolutely stunning, Luna, Neville's jaw is so going to drop when he sees you!"

"That's the plan!" Luna giggled, a red flush appearing on her face, she didn't get complimented very often, especially not on her outfits.

A knock on the door interrupted them. "That's everyone in place," was heard through the door by an unfamiliar voice it must be the event coordinator.

"We'll leave now," Fleur said, urging Luna out of the room, grabbing her bouquet of mixed flowers, but not going too fast, as they walked towards the opposite end of the hallway where Xeno was waiting for her beaming at her his hair tied back and in proper wizarding attire for the wedding. Crisp white shirt, black dress trousers, a black vest with a cloak clipped over his neck and shoulders with black dress shoes. He had a moon flower stuck to his vest, something Luna had insisted he wear. Fleur nodded and the doors opened and she stepped into view, both hands clutching the bouquet she wandered down the isle smiling at the people here to celebrate Luna and Neville's big day. Multiple people began taking pictures, before long she was at the top, and stepped to the side, staring downwards waiting for Luna and her father to make their grand entrance.

And make an entrance she did, soft mellow music played by a spelled harp in the side of the room as Luna and her father stepped into the room. Everyone stood as one, taking pictures, Frank and Alice watched with tears running down their faces, pride and gratitude written across their faces, they knew how lucky they were to be here for this wonderful day, each and every day they were here actually. Their youngest son stood right beside them, with Roxy who was dressed in a yellow dress.

Once she was there, Xeno placed Luna's hand in Neville's almost overwhelmed with emotion, it was someone else's turn to take care of his little girl now. At least he knew Neville could give her everything she could ever hope to have, security, homes, money and more importantly love. He could see that Neville adored the ground his daughter trod on, and for that this was bearable. He squeezed both their hands, giving Neville a warning nonetheless, he had just better take care of her before he stepped aside, standing next to Luna's best friend and Neville's best man, Harry.

"Dearly beloved we are gathered here to day to join this man and woman in holy matrimony." and with that everyone sat down, ready to observe the wedding, an occasional sniffle was heard. "To ever intertwine their lives, growing and flourishing as one until their souls join as one for all eternity." the smooth voice of the Minister spoke, dressed entirely in black.
Neville had only eyes for Luna, he had been that way since she first appeared at the door, he'd had no idea what she picked, she'd kept that a closely guarded secret, even working on it at her childhood home, and leaving it there. She was absolutely breathtaking, and he was just finally getting his breathing under control. Who would have thought he'd be this lucky? She was his rock, his everything he loved her to the moon and back.

"Should anyone have any reason why those two shouldn't be bound in holy matrimony, speak now or forever hold you peace."

As expected everyone remained quiet, with still the occasional sniffle from the proud parents.

"Luna, will you take this man to be your husband, to love, to comfort, to cherish, to honour and remain faithful until death do you part until you find each other in the next life?" the Minister questioned.

Luna never removed her eyes from Neville's as she spoke confidently, "I do." she declared proudly.

"Neville, do you take this woman to be your wife, to love, to comfort, to cherish, to honour and remain faithful until death do you part until you find each other in the next life?" the Minster then questioned Neville. Wizards believed fully in reincarnation and having only one soul mate.

"I do." Neville declared almost smugly.

"And will all of you as witnesses do all you can to ensure you do all in your power to uphold these two in their bonding?" the Minister then looked out at the sea of happy people all there to see them bound in marriage.

"We do," they solemnly replied as one.

The Minister then gave Neville and Luna a quick nod, giving them the go ahead for the vows. Harry stepped forward, giving Neville the ring, which he nearly clumsily dropped but Harry saved the day, and prevented any red faced embarrassment. Neville gave him a sheepish thankful look before he turned back to face Luna.

"I am drawn to you like a flower to sunshine: you are the unstoppable force of nature, timeless in sincerity, unwavering in your devotion. You're my gentle summer breeze, strong as the roots of an ancient redwood, beautiful as a misty rainbow; you are the only woman in this wide world for me. It is on this day that I vow to cherish your kindness, your keen intelligence, your gentle soul for as long as we both shall live. It is this day that I will forever remember as we read out loud to each other on cold nights, strolled the forbidden forest hand in hand and pedal side by side into all the sunsets to come with laughter and joy to light our path. It is on this day, that I give myself entirely to you and you to me in exchange for a lifetime of learning, loving, and, above all, happiness. Love doesn't make the world go round to me. Love is what makes the ride worthwhile and you, Luna, make it worthwhile. You are my rock, as I promise to be yours in time of need and this ring will help remind you of that." Neville said, choking with emotion as he bared his soul to his very soon to be wife. Luna's own eyes glimmered at his declaration, how she loved him for this. He slid the ring on Luna's long delicate finger, she was his now, for all time. Magic flared slightly, binding her in her word.

"Today we promise to dedicate ourselves completely to each other, with body, speech, and mind. In this life, in every situation, in wealth or poverty, in health or sickness, in happiness or difficulty, we will work to help each other perfectly. The purpose of our relationship will be to attain enlightenment by perfecting our kindness and compassion toward all sentient beings big and small that we come across in our travels. You are mine, as I am yours, forever and I'll always love you
and I give you this ring as a symbol of that love." Luna said smiling, not paying any attention to the blowing noses and sniffing; she quickly accepted the ring from Fleur who looked ready to burst into tears herself. She had been so moved by Neville's words. Luna slid the ring on her now husband's green fingers - figuratively today of course.

"Such beautiful vows, Severus," Eileen said choking with happiness as she smiled at the pair.

Severus wasn't quite looking at them, no he was gazing at Harry, "Indeed," he said, a few years ago he would have sneered at such a maudlin pathetic display of emotions. Now? He understood them in a way that he'd never allowed himself to hope. He would lay his soul bear just to see Harry staring at him the way Luna was with Neville with such utter love and devotion. Perhaps he was getting old, but having a family was changing him in ways he'd never thought possible. Perhaps when it was their turn up there, he should let Harry know just how much he loved him, bare a part of his soul, even just a little bit so there could be no mistaken how he felt but no sappy moments, as Harry had demanded and he would keep to his word. He knew Harry had said that because Harry knew what he was like and that he wasn't one for bearing himself and making himself vulnerable.

"Now that Luna and Neville have shared their solemn vows with us today, with the joining of hands and receiving of the bonding rings, I now announce them husband and wife, bonded forever let no one or anything tear them apart." the Minister said loudly, smiling at the newly married couple, "You may now kiss the bride." he told Neville.

And the second the couple kissed, cheering, catcalling, whistling and congratulations began to loudly surround the hall. Severus automatically looked to the twins at the loud noise, but calmed when he remembered the silencing spells around the buggy - keeping any noise from disturbing them but they'd be able to hear if the twins needed them. Looking back up, he saw Neville and Harry embracing followed by the others of the tightly knit group.

Well, it was time for the meal, which was good, he was actually rather hungry, and neither he nor Harry had eaten much of their breakfasts this morning. They'd been too busy to have lunch other than grabbing a quick sandwich, just then one of the twins got fussy as he rocked the buggy back and forth trying to calm him some, and it worked, thankfully. He hoped they managed to stay quite content until a little later.

"Ready to head over to the restaurant?" Harry asked once he was close enough, rubbing his arm soothingly, a bright smile on his face.

"Of course," Severus nodded his agreement.

"Well if you want to wait a few moments we can go with Neville and Luna, the Portkey will activate soon." Harry told both Severus and Eileen, as he leaned against Severus in a show of solitary and just wishing to be near him.

"That's probably for the best," Severus nodded; he didn't fancy nearly being trampled by people. He observed James Potter and Roxy leaving through the double doors, before everyone made their way over to the main group that would be using the Portkey to get to the restaurant.

"Congratulations to both of you." Severus informed Luna and Neville once he was close enough as Eileen hugged them tearfully saying their wedding vows was the most heartfelt she'd ever heard and they looked handsome and beautiful.

Chapter End Notes
Hen night/stag night - Bachelor and Bachelorette party

Luna's Vow - Buddhist Prayer

Neville's Vow - inspired by a nature vow I found online I would post the link but we all know it wont work :)

There we go! another chapter! I hope that Luna's wedding attire was just 'Luna-ish' enough :) and that their vows worked with who they are :D it took a bit of deciding lol next chapter we will see Harry's wedding I think :D there won't be many more chapters after that I know you guys love the story but there's only so much one can do without it going completely stale...and getting boring and I don't know if its there yet or not you would know better I just love writing so :) that's what I do! would you like to see some of the wolves at Harry's wedding? ones he's perhaps gotten close to? R&R please
Chapter 110

Invisible

Chapter 110

Four Days Later

The room Harry was currently observing he'd never been in before, it seemed the Ministry had created a large ball room for instances like this, celebrations where Order of Merlin's were to be awarded. The workers had gone all out, decorated it elegantly and it was just mesmerising, Harry was in awe of the dedication that had gone into making this night a night his fiancé would never forget. He was sure it was roomed one level above the last place had had housed celebratory celebrations, like when he and Sev had gotten awards the last time - the ending had sullied the night completely - this time the Dark Lord Voldemort wasn't around to destroy it for them.

Silver drapes hung down from the ceiling all across the hall, separated by hanging chandeliers that were alit with candles giving the room a warm glow. Tables covered with white cloth, with the finest cutlery out for the occasion, crystal glasses adorned the table too, and some even had the coat of arms on them, for the Lords that were attending. Each seat was accounted for, name cards folded neatly for everyone so they were sitting. A bowl of nuts also sat aside for everyone that was feeling peckish. Harry was on the elevated platform, where the singers would soon be on again. At the very opposite end of the hall, there was a bar which he wished he could go to but right now it was time to focus on Severus.

Since Severus was only allowed to pick one other to attend with him, he had obviously picked Harry. Eileen was at home looking after the kids, which is exactly where she would have been even if they had been allowed to choose more people to attend this gathering. This was a day for her son, and it was only natural that Harry would attend with him, and both of them didn't trust many people with the twins, in fact they could count on one hand who those people were. Luna and Neville were still on their honeymoon, but word had reached them, they'd sent Severus a note to congratulate him and a bottle of very expensive and rare wine remote to the region they were visiting in Italy for their honeymoon, Severus had put it straight in the cupboard with the rare bottles almost giving in and having a taste but he somehow succeeded with his willpower and put it away.

Each person here was either important in the magical community or had paid a lot of money for a ticket to be there. There were a few familiar faces but none he knew well or trusted for that matter. It was too bad the other Potion Master's hadn't been able to attend, Jacob and Penelope had planned to come, but their daughter was in St. Mungo's having taken extremely ill the day before, Soren's and the others hadn't been able to get tickets because it had sold out. Harry could see the multicoloured robes that belonged to Albus Dumbledore in the room as well; he was deep in conversation with those surrounding his table, beaming and looking incredibly happy.

It was to Severus and Harry's extreme surprise when the door opened and an out of breath Rick and Damon walked through. The stubs in their hands proved they had every right to be there. They nodded to Harry with a playful grin before making their way over to Severus, who they spotted right away, he was extremely tall, and so it was no surprise that his head was above those at his table. It helped by the fact Severus was always sitting straight back, never slouched down despite
the fact he despised any attention being on him.

"How did you manage to get here?" Severus asked as they sat down in what should have been Penelope and Jacobs seat. He already suspected of course, after all they were sitting in their friend's seats.

"Penelope told Jacob to Floo over and give the tickets, that there was no point to wasting the money." Rick answered, his American accent causing people to twitch in surprise as it always did in big British gatherings like this. Rick had tried and successfully given them the money the tickets were worth, Jacob had refused until he realized they didn't know how long they'd be in the hospital with their girl and they were best having money on hand instead of having to leave his wife and go to Gringotts to withdraw money, it was that or starve.

"How are they?" Severus murmured quietly, his black eyes filled with concern, the little girl was absolutely adorable, he couldn't imagine what they were going through.

"Well they've managed to get her fever down, but they aren't quite sure what's wrong yet, the results aren't back in." Damon was the one who answered his time, absentely drinking the water from the goblet in front of him, it was still cold.

"That's two days, how long do they need?" Severus sneered in disgust at the idiotic medical professions. He would have been razing hell if it had been his kids, and he knew Penelope probably was making a fuss.

"First one was inconclusive; either magic couldn't detect what was wrong…" Rick purposely trailed off.

"Or they screwed up and didn't want to admit it." Severus nodded, blood work was done with delicate care, and only enough for one diagnosis spell, since whatever was wrong couldn't be picked up by the everyday diagnosis charm. The blood work allowed them to dig deeper and get a full health check-up on the person. They also needed to get permission, freeze it, and take it down to the lab and where it was worked on by one single person who then had to ensure no spot of blood was left behind. If it was, they would lose their job quicker than say accident. Blood was one thing wizards or witches did not like lying around; it could be used for extremely nefarious purposes.

"Yes," Rick agreed. "How have things been?" it had been months since he saw Severus last, and usually they just spoke about potions in their letters. Things they'd been in Potioneer magazine, the conferences, or even rare a potion idea, or difficulties they were having completing one.

"Extremely busy yet somehow slow at the same time," Severus admittedly wryly, he didn't have time to brew potions as much as he used to. He could of course go down to brew potions, but he didn't want to do that all day every day anymore. He didn't want to miss anything when it concerned Hunter and Hector, they were crawling already, he wouldn't be surprised if they were walking soon, well aided at the very least. He wanted to be there for those things, first tooth, first crawl, first word, first step, they were millstones he absolutely refused to miss. He had his entire life ahead of him (with a little luck) to brew potions, but his kids? They would grow up all too quickly; he could go back to brewing full time when they were older.

"We get that, it was like that for us at first," Damon snorted in amusement, his kids were older now, already at magic school, they'd soon be graduating, after this year actually. "Sorry about being late, the Portkey bloody malfunctioned,"

"How far did you get?" Severus' lips twitched in amusement.
"Stuttered to a stop in France, I'm not exactly sure where, we both just Apparated to somewhere we actually knew then Apparated a few more times to get us here." Damon explained.

"Security hasn't half been tightened, look us nearly twenty minutes to get through security checks," Rick commented, it wasn't necessarily a bad thing, not after what happened, but it was still annoying having to go through them all when you were late.

"It's been a long time coming," Severus agreed with Rick, knowing what he was meaning without needing further words.

"Do you think it would withstand the sort of attack that happened last time now?" Damon mused, well aware of what had happened, after all he had been there. Had helped tidy up after what happened too, it was to this day one of the worst experiences of his life, but he had saved people, he liked to think he'd made a difference, and as a potions master he didn't normally get hands on with helping people, so despite how harrowing it had been - it had changed his life.

"We would have a better chance of surviving, the amount of dead would have lessened greatly, but in the face of Giants and Trolls even the greatest of magic can only do so good." Severus answered thoughtfully.

A loud clearing of a throat through a Sonorus charm had everyone's attention, the talking cut off immediately, as Harry stood at the podium with a small box in his hand - which everyone knew was Severus' order of Merlin first class. He had received the honour of giving Severus his award, normally they try to get someone the recipient of the award respected greatly, and since they were both at the top of the same field it didn't really surprise anyone that they'd automatically thought of Harry.

"Firstly I wish to thank absolutely every single one of you for coming tonight to help celebrate this wonderful occasion, it is my even deeper pride that I was the once chosen to give this award to its intended recipient." Harry took a pause as everyone applauded loudly, some even whistling, "So without more to do, I wish to present this Order of Merlin first class to Severus Snape-Prince," Harry called, and the applause got deafening but Harry didn't mind as he was clapping along with them a proud look on his face.

Harry watched Severus stand up, nodding briefly in acknowledgement to the applause, Harry knew though that he was extremely irrate, he didn't like the public attention being on himself. He'd been annoyed at the fact that it took them nearly all night to give out a single award that only took a few moments. With nobody else getting an award, he felt it was entirely pointless, but he was bearing it, he would say grinning and bearing it but Severus rarely grinned, every time he did it was at something the twins did. He opened the box as Severus approached, his green eyes filled with warmth and love for the wizard stepping before him. He handed it over, before stepping back; it was his turn to speak now.

"Sonorus!" Severus murmured placing the spell on him Wandlessly, before stepping up to the podium his fiancé had been just moments earlier. Clearing his throat, but not to get anyone's attention, "Thank you so much, it's rather quite overwhelming, so thank you, more importantly I wish to thank my friends and fiancé who are here tonight to help me celebrate this tremendous accomplishment. Also a big thank you to the potions community that helps make the magical world what it is today."

Harry was barely able to refrain from arching his eyebrow, overwhelming indeed, well he couldn't complain too much, at least he was playing nice (not that it mattered to him, he would always love him regardless of his attitude to others). Severus didn't play well with others most days, except those he had known a long time, and they were used to his humour and sarcasm that it just beaded.
up and rolled right of their backs like it was nothing.

"I also wish to thank my mother, who couldn't be here tonight, she was the one who taught me everything I knew in preparation for my Potions Mastery, encouraged me, supported me throughout everything. This potion we are celebrating tonight might end up being my crowning glory, for there is nothing more important to me than my family, my children, no greater honour could outweigh that. So tonight this medal is not just for me, but for my fiancé and my sons."

Everyone stood and applauded, camera's were clicking, light bulbs flashing in accompanying the picture taking, quills were madly writing everything down for the few reporters who had the pull and money to get into such an occasion. They all understood the words behind his speech that his family came first, that he might not make another breakthrough like this, that it just might actually be one of the best potions he would ever invent.

His friends and fiancé knew that this wasn't the case, he would be back to brewing whether it took ten or twenty years, he loved potions too much to ever give up, not completely. Severus lived and breathed potions, he was a genius, he'd created a potion that enabled pregnancy within half a year, which people tried to make such a potion for decades but never quite succeeded. It would take a very long time for another Harry or Severus to come along, for now both can bask in this moment, their moment in the sun.

"See, that wasn't too hard now, was it?" Harry teased quietly, as he stood beside Severus, leaning against him contently. Unaware of the rapid pictures that were being taken of the two. "Would you like a drink?"

"I wouldn't mind one," Severus admitted, "A beer and shot of fire whisky for all of us," by all of us he meant Rick, himself, Damon and of course Harry.

"Jacob give them his tickets?" Harry asked offhandedly as they both exited the platform and began to make their way back towards the seats. He knew without needing Severus to answer, Rick was closest to Jacob, that's not to say they weren't close per se, just that Rick and Jacob lived closer together and it wasn't a problem for them to meet up whereas he and Sev weren't able to visit very often due to the distance. Although as of late it was becoming more and more common, due to all the special occasions they were having.

"Yes," Severus confirmed.

"I'll be right back," Harry added, as he continued walking on towards the bar while Severus cut through the crowd to get to his seat.

"Harry's gone to get us drinks," Severus explained as he sat down in his seat, sighing in relief, only to snort slightly at the stark relief on Damon's face directly afterwards.

"Please tell me it's more than just a beer," Damon said, the music was grating on his nerves, it just wasn't his taste - he was used to being in silent solitude of the dungeons after all. It always did get a bit much, but everyone here could sympathise, they weren't social butterflies. The only reason they got up in public was for the sake of their potions usually, and it wasn't to a soiree, just a plain old convention.

"Shot of fire whiskey, I knew I could do with it," Severus admitted ruefully, putting the award on the table, before pressing his finger down and closing it with a muted thud.

"Thank Merlin for that," Damon couldn't help but exclaim in relief.
"Indeed," Severus said replied trying to withhold his snort of amusement, he did not snort. He was glad Rick and Damon had come, it would lessen the dullness of tonight. He couldn't believe he had let his mother and Harry talk him into coming. Looking down at the box, he opened it and the Order of Merlin medal greeted him. His fingers trailed across his name, Severus. T. S. Prince, all this fuss over a potion, it hadn't been something he thought about overly much, he hadn't desired to make the potion he'd had to, there was a difference. For Harry, for the sake of his twins, it was just pure luck (which he had never truly thought he had) that he'd successfully created it in the nick of time. He didn't feel as though he deserved it, but he did feel proud of his accomplishment in actually creating it. "I know you don't want to hear it man, but congratulations, you've...blown the potion communities preconceived notions to hell, and broadened our search limits beyond anything we ever expected to get. The baby boom is going to be immense in nine months time."

"Which could be a problem," Harry said as he put the tray in the middle of the room, he picked up his menu and gave it a cursory look before deciding what he wanted and naming it. 'Rib eye steak, asparagus, baby potatoes smothered in gravy,'

"Why would it be a problem?" Rick enquired as the others at their table did the same and ordered dinner.

"Have you seen the maternity...well I'll call it a ward since that's its official name, at St. Mungo's?" Harry questioned him, passing out the alcohol.

"No I don't believe I have, just the emergency area, once." Rick informed him.

"Same," Damon said thoughtfully, drinking a gulp of beer.

"It's extremely small, our so called ward is fit for only two maybe three births at a push, our community is small, there's never been a large concern before, but with this potion and the delicacy of the procedure in removing the baby...we need it expanded, I already discussed it with Andy, or healer," Harry said gesturing to both himself and Severus. "She's going to be discussing it with her superiors."

"Two to three births?" Rick rasped out, his mouth open in silent incomprehensible shock. He'd known the British Isles was a little behind with times, and not as advanced as everywhere else on a few things but children were the most important things in the magical world. If anything the first thing St. Mungo's should have done was create the maternity ward first and foremost, it was as if it had been created purely as an afterthought. "How many healers?"

"I don't know, I gave birth at home, with Andy's help," Harry informed them, leaning against Severus, knowing how much of a scare he'd given his fiancé. "I was just lucky enough that Healer Welsh had experience in birthing," he wasn't sure if he could have trusted anyone else, especially someone he didn't know. He trusted Andy with his life, with the life of his kids, she could be trusted with information and not give it out, and she took her oaths very seriously. "I'm thinking of donating a third of the sanctuary money to the hospital so it can be equipped to deal with the sudden influx of pregnancies and births."

"I hear that one of them gave birth to a baby recently?" Damon queried, it had been in one of Severus' letters.

Harry grinned, "Yeah, healthy baby boy, Lucian Fenrir Greyback, five months old."

"And is he...?" Rick trailed off, unsure of whether he wanted an answer to that question or not.

"Yes," Harry nodded, "With the potions though it's basically painless, all he's doing is turning into
a ball of fur for the full moon. Soon enough he'll be stomping around with the others." all the werewolves except Remus fully embraced their wolf counterpart, didn't see it as a curse, those that first came in perhaps were like Remus until they began to integrate into the pack. It was definitely now the biggest pack in the UK might even be close to the biggest ever but it wasn't as if they'd ever find out. Werewolf communities weren't exactly outgoing, they were secretive, the past wasn't something easy to let go even for those in America who weren't persecuted like they used to be. Britain's magical world was now just going through that phrase, and Harry was at the forefront of the talks to give them more rights and drop the 'creatures', they were all magical, they shouldn't be ostracised for something they couldn't control - literally. Harry's convictions were doing wonders, especially with potions to back him up and give them proof that the werewolves were absolutely NOT DANGEROUS during the full moon.

"Trying to clean up your town?" Rick asked, causing Damon to laugh in amusement, "He isn't a sheriff," he managed to get out.

Harry just blinked blankly not getting the reference.

"To make change the entire community needs to get involved, at least here, we aren't as vast as America, I hope one day we can be like them, not just more tolerant towards magical beings but just advanced, our holiday opened my eyes to how bad it actually was." Harry explained, inhaling pleasantly as the food which had been cooked to suit his individual needs appeared on his plate, along with a fresh glass of water. The plates appeared on Rick, Damon and Severus' as well.

"Seems to me you're trying to do it all alone," Damon said after getting his amusement under control and sobering up a little.

"No, not alone, at least I hope not, people just got complacent, comes with just surviving…with one war after another," Harry replied, "At least I'm assuming so."

"Or nobody else saw what could be," Rick suggested, "You did, still do, and you will go to any lengths to accomplish it."

"Even Harry can only do so much," Severus felt the need to state; he honestly didn't think Harry knew how to relax, if he wasn't one thing it was another with him. "They need to accept the change, want it otherwise it is just a colossal waste of time."

"There is that," Damon agreed grimly.

"Have you had any more trouble with those idiots sending threatening letters?" Rick enquired after a few moments of silence as they at their dinner leisurely, ignoring the conversations that continued around them.

"No, it was the same person sending multiple letters, leaving your magic in them was the stupidest thing I've ever seen, I believe he was sentenced to three months in Azkaban just last week." Severus revealed.

"Should have got more, if we weren't so vigilant those hexes and curses could have hurt the twins," Harry said his tone filled with fury at the mere thought of anything happening to his twins because one man was a bigot and prejudice arsehole.

"Definitely," Rick agreed, three months wasn't enough, what was stopping him from doing it again and again? Perhaps he would learn his lesson, but only time would tell.

"Azkaban is no ride in the park, with a little luck the ingrate will learn," Severus said but his tone
was filled with thinly veiled warning, they all knew him well enough to realize he would do whatever it took to keep his family safe.

"He's to learning your lessons," Damon said, raising his shot and drinking it in one go.

"Learning lessons," the other murmured quietly before downing their own whiskey.

"When are you leaving? Straight away?" Harry asked, out of the blue.

"Yes," Damon and Rick replied immediately.

"Will you take a gift basket back with you? For Jacob and Penelope, it will reach them much quicker than sending an owl," Harry asked, he could go and get it before the night was over and come back, so they didn't have to wait around. "It came just before we left; our owls were already out carrying things so we couldn't send it on quite yet."

"That's fine, we're using the Floo though, so hopefully it's nothing to delicate," the Floo network wasn't by any means a smooth journey especially internationally.

"It should be fine, everything's well wrapped," Harry answered.

"I'm going to see them tonight when I return anyway, I want to see how she's doing," Rick informed them.

"Thank you, and yes, if she doesn't get better soon we'll have to go and pay them a visit too," it was only the right thing to do.

"They'll definitely appreciate it," Rick nodded in agreement.

They ate the rest of their meal in silence, not bothering with dessert due to the fact they were feeling pleasantly full.

"You're both awfully calm," Damon teased.

"It's true," Rick pointed out, "I was a mess two weeks before my wedding."

"Why?" Harry asked cocking his head slightly, trying to understand why he would feel nervous.

"Are you kidding? I worried about everything! I drank more the few weeks before my wedding than I have in my life; nerves got the better of me." Rick chuckled, shaking his head ruefully grinning in remembrance. "Back then I had hardly any money, I didn't think I was good enough for her, that I couldn't provide, then there was her family all threatening me to take care of her or else. It was definitely a tough time for me." man he couldn't believe it had been so long now, twelve years it didn't feel it.

"Who made you see you were?" Damon asked, curious as well, he'd never heard this before.

"My brother," Rick said sombly, "Man he was always so strong, my big brother...don't know where I would have been without him."

"What happened?" Harry asked sympathetically.

"He was an Auror, got cursed real badly in the line of duty six years ago, they never found out what the hell the curse was, but he deteriorated rapidly," Rick said grimly, "His partner caught the son of a bitch, killed him too after he was nearly taken down, but he died with his family around him, not everyone gets that." it was the only comfort he got, that and he hadn't died in pain.
"I'm sorry to hear that," Harry said, both Damon and Severus nodded in agreement to that statement.

"Thank you," Rick said smiling, it still hurt but not as much anymore, he still wished his brother was there, but he'd just had to live with it. "He was a cocky shit, not many could tolerate him but damn his sense of humour used to leave me in fits."

"Sounds like someone I would have liked," Damon smirked, drinking the dregs of his beer, "Another round guys?"

"No more whiskey for me, just a beer will do," Harry replied.

"Same," Rick and Severus answered.

"Be right back," Damon said before he was up and gone.

"If you'll excuse me, I need to find the toilets," Rick said standing up looking around.

"Through the door, to your left three doors down," Severus told him.

"Thanks!" Rick said relieved before he was off like shot, obviously bursting.

Harry turned to Severus to see him gazing at the medal again, "You deserve it you know, this is your legacy, it's what people will remember you for, not some mistake you did as a teenager. You're the bravest man I've ever met, Sev, and I love you." he whispered his green eyes alight with passion and sincerity.

Severus had tensed up immediately when Harry began talking, but after hearing the end of his declaration, he couldn't help how his body unconscious relaxed. How was it that Harry could make him feel so much with so little effort? Shouldn't he be the more mature one that was more equipped to deal with this? Then again, it went back and forth, they helped each other stay strong, its how any partnership should be - how their partnership was. He'd been hearing how he deserved it since that announcement had come in the post, but for the first time he truly embraced his evening for what it was. Although he knew the statement wasn't directly involved in this night, but rather his duties as a spy and how he had overcome them. Severus' lips twitched just slightly as he dipped his head, acknowledging and thanking him for his words without saying anything. He wasn't a man who was big on public shows of affection, and so they continued to stare at each other until they were interrupted.

Neither men noticed one particular person taking photos or paying too much attention to them, as they had all night - reporters just didn't understand the meaning of the word privacy.

It was fortunate that most Potion Master's were observant too, "You have a little problem," Damon said quietly as he slipped into his seat, the tray sliding along being pushed by his left hand. Subtly with his right he cast a silencing charm around them. Keeping his face turned away from the reporter so she couldn't figure out what he'd done. At least not yet he was sure she'd figure it out pretty quickly.

"What do you mean?" Harry and Severus asked together in sync, their eyes narrowing a little, eyebrow arched slightly, and Damon had to stop himself laughing, they were very alike, and they both spent way too much time together.

"Two tables down, brown hair, ribbon, she's been eavesdropping on everything we've been saying tonight, the notes she has are our conversations I'll guess she's also got dozens of pictures as well." Damon explained.
Severus pursed his lips; he hated reporters with a vengeance. Narrowing his eyes, he turned to face the woman, to find her talking to the witch on her left, putting his hand out he nonverbally summoned the notes, smirking when she didn't even realize they were gone. He quickly tore them in two and set them on fire, within seconds it was all gone.

"What the hell?" Rick said as he sat down, "Why?" he asked blankly staring at the ashes on the table.

"Reporter," was all Severus stated his tone annoyed yet steely satisfied.

"And you've destroyed an entire night's work?" Rick feigned disappointment, but his face didn't hold it for long before he 'Tsk'ed and grinned, laughing out loud when he noticed someone searching desperately for something and assumed (quite correctly at that) that this was the reporters work Severus had just destroyed. "You're terrible, Sev," he added, which of course Severus only smirked at - he had never claimed to be a saint.

"It's not the first time they've intruded," Harry sighed shaking his head, green eyes gleaming with displeasure. "I'm just thankful that our home is so well protected, we're aware when anyone tries anything," he added in explanation. "They're treating my sons as if they're miracles." well they were, to them, to him and Sev, but to the reporters the twins were just worth money to those selfish idiots who thought they had the right to invade their privacy.

"They are," Damon pointed out hesitantly, "But it doesn't give them the right I know," he added seeing the twin looks of irritation on Severus and Harry's faces.

"To people like us they're a miracle, but to them they're exploitable, profitable, I refuse to let my sons be raised in the public light...I know what happens to families like that and I..." Harry swallowed hard shaking his head, his childhood had been so lonely, and he never wanted that for them. He wanted his sons to love each other, stick up for each other, sure they'll probably fight from time to time but it was better than two strangers with the same face growing up in the same home yet he and Nick might have been hundreds of miles apart.

"Reporters are always going to be that way," Damon said, trying to let Harry come back to himself, they all knew what his childhood had been like, what the Potters had done to him, it had been in the papers for months, even overseas ones when Harry proved himself to be quite an accomplished Potions Master. "They're like rats,"

Harry snorted, and nodded his agreement after forcefully refusing to even contemplate the thought of his little boys ending up anything like him or his brother.

"It's why the location of our wedding is being kept under wraps, the Portkey's will be individual and the magical signature will have to match. We aren't taking any chances, neither me or Harry wish to deal with them - especially don't want the reporters near our sons and friends," Severus explained. He had never imagined the press would get as bad as they did, not even with the twins being the first 'born' after the potion was published. They were doing the best they could, without killing them at any rate - which wouldn't end well for them.

"I noticed," Rick said wryly, his wife hadn't stopped talking about it, all curious as to why the place wasn't filled out.

"I'm going to head home to get the gift basket while everyone's eating," Harry told them, "I shouldn't be any longer than ten minutes."

"Try thirty," Severus stated amused, "Especially if Hunter is being stubborn,"
"Bit late for that," Harry mused glancing at the time, taking a quick drink he left the others to return to the Manor to retrieve the get well gift basket he'd ordered.

Chapter End Notes

Well next chapter will be the wedding and I'm still stuck on where best to actually end the story, the twins going to Hogwarts would be predictable and boring so I want to cross that off...perhaps six years in the future with little flashbacks or thoughts to their first accidental magic? their abilities? the things they'd been doing over the years as a family? perhaps their seventh birthday or something? what do you guys think? obviously the story does have to end im just a little stuck on how and I do want to give it an end worthy of this story :) but i'd love to end it with them together...maybe the wedding would be the best way? Although i would love to have shown the twins a little older maybe with another sibling ;) R&R please you're ideas and suggestions would be great for a conflicted writer!
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Invisible

Chapter 111

Two Weeks Later - The Wedding

Absolutely everyone other than Alec and Daniel had made it to Severus and Harry's wedding, Alec and Daniel were in St. Mungo's the baby was overdue, but they didn't want to risk going in, so they were waiting hopeful that the baby would make an indication of wanting to come into the world. They weren't sure how to proceed so ironically enough they were asking Severus and Andy on advice, it was his potion and she had experience delivering children from said potion. They had sent a gift with a very apologetic note attached but both Severus and Harry understood. Severus wouldn't have left Harry for anything, if he'd had to deal with concerns like that. Not that Harry's delivery had been smooth; it had been a mass of panic until the twins had been delivered.

For two wizards who had wished for a small wedding they seemed to have quite a turnout for their big day. Andy Welsh and her husband Dean was there, as well as all Severus' close acquaintances from America and their wives Jacob Grimm and his wife Penelope with their daughter Alisha who had recovered from her sudden and unexpected illness and was back to her normal happy yet hyper self. Soren had come, as had Russell and his new fiancé Bernice, Damon and his wife Sasha, Rick and his wife Amanda James it was the first time for Harry or Severus to see their wives since a few had never appeared with their husbands at conferences, either due to work obligations or looking after children. Harry's best friends had all made the big day too, Luna and Neville, Viktor and Lukas, Fleur and Gary and last but no means least Cho and Cedric. To top it off, Don, Sirius, Remus, Fenrir and Amelia had come with their little cub Lucian.

Then of course for family they had Eileen and their twins, who were flourishing beautifully under Harry and Severus' care. Harry had understandably not invited the Potters' to his big day, he wanted this day to be about himself and Sev, not tarnished by their appearance, while he no longer felt bitter all the time, seeing them out make him feel that way.

Harry and Severus stood together watching Hunter and Hector toddling down the isle, with the help of Neville and Viktor keeping them safe from falling, both were smiling toothlessly at their dads, babbling nonsensically, dressed adorably. Black trousers, white shirt, black cloak, with small clip on green ties everyone was positively cooing over the spectacle which wasn't a surprise since everyone there loved the twins to bits. Viktor and Neville were dressed traditionally as well for the wedding. There was light music playing in the background, but nothing too ostentatious or loud.

Soon they had walked up the small isle to their parents, but were situated quite happily into their buggy by their uncle Viktor and uncle Neville sitting next to their grandmother, Eileen who was trying and failing to hide her tears of joy. She had given up hope of Severus ever marrying, ever having children or being happy, for such a long time. Who would have thought the young boy she had given a paper job to would have led to all this? To her sons happiness? To her being a grandmother? To bring them together as a real family, oh this was a joyous day for her and she couldn't help but remember how it had all began and where it had led to. Her son had often commented with a sad glimmer in his eye that he would ever only be remembered as a Death Eater, that none of his accomplishments in the potion community would matter overall. It had been one of
his biggest regrets, and she had tried to make him see it wasn't so, but now he believed it himself. Dabbing her eyes again, she handed Hunter his dummy which had fallen into the buggy a wide smile on her face despite her tears. Sitting up straighter when the Minister came in, straightening out her blue dress, which hung just down by her knees, many had commented on it saying she looked wonderful. Eileen had never really worn dresses since she was seventeen until a few years ago, so to be complimented made her self esteem shoot up, after being downtrodden for so many years by Tobias she finally felt a sense of normalcy, life was good now and she knew if she were to die today, she would go a happy, happy witch of a woman.

Fleur who was sitting next to Eileen rubbed her back, giving her comfort seeing as she was so overwhelmed today. She was feeling a little nostalgic herself if truth be told. She'd felt it at Luna's wedding as well; it surely must be a day for reminiscing. She'd been seventeen when she first met Harry at Hogwarts during the Triwizard tournament. She'd put herself above all the younger years, never giving them the time of day, especially the ones who had drooled all over her. She'd hated being away from home, but the temptation of proving herself to a male dominating society had been too tempting to resist. She had endured the thought of coming, but it hadn't been endurance for long. She'd made really good friends at Hogwarts, ones that had lasted after her return to France. Now she had a lovely home here, with a fiancé she adored who treated her like a princess. Who would have thought the shy Ravenclaw would be one of the most renowned Potion Makers in the world? The first man to give birth, to twins of all things, they made her long for children of her own. Her parents would never forgive her if she got pregnant before being married, turning to Gary, she smiled at him; perhaps it was time to set a date? They'd been engaged for more than long enough.

"Oh dear, I know that look," Gary said giving her a look of contemplation, "Do I even want to know?" he added with a teasing smile, he loved her with all that he was, he'd give anything for her and she knew it too.

"Maybe," she said mysteriously, giving him a wink she turned back to listen to the Minister speak.

"Dearly beloved we are gathered here to day to join these men in holy matrimony." the Minister spoke clearly and with solemnity that a wedding deserved without it being grave something they practiced to perfection. "To ever intertwine their lives, so they may flourish, their souls join as one for all eternity." he was very proud that he had been chosen to do their marriage ceremony, even if he had been asked to take an unbreakable Vow. It was understandable, they didn't want the press to clamour together and ruin their day.

Luna watched them with pride and affection clearly written across her face, she was alone in knowing this hadn't been the future she saw for either of them once upon a time. She knew how far Harry had gone to keep the love of his life alive and whole. Nobody not even his other closest friends did, she hadn't even told Neville. Not because they couldn't be trusted, they could and always would be. It just wasn't fair to tell them since Harry had broken the law to do what he had. She didn't care and neither would they, but if it did somehow come to light they could be seen as accomplices and end up in Azkaban. It wouldn't, but the possibility kept Harry from revealing it, that and he didn't want anyone to know. Harry would have had the twins in the other timeline, but their names would have been very different, one of them would have been named after Severus the other would have been named Samuel. Harry would have raised them but he would never have been happy without Severus. All those potions they'd created for the betterment of the magical world would never have been created. It was astonishing knowing what she did, how the life of one person could inspire each other, to allow them to be all that they could be to change the world. Not many could say the same thing.

"Should anyone have any reason why those two shouldn't be bound in holy matrimony, speak now
or forever hold you peace." the Minister added, gazing around at the witnesses who were here to see the men bound together in marriage who would support them. Unsurprisingly the room remained silent, waiting silently for the Minster to move on, that question made everyone tense whether they knew nobody would interrupt or not it was just something they did.

"Harry, will you take this man to be your husband, to love, to comfort, to cherish, to honour and remain faithful until death do you part until you find each other in the next life?" the Minister questioned.

Harry and Severus had decided long and hard which ones to do and decided on these simple ones, because they spoke to the pair of them from the heart, "I do." he stated with a small smile playing across his lips, Harry had wanted to marry him for years, would have done it sooner if he'd been able to but seeing their sons toddling down? Merlin he'd never felt more proud or happy in his life.

"Severus, do you take this man to be your husband, to love, to comfort, to cherish, to honour and remain faithful until death do you part until you find each other in the next life?" the Minster then questioned Severus facing him now.

"I do." Severus declared without a second's hesitation.

"And will all of you as witnesses do all you can to ensure you do all in your power to uphold these two in their bonding?" the Minister then looked out at the friends and family who were all there to see them bonded and married.

"We do," they solemnly replied as one, Eileen had a slight warble to her voice but it was just as strong as everyone else's.

The Minister then gave them both a nod, giving them the go ahead for the vows. Harry stepped aside to take the ring from Hunter, who was the ring bearer for them. It had been safely stuck to the pillow in the buggy to prevent his son from eating it or Merlin forbid it being lost. Severus did the same with Hector, giving his son a kiss on the forehead before standing back up and Severus began to speak from the heart.

"I promise to be your lover, companion and friend. Your partner in parenthood. Your ally in conflict. Your greatest fan and your toughest adversary. Your consolation in times of disappointment. I will love you, hold you and honour you, I will respect you, encourage you and cherish you, through sorrow and success, I take you to be my partner for life I promise above all else to live in truth with you and to communicate fully and fearlessly, I give you my hand and my heart as a sanctuary of warmth and peace. I promise to nurture your dreams, because through them your soul shines. You make me happier than I could ever imagine. You have made me a better person. You are my light, and you've shown me more love than I've ever known. This is my sacred vow to you, my equal in all things. One lifetime with you could never be enough." Severus vowed, reciting it from memory, having memorised the entire thing, helped along the way by his vow stemming from the words his heart longed to tell Harry every single night. He had promised himself to do this, to show Harry on the biggest day of their lives how much he meant to him. Every word was worth it, seeing the look on Harry's face, it was obvious he hadn't been expecting it - not by a long shot. He smirked just a tad, in smug satisfaction as he placed the ring on Harry's finger.

The women all sniffed at Severus heart glowing words, those that had married remembering their own, others just for their words knowing how much Harry needed them, would cherish them. Severus wasn't a many of many words, it was obvious to almost everyone there that he had done this for Harry.
"I have called you professor, Master, my life partner, my significant other, my companion, my lover... now I vow to love you always as my lawfully wedded husband. To be your partner in all things, working with you as a part of the whole. I always had dreams and aspirations, things I wanted to do, then I met you and you helped me fulfil every single dream I ever had. The only other dream I have now...is to be with you for as long as I live. I will celebrate your triumphs and love you more for any failures." Harry said his voice catching for a hint of a second, not that Severus had ever failed in anything but he wanted Sev to know he loved him no matter what and would continue to do so. "I promise to be supportive and to always make our family's love and happiness my priority. I will be yours in plenty and in want, in sickness and in health, in failure and in triumph. I will dream with you, celebrate with you and walk beside you through whatever our lives may bring. You are my person—my love and my life, today and always." With that Harry placed the ring on Severus' finger.

Viktor smiled as he watched on, he never thought that Hunter and Hector could be his, no hint of bitterness. Their break-up had been a mutual thing. He'd never have been able to give Harry the time he needed back then, he still needed it now Viktor reckoned. He was away playing Quidditch far too much for Harry to have been truly happy with him in the long run. It would have led to bitterness and unhappiness, no they'd both found someone to love who was most suitable and compatible with them. You could see the way Harry lit up that Severus was his whole entire world, well the twins too that much goes without saying. He'd always known Harry would end up with someone older than him that could give him the support and emotional stability he desperately needed in his life. All he had accomplished was thanks to Severus' help, the Potters had been idiots to ignore their son, and Harry was by far the best of the bunch.

"Now that both Severus and Harry have shared their solemn vows with us today, with the joining of hands I now pronounce you wed and bonded." The Minister said clearly, "You may now kiss to seal your vow and bond."

Harry and Severus gave a quick, sedate kiss, not one for displays of affection in public. Despite that everyone rose to their feet cheering for the newly married couple who only had eyes for each other at the moment. Green staring into black, their love for each other clear as day, loving each other all the more on this day of all days.

"I give to you, Harry and Severus Prince-Peverell." the Minister added, before stepping from the podium, his part was done he gave both Severus and Harry a nod before disappearing through the side door he had come in earlier. They were having the reception in the same building, it made for a smoother day with the twins and added to the fact they'd spent a fortune on Portkey's for everyone they wanted to minimise cost just a bit. Lack of money might never be a problem for them, but it didn't mean they wanted to go overboard.

"He looks so happy doesn't he?" Sirius said with a goofy grin on his face, utterly drunk. He'd been somewhat surprised he'd been invited, since Harry and he weren't actually talking much, but he understood, Harry was a parent now, nearly every waken moment he spent with the twins. He'd been over a few times, he absolutely adored the twins, James would too if he was given a chance. Not that he would ever say anything like that to Harry, James had admittedly made his bed, and all he could do was lay in it.

Remus just shook his head wordlessly at Sirius' words, "Yes, he does," he eventually said seeing the puppy dog look on Sirius' aged face. His eyes continued to travel to the side of Sirius, seeing Fenrir Greyback happy made him grit his teeth in fury. He hated the man more than he hated anyone else, perhaps even Voldemort. He shouldn't be allowed to be happy; he should be locked
up away from everyone. Especially seeing him with his little boy in his hands, who looked so tiny in the tall muscular arms of the alpha werewolf.

"We could have that," Sirius said, knowing where Remus was looking without needing to look himself since he had been watching the little boy himself.

"I would never condemn a child to my life, especially not a baby," Remus warned him, shaking his head vehemently. Not seeing Rick looking at him curious from where he sat nearby.

"The potions make it so it doesn't hurt," Sirius argued, "The baby if he has the gene will be like transforming into an Animagus form once a month. All the worry that the baby might have the gene is moot; he or she might not even have it."

"We don't know that," Remus told him feeling defeated.

"If I may interject, the brave might not live forever, but the cautious do not live at all, it's one of the sayings I take to heart at each situation I'm faced with." Rick informed them, "Do you doubt Harry's potions?"

"Of course not," Remus replied immediately, not even having to think about the answer.

"And do the potions not help else the pain fully?" Rick enquired.

"Considerably, Harry says I shouldn't feel anything in a few more months' time after the Wolfsbane potion is completely washed from my system." Remus admitted, and he did feel better, each month that passed the pain was lessening greatly, he just couldn't believe the damage the original Wolfsbane had done to him over the years.

"He knows what he's talking about, I've never met anyone more proficient, well except Severus of course," Rick said wryly, but sincerely. "If he says the pain will no longer be a problem then it won't. Harry would never consider lying about things when it comes to children." he blatantly ignored the look of gratitude Sirius Black was currently giving him, he wasn't getting in the middle of a dispute between partners, hell no, nobody came out of that unscathed. He had been more focused on the potion aspect of their little dispute of theirs.

"See," Sirius said, "I just want you to think about it that's all, I mean really think about it." Remus' eyes trailed to Lucian Greyback again, it wasn't fair that the werewolf who had made his life near unbearable could have a family and be happy yet here he was denying himself. He could see the look of total adoration the three adult werewolves had for the child. Don, Greyback and the alpha female. He'd never considered a family as a young boy, before he realized he was gay of course, because of his affliction. It had never been a problem between him and Sirius until now, now that there were options for them. "I'll think about it, I promise." Remus said solemnly, he owed both of them that surely? Rick was right, Harry wouldn't lie when it comes to children, and his heart ached just remembering the few times he’d held Hector and Hunter.

"Thank you," Sirius said softly, his blue eyes shimmering just slightly, it was more than he had gotten out of Remus before. Hopefully he would remember this, but Remus could drink almost everyone under the table, werewolves couldn't get drunk - not really. Sirius stood up ready to get another drink, hoping and praying that Remus would really think about it.

"Alec? What are you doing here? Is everything alright?" Harry stood up immediately, concerned for him when he noticed his entrance. He relaxed completely when he saw the wide beaming smile
on his face, it was obvious Daniel had given birth and both were safe and had a good delivery, there was no way he would be here otherwise.

"I'd like you to be the first to see Alexander Daniel Fawley Selwyn-Warren," Alec said, handing him a picture vibrating with excitement. "Born three hours ago to the exact minute, six pounds," they owed Harry so much, in fact both his and Daniel's parents were writing out checks for Harry, their relief that the family lines would continue was just too much to contain and they felt they owed the potions creator for the blessing they'd received. They were even more ecstatic that it was a boy, and they planned on getting a Portkey over to St. Mungo's to see the newest member of their family; he wouldn't be surprised if they were there within an hour or so. Alec personally didn't care what sex the child was, he was just happy both Daniel and the baby were healthy and alive.

Harry took the moving photograph, a smile of his own stretching across his face, "I'm glad everything worked out for you both, he's beautiful and has a good strong name." Severus, who had come up to stand beside him, looked at the photo as well, giving his usual agreement of "Indeed."

"Did you pick out girls names?" Harry asked curiously.

"Yes, Amelia Danielle, maybe some day it could happen," Alec said with a hopeful glint to his eyes.

"I doubt Daniel will be agreeing any time soon," Severus chuckled dryly.

"Very true," Alec agreed in amusement. "I'm sorry I wasn't here," he added, "But congratulations to both of you, I hope you have a long and prosperous marriage."

"Thank you," both replied in gratitude.

Alec dug into his cloak pocket bringing out a small box, before tapping it and returning it to its original size. "This is for you. I didn't want to send it via owl, it seemed too impersonal." he handed it over and Severus accepted it, and placed it on their table.

"Thank you," Harry said once more, "We'll definitely be over to visit in a day or so."

"No honeymoon?" Alec teased.

"No, we're going away for a single night, its enough for both of us, we've done our fair share of travelling, but maybe when the twins are older we'll do a bit more." Harry answered, leaning against Severus. "I assume you can't stay?" knowing he wouldn't, if the situations were reversed he'd be the same.

"Unfortunately not, I hope you can forgive me," Alec replied, "Daniel's just having a rest and suggested I bring the gift over and I did want you to be the first to see him, if it weren't for you my little boy wouldn't be here." feeling very emotional, overwhelmed and extremely happy.

"I wouldn't consider doing anything different myself," Severus stated immediately. "In fact I rarely left Harry's side for at least a week afterwards, give Daniel our best when you return, we'll be by in a few days like Harry said," Severus promised.

"I can't wait to meet him," Harry added, giving Alec a quick hug, knowing he was a bit like Severus when it comes to…well everything actually, he was just an older version of Severus. "Go take care of your family." he added.

Alec nodded once before he disappeared with a crack.
"I don't suppose you want to dance?" Harry asked with a sudden sly grin.

"I don't," Severus replied immediately, "I do not think my toes have recovered from yesterday." his tone dry.

Harry sniggered in remembrance; Eileen had tried to get them to dance for one dance at their wedding. They had agreed after she asked them for what felt like the millionth time, he hadn't been very good, and Severus had suffered because of it, he'd stepped on his toes more often than not. Needless to say the lesson hadn't lasted long, Severus seemed relieved by his inability to dance - he definitely didn't want a spectacle made.

"You're just relived we can't do a dance," Harry teased, nudging him before both of them reclaimed their seats.

"No my toes are," Severus corrected smirking.

Harry just laughed, "Sure thing," as soon as they sat down the food appeared on their and everyone's tables, Parma Ham and Mozzarella Salad with Fresh Figs and Balsamic Dressing, and it looked mouth-wateringly delicious. Of course the twins couldn't yet eat the food on the table, but chicken nuggets and chips appeared for them, which Fleur and Luna were all too eager to feed to them - not that they needed much help too much on them.

"That was delicious, there was definitely not enough of it," Fleur said, after eating the small starter.

"I agree, I'll definitely need to get the House-elves to try making this," Harry said, glancing over at the werewolves, unsurprised to see that they hadn't eaten much, it would probably upset their stomachs. "Excuse me," he said slipping from the table and making his way over to Fenrir, who he had placed on a different table from Remus not wishing to cause any antagonism on his wedding day.

"Thank you for coming," Harry said as he crouched down, bopping Lucian on his nose laughing softly when the little boy went cross-eyed. He was adorable, and when he was in wolf form? Merlin he made the most outrageously gorgeous little cub he'd ever seen. Admittedly it had been from afar, he'd taken a picture and given it to the pack, and he could have sworn Fenrir had almost teared up at it. "The main course will be more to your liking, I had them make steaks for you all, rare, and I made sure to tell them that it was for you. They were extremely obliging, I know the food that's being served would have been rather difficult to swallow." especially if they were used to eating stuff raw and they were. They only ate stews and that during cold weathers, when they were ill or if a stubborn child refused to eat. Werewolf or not, they needed vegetables to get strong especially if they'd been lone wolves.

"Thank you," Fenrir said dipping his head in appreciation of the extent Harry had gone for them. It made wearing these constricting clothes worth it - almost. He'd never be comfortable in these sorts of attires, give him a pair of jeans and a vest any day. Admittedly it was nice wearing clothes that didn't smell of your own sweat all the time, another advantage they had at the sanctuary. He honestly hadn't expected to enjoy staying there, he'd assumed he'd just have to grit his teeth and bear it, solely for the chance of having a child…but along the way he began thinking of it as home. He was an Alpha to over seventy werewolves who had sought out the sanctuary or been brought there by Cedric Diggory. Not only that but he'd grown fond of Harry as well, finally understanding Don's friendship with the wizard.

"It's no problem," Harry said, and it wasn't, he had invited them the least he could do was give them something they could eat. The starter disappeared knowing the main course would soon he served he added, "I'll talk to you later." before wandering back over to his own table.
Just as he sat the plates appeared, Chicken Breast with a Black Olive and Tomato Sauce on a bed of Roasted Mediterranean Vegetables just as Harry and Severus had selected for the main course. Everyone had different drinks, the open bar allowed them to choose whichever they liked.

"This is lovely, you decided well," Eileen said, biting into her meal with relish. She had put a bunch of menus together, but they had decided on their own.

"I'm just more glad the weathers held," Harry said sheepishly, gazing up at the clear blue beautiful sky, they were eating outside, but there was a canopy above that could be moved to give them all shelter if it was raining and slide along glass doors. When it had poured yesterday he'd been slightly worried, but it looked as if it had been for naught.

"Where did you both decide to go?" Sirius enquired to Severus and Harry's left (different tables of course).

"Go?" Harry asked, craning his neck to see.

"On your honeymoon," Sirius elaborated.

"We're just going to Paris for a single night, we'll be back tomorrow early evening," Harry answered.

"Only one night?" Sirius wagged his eyebrows suggestively.

"You are wasted," Harry snorted, knowing Severus was pursing his lips without even looking.

"Only a little," Sirius protested.

"Uh-huh," Harry nodded as if agreeing with him causing him to lean back against his chair with doofy grin.

"Do you remember that prank we pulled on Petunia's fiancé at James and Lily's wedding?" Sirius snorted, chuckling under his breath before downing another fire whiskey.

"Sirius, enough," Remus stated, glad nobody was listening to this, and too busy eating their dinner before it got cold.

"What?" Sirius protested, staring at Remus petulantly.

"Do not go there Sirius, I wont be responsible for your mistakes, not this time." Remus hissed angrily.

"Coactus sobrietate," Rick muttered under his breath, aiming his wand at Sirius Black, he refused to let anyone and he meant anyone sully Severus and Harry's big day, especially not a wizard who apparently had absolutely zero control over his drinking.

It didn't take long for Sirius to crash back to reality at all.

"Pass him over," Harry said, gesturing for his son who was crying.

"Its fine, Harry, I've got him," Luna insisted, standing up and jiggling him about like Hunter liked.

"I've not got to see them all day," Harry almost pouted as he watched his best friend comfort his son.
Viktor and the others all laughed at the face Harry was pulling. Luna and Neville would be returning with Eileen to Prince Manor to stay the night and look after the twins, even though Eileen had insisted she could do it, Harry didn't want to use her all the time, and he felt as though he was using her as a free babysitter, so she deserved a decent nights sleep, so he'd asked for the others to help for the night. Severus wouldn't let the twins stay anywhere but the manor since it was the most protected and they knew it, so they'd volunteered, and they would be sleeping in one of the many guest bedrooms.

"Do you think Alec and Daniel will stay in Britain?" Fleur asked thoughtfully, having finally finished her meal. "I mean their entire families are over in America it isn't easy." she should know she was here away from her entire family too.

"I actually get the impression they're glad," Lukas admitted.

"I can see why, they were probably pressured a lot, to stick to your guns for so many years…they have my respect." Cedric added he couldn't help but cave to his own parents when they put the pressure on him. If there was anything worth not bowing to pressure…it would definitely be for love he thought to himself as he looked at Cho she was absolutely radiant tonight.

"Nobody can tell Alec what to do," Harry snorted at the thought, he was definitely the strongest of the two; it would be like someone telling Sev what to do. "I wonder if their boy will take after him in personality and strength?"

"Oh he'll have them wrapped around their fingers in no time!" Cho exclaimed, "Just like Hunter and Hector." everyone was quick to agree.

"I've always wondered what made you choose those names," Rick said after a few seconds of silence.

"Hunter I chose to honour my relatives on the Black side of the tree, I didn't want to make it an obvious constellation or star, so I picked Hunter, I have a relative called Hunter Peverell way back in the beginning of the family tree, it's also the name of a hero in mythology, a brave warrior. Hector was a Prince, a nod to Severus' family and he was also a brave warrior." Harry revealed for the first time his true reason for naming his kids with the names he had.

Luna smiled mysteriously as if she had known all along as the others all contemplated everything Harry had said.

"You put a lot of thought into it," Penelope said, brushing her daughter's hair back, "We just chose a name we liked."

"I liked them too, it just so happens there is more reasons behind it," Harry explained with a smile. "I'm so glad she's feeling better." changing the subject expertly. Jacob just gave him a knowing look, as he handed his daughter a drink.

"I know, she didn't half give us a scare," Penelope said, "Isn't that right sweetheart?"

"Ice cream!" she cheered completely oblivious to the conversation as the dessert appeared.

Homemade individual Pavlov's with ice cream and summer fruits.

"You know this is nice," Amanda, Rick's wife said, "I wish I had thought of a venue like this for our wedding," gesturing to her husband, "Being able to talk without music overwhelming everything, although I do like a good dance."
"That's one thing I can't do," Harry said sheepishly, "With so many kids we thought it was best not to have too much music," there were four kids here, Penelope's daughter, the twins and of course little Lucian.

"Probably a good idea," Luna nodded, her and Neville's wedding had music and the kids had cried being able to feel the vibrations even with the silencing spell up. In the end Harry and Severus had taken the twins home and called it a night.

"Another round?" Harry asked those at his table standing up, ready to go to the bar.

"I'll come," Luna said standing, and they began wandering over to the bar.

"Don't think I haven't noticed you haven't had a drink all night," Harry said nudging her gently. "Something you want to tell us?"

"I only found out this morning," Luna said her eyes wide, she hadn't expected Harry to realize, or anyone for that matter sticking to things that would give her the appearance of drinking. "I didn't want to make this about us, this is your day, and we'll let everyone know another time."

"It's just more reason to celebrate, not something that takes away from me and Sev," Harry argued, as he grabbed a tray and began to get everyone's drink, Luna helping along the way, filling a tray of her own up.

"Just please...let tonight be just about you and Sev, we can celebrate me and Nev another day." Luna pleaded with him.

"Alright," Harry conceded, "If that's what you want. But I'm happy for you, you're going to be an amazing mum, you're a fantastic auntie, the twins love you."

"I love them too," Luna said blushing at Harry's words. "There, now we can head back."

"Congratulations," Harry said giving her shoulder a squeeze extremely excited for her. "At least the twins will have cousins real close in age." he teased her further.

"Hush you," Luna muttered, still red in the face as she joined everyone, absently passing the drinks around.

Harry smirked at Neville giving him a nod watching him return that nod with a beaming smile; everyone other than Severus seemed oblivious of it. Severus did give Harry an enquiring look, which he in turn flipped his hand indicating he would discuss it later. He would do as Luna wished and keep quiet for the remainder of the night.

Chapter End Notes

Will Lily ever get out of St. Mungo's if so what will happen to her? What will Roxy do with her life after Hogwarts? Will Nick marry Susan Bones? Will they have kids? Will they ever interact with their cousins or will Harry prevent all contact? Will we see Harry letting James and Nick see the twins at least just once a year growing mellow with old age? of will the only contact the twins know from 'cousins' be from Harry's best friends? hmm what else would you like to see in the very last chapter of Invisible? yes I know :( I'm going to miss writing it! it's been great fun but the story has to end at
some point...If there are any loose ends you can think of you want answers to then please feel free to review and let me know :) I'll do my best to incorporate them all into the story's last chapter! R&R please
Chapter 112

Lily Evans stared at the newspaper, her red hair dull and lifeless even the sun gleaming into the breakfast room in the secure ward of St. Mungo's, not even the sun could give it a gleam. She hadn't had it cut in years, it had always been long but now it was ridiculously long. Today her freedom had finally been granted to her, and she was waiting on James coming to get her. She had been out only three times on day releases, with supervision in the nine years that had passed. Her daughter's graduation and wedding as well as her son's wedding to Susan Bones. To say her family wasn't what she had dreamed it would be, would be putting it lightly. She'd always imagined her son marrying Ginny Weasley, a fellow Gryffindor and Order member, and her daughter she'd imagined her marrying into the Longbottom family. Furthering the Potter name and connections, making sure everyone knew it was as light as could be. The Longbottoms were the connections; the Weasley's while they had no financial comforts were all hard workers and anti-dark. She hated Susan Bones, she had interrupted her every time she tried to talk to her son at his wedding, it had been the first time she saw him in years and she couldn't let them talk? She hadn't seen him or the family since, James brought her pictures of her grandchildren when he visited but that was it.

"Lily?" called one of the Medi-witches, giving her a small smile as she did for all the patients, it was one of pity mixed with someone who was genuinely good natured enough to care about those inside St. Mungo's hospital. "James is here, its time." she had a bag of her belongings in a clear plastic bag.

Lily gave one last glance at the window, before she stood up and followed Janine out of the room; she'd been in here so long it was almost terrifying to move knowing she was leaving. At the same time she didn't want to stay, she wanted her family back, she wanted to actually see her grandchildren and not just photos of them, help raise them like she'd raised her children.

They walked through the corridors in silence, before long they reached the family room where James was currently waiting. James took the bag from Janine, giving her a thankful smile and a nod of appreciation.

"Did you come alone?" Lily asked tentatively, sometimes she didn't know what was going to set James off so she tended to ask things with uncertainty. Not reacting to the Medi-witch closing the door to give them privacy still staring beseechingly into James.

"Yes, yes, I did," James replied, his hair was shaved shorter than normal, and he was dressed to impress. "We have to go, I have a…meeting to attend," he added, lying slightly, he was meeting up with his lovely girlfriend who he was hoping would become his fiancé, although she was kind of annoyed at him right now. He'd bought a small one bedroom cottage for Lily at Hogsmeade and she was acting as though he'd betrayed her. There were many things he might be but a cheat wasn't one of them. He didn't want Lily living with him but he couldn't in all good conscience let her be homeless. He felt to blame at her mental state, if he hadn't been so blinded himself he could have got her help when Voldemort attacked, preventing all this heartache.

"Where are Nick and Roxy?" Lily enquired as James opened the door and they began walking the
rest of the way out of the hospital now that they were past the secure wing.

"At work," James explained, Nick was now an inventor, he had just created the newest broom in the market, and it was doing very well better than the Nimbus. Roxy worked in the brand new department in the Ministry of magic, that was created for the sole purpose of keeping children safe, its counterpart in the Muggle world was called social services, they'd tried calling it Peverell services but Harry had shot them straight down, just because he had worked hard to get the department up and running didn't mean he wanted it named after him. There was a meeting in the Wizengamot right now for the final deciding of the name he wasn't sure if Harry was there or not.

"Oh, when will I see them?" Lily asked breathing in the fresh air coming from the sliding doors.

"I'm not sure," James admitted he hadn't quite been able to tell her that Roxy and Nick had moved on with their lives and they didn't want to see her. He'd made excuse after excuse and Lily for someone so bright just didn't seem to realize her children were grown adults now and were just getting on with their lives, they were married they had kids and careers. To think he'd been terrified his two other kids would pay for the sins of him and Lily…well it simply wasn't true and for that he would be forever grateful.

"I see," Lily became despondent again, this was a big day, she was finally free from the hospital, their lives could get back to normal, and she could prove herself to them so why weren't they coming to see her? No, they were just hard workers, just like her and James; she always knew they would be.

"I'm going to Apparate us," James said, grimacing at the sight of the press taking pictures, honestly he hated those hounds. Grasping a hold of Lily's wrist he Apparated them away before anyone could get too close, thanking his lucky stars he was an Auror so he had the ability to do so in front of the hospital while patients and reporters had to walk towards the entrance.

"Wow, everything's changed! Where's the Shrieking Shack?" Lily said in awe as she looked around, there were far more buildings than she remembered it having. It wasn't the small place where students could come now it was utterly thriving with activity and children.

"It was knocked down," James said, continuing to walk towards the cottage. "It's now a children's home,"

"Who would think of something like that?" Lily scoffed, "It seems silly to me, and I've never seen a homeless child in the magical world, its money that could have been better spent elsewhere."

"They stayed in Knockturn Alley," James answered quietly, staring at the building that had replaced the horrible shack - which had held a lot of fond memories of his younger years. His eyes dimmed just remembering the last few weeks, how many kids they'd found down there, how many had run away, how many didn't have family; the magical world had completely let them down in more ways than one. There was hope for them now; Headmistress Minerva McGonagall was trying her hardest to see about getting those who were at the right age into Hogwarts when term started again. It wasn't going to be easy, they could only sponsor so many people, and money would need to be found elsewhere for the rest of the children. Harry was already sponsoring over a dozen children at Hogwarts, all of them werewolves, things had changed so much for them over the years.

"Hey James!" called Sirius, rushing over, his hair greying just slightly due to age. "Hello, Lily." he added upon seeing her feeling a little awkward he hadn't seen her in what? Over ten years.

"Hey, what are you doing here?" James asked in surprise, "Where's Regulus, Phoenix and Orion?" Sirius had three children with Remus and despite Remus' constant worry, none of the kids had the
gene - they weren't werewolves. Two boys and a girl, despite his hatred of his family Sirius had stuck to tradition and given them all names of stars. Regulus Alphard Lupin-Black and his twin Orion Remus Lupin-Black and the adorable little girl they had name Phoenix Andromeda Lupin-Black. Although they were usually just called Black's, which wasn't right, the Lupin name had been just as pure as the Black's until Lyall Lupin had fallen in love with a Muggle he'd loved dearly. Remus didn't seem to mind.

"They're at Fortescue's with Remus," Sirius chuckled, "You should have heard Reg, Moony totally walked into that trap,"

"You're married?" Lily blinked unable to comprehend what she was seeing. "You never seemed like the marrying kind," she added a little dazed.

"Married with three kids," Sirius said wryly, "I never thought I'd see it myself, Merlin can you imagine how we would have reacted as kids if we were told everything that would happen?" he'd also been sober for eight years, he didn't drink, not after that close call at Harry's wedding, he'd realized he had to stop or he was just going to continue downward on a spiral out of control. Remus agreeing to have a child with him had been the deciding factor, and he didn't regret it - not even a little bit.

James just grinned, "We need to get going, and I've got a meeting afterwards."

"A meeting huh?" Sirius said, his blue eyes twinkling deviously. He had been with James when he got the ring; he'd wanted a fresh start with a new ring and new history. So he had gone and bought one just for Marian McKinnon, Marlene's mother Mary McKinnon it turned out had a child while she was still a teenager attending Hogwarts. The family had sent the child off to distant relatives, James wasn't even sure if Marlene had known she had an older sibling by four years. She certainly had never mentioned one, she had been killed along with what they all thought as her entire family, during the war, nobody knew who exactly did the deed but it was suspected that Travers did it as he was arrested for their murders. Marian had come to see where her family had lived, and to finally sort out the finances at Gringotts and he'd asked her who she was, that she reminded him of someone and he'd stayed here, for him, and he was finally happy. He had someone strong to lean on, someone who stuck by him even when he admitted everything he'd done - knowing someone would tell her or the papers would and she had sat and listened without judgement asking a few questions here and there. "Alright, I'll let you go, I need to get back before Remus starts worrying, I just dropped off my approval to sponsor six of the kids, they'll be joining everyone at Hogwarts." a prideful glint in his eyes.

"I'll see you all tonight at dinner?" James asked, questioning whether their monthly Sunday get together was still on.

"You bet!" Sirius said waving before he was off, still moving towards Fortescue's.

"He…he…he got married?" Lily gaped at Sirius' back totally shocked, "Kids?" turning to James bewildered. It was against everything Sirius believed, she'd always thought he'd be a bachelor then that was wiped when he started dating Remus but still…marriage and kids? "Why didn't you tell me any of this?"

"You never asked," James stated calmly, "Come on, let's get going."

"Why are we here in Hogsmeade anyway?" Lily asked curiously, her mind still reeling at the news of Sirius having kids.

"Come on, this is the cottage," James said, unlocking the door, leaving it open and entering the
"You live here now?" Lily asked, it looked lovely but it had a really unlived in feel to it.

"No," James replied, sighing softly, "I bought the cottage for you, it's in your name, and the deeds are on the kitchen table."

"Why? What was wrong with me using the place I was before…?" Lily queried.

"It's a Potter property, it belongs to Roxy now, and this is yours, your own place." James replied, "I'm sure you'll be comfortable here." She wasn't a Potter anymore, he wanted to keep his families properties in the family, there wasn't that many of them, and Roxy had been living there for years now with her family. She'd married Dennis Creevy, of all people, but he'd grown into his looks and was actually really smart, he was able to keep up with Roxy intellectually, but when they'd married Dennis had given up his last name and taken on Roxy's, Roxy had just found out she was pregnant before the wedding, and Dennis had suggested it, he wanted his kids to have a good name, one that wouldn't see them ridiculed because they were 'Mud blood' and Roxy had agreed. With him giving the blessing it hadn't been a difficulty, it just meant more Potters. He placed the keys in her hand, he'd done his part, what more could anyone expect of him? He couldn't give up his whole life for her; Merlin only knows how she was going to react when she found out about Marian.

"Of course," Lily said blankly, wondering why they weren't staying at the manor together, there was more than enough room. "Thank you," she said softly, he was still as handsome as ever. Moving towards him, she was very surprised when he lifted his hands up to stop her.

"Don't Lily," James said, he didn't want her near him, and he wasn't going to give Marian any reason to distrust him.

"I but I thought…you waited for me…" Lily's green eyes gleamed with confusion.

"No, you mistake guilt and old fondness for something that isn't there anymore, Lily. I've moved on," James explained, perhaps it was better coming from him before she found out some other way.

"You're seeing someone?" Lily questioned, her heart breaking, she had been so stupid to think James still loved her.

"I am," James answered honestly, "I'm happy…I'm going to ask her to marry me."

"I see," Lily replied, her smile brittle, "Well, you have a meeting, I don't want you to be late because of me, go on, I'll be fine," she managed to keep her feelings at bay as James nodded and walked out looking awkward. Pressing her lips together she closed the door to her new small home, the lump building up until she couldn't hold the tears at bay as she watched James walk down to the gate and close it before he was gone and Lily had a feeling it was for good this time.

"Marian!" James called, making his way over to the restaurant he had booked.

"Hey, you're late, they've given our table away," She said, her brown hair tied up in a small pony tail, her blue eyes twinkling brightly showing she wasn't angry at him. "I ordered food to take away, how about we go and eat at home?" she suggested, she could see how strained James was, it was how he always was after visiting Lily and she honestly didn't understand why he put himself through it, well she did, it was some sort of penance for the things he'd done wrong in life.

"I'm so sorry," James groaned feeling frustrated, it had just taken a lot longer than he'd anticipated.
"It's fine," Marian insisted, "I'll go get it and we can head home," she stayed with James in Potter manor, the property her family had used had been partially destroyed when the Death Eaters had attacked their home. It had been left to become derelict for over thirty nearly forty years. She and James had salvaged what they could, that wasn't moss or covered in something she really didn't want to identify, and let it be torn down. Another new modern property had been put in its place, taking almost a year to build, it was currently being rented out with the aid of Gringotts, and there was just no point to it lying empty. Since then two others had been built on the land, both rented.

"I've got it," James insisted, wandering over before she had the chance to move.

Marian shook her head, biting her lip as she watched him, she had news to give him and she had no idea how he would react. They'd been together for a long time, dating for a long time especially by pureblood standards. She definitely didn't want to lose him, but she couldn't keep it a secret from him. Putting a smile on her face as he turned back to her, truthfully she was glad they weren't eating at the restaurant; she'd rather tell him at home.

"Ready to go?" James said happily enough, his tenseness evaporating as it always did eventually after a visit with Lily.

"Of course," she replied, and both of them Apparated away.

"Tish?" James called as soon as they returned home.

"What can Tish so for Master James?" Tish enquired her long flapping ears excited.

"Bring plates and glasses through, we're eating here instead," James asked, putting the food on the table.

The House-elf popped away to do as James asked.

"How did it go?" Marian asked.

Instead of answering James sat down, watching the woman he loved sit opposite him, "I know you don't understand why I go to visit her, for the longest time I thought she was the only one for me, she was beautiful, smart, and anything she asked for I gave her. I even let the House-elves go because she felt uncomfortable with them here, because she wanted to be the one to cook and clean. I thought after she and I divorced I'd be alone, and I was alright with that, I felt as though I deserved it. I was fine with helping my kids grow up as they should have, then I met you. You stirred so many feelings within me that I hadn't felt in so many years; I realized I hadn't been happy with Lily since before my daughter was born. I felt as though I had to be perfect though and that's what I tried to be. You accept me, all of me, and I love you for that." James said honestly, "I do not feel anything for Lily, I just had to help her, I feel partially responsible for her mental state, if I had just noticed something was wrong…I could have gotten her help a long time ago. I couldn't leave her to be homeless, I'm just not that sort of person, but if you want me to swear an oath that I don't love her then I'll do it in a heartbeat. It's you I love…" James removed the pouch holding the gold diamond engagement ring, opening it he removed the ring and took a deep breath; he was opening himself and leaving himself vulnerable he hadn't done that in such a long time. "Will you marry me?"

Marian gasped in shock, her hand going to her mouth; she hadn't seen that coming a mile away. Her other hand snuck to her stomach, she had to tell him before she answered him, would he still want to marry her? "I…need to tell you something…it might change your mind."

"You're not already married are you?" James asked his heart sinking, was that why she'd stayed
with him so long despite the fact he hadn't proposed? Oh, he knew it was a long time, too long, but he'd had to be sure before he did anything like that again.

"No, no nothing like that, Merlin no," she exclaimed shaking her head adamantly.

"Oh," James felt elated relief flow through him, "When what do you need to tell me?"

"We forgot the contraception spells three weeks ago…” she informed him letting him connect the dots.

James' jaw dropped, his eyes going comically wide, and if it were any other situation Marian would have laughed at him in amusement. "Yo-yo-you're pregnant?" he stuttered out, his heart dropping, he felt sick, nervous and horrified all in one go.

"Yes," Marian admitted, breath trembling slightly, James was just staring, why was he just staring? She wanted some sort of reaction from him. "If you don't want to get married now I understand…” and she did, James still felt so much guilt over what had happened to Harry. He'd taken blame that belonged to Lily and accepted it as his too. Lily had been the one to arrange the tutors, James had worked hard as an Auror, he had entrusted those tasks to her, and when he'd found out he had gotten a tutor for Harry, he should have known he always said, he'd ignored his son and there was absolutely nothing that could make it right.

"NO!" James said immediately, causing Marian to feel as though she'd been punched, "I do, I still want to get married…and I swear…I swear I'll be a good dad, I won't let them down, I promise. I'll even cut down my hours to part time, so I can spend more time with the baby…I'm going to be a dad…” he murmured, he was going to have a child who was younger than his grandchildren. He vowed he would never let this one down; he would do it perfectly this time. "Why would you want me near a baby after…" he was genuinely surprised.

"What you did was wrong, you know that, you don't need me telling you, but you made a mistake, you learned from it and apologised its more than some would do. That and I would never let you treat a child of ours the way you did Harry, I would leave first, but I trust you," Marian explained, clutching his hand in hers. James just nodded already knowing Marian would do just that. She'd said that during their quite brutally honest conversation about his kids and what he and Lily had done. It was the only time she'd mentioned kids, 'if I'd had any kids being treated like that I would have taken them and I would have walked' he'd never even thought to ask her if she wanted any, he'd already had kids, but she hadn't she'd put her career first. "I love who you are now, not who you were back then."

James felt over the moon, he shakily picked the ring back up that must have fallen at some point, and slid the ring onto her finger. Leaning over he passionately kissed her, "Thank you," he whispered reverently, with her his past didn't seem to matter so much, it didn't get on top of him. He felt as though he was looking to the future now instead of always dwelling on the past. He owed it all to her, and he never wanted to be without her - not a second more.

Marian just smiled at him, their meal forgotten as they shared a very intimate moment together.

The Black Residence

"Reg, Nix, Ori get down here now!" Sirius shouted, ignoring that Remus was killing himself with laughter in their kitchen in stitches. His three children came down the stairs; his daughter was first to lose control and begin laughing which caused the chain reaction of her older brothers laughing
with her. "What do you have to say for yourselves?" he was flashing neon yellow and green!

They just continued to chortle and laugh at his expense.

"You had better have the counter curse or you're grounded," Sirius informed them, his lips pursed so he didn't laugh along with them the little miscreants that they were.

"Well...what goes around comes around," Remus finally said, he was very health and happy, especially compared to how he had been ten years prior.

"Do not encourage them," Sirius whined, "Look at me!" he was green with neon yellow hair and he had everyone coming over for a visit.

"Don't worry dad," Phoenix eventually said, she unlike her brothers had Remus' hair, but they all had the prominent grey eyes that belonged to the House of Black. "It will fade away in a few minutes." Regulus and Orion had Sirius' wavy locks.

"It had better," Sirius warned them, Remus laughing at him was bad enough without James doing it too.

"Can we go over and visit Lucian?" Regulus asked the three kids had all been to sanctuary a lot over the years, and much to Remus' despair they had become fast friends with Lucian Greyback, of all the people it had to be him. Remus worked at the sanctuary, at first teaching them everything while Harry worked on getting them admitted into Hogwarts. It had taken over seven years for the agreement to be set, after those seven years he stayed around continued to teach those that wanted to further their education after N.E.W.T's which he enjoyed a lot more - it was a challenge he relished.

"Tomorrow, everyone's coming to dinner, they'll be here in a few minutes," Sirius told them, he might not be a harsh discipliner but his children did listen to him. Sighing in relief when his hands turned back to normal, well thank Merlin for that.

They groaned but nodded their heads reluctantly, moving into the kitchen nosing to see what was for dinner. The three of them shoving each other to get to it first only to be reprimanded by Remus who gave them a serious look getting them to settle down they knew better than to mess around in the kitchen.

"Uncle Sirius! Uncle Remus!" cried several children barrelling into the house, big excited grins on their faces as they raced down the hall.

"Calm down now!" Roxy admonished rolling her eyes, while her husband Dennis just grinned from where he stood his arms wrapped around her. They had two children, two boys one with sandy coloured hair like his father and one with red hair and the Potter hair nest curse. They were a few years younger than Sirius and Remus' kids but they all got on and thought of each other as cousins.

"You don't usually get here first," Sirius laughed as he hugged her, patting Dennis on the back harder than needed as always.

"For once we were running on time," Roxy grinned, "So what are you making for dinner? I'm absolutely famished."

"Silverside beef, potatoes, carrots, peas the whole deal," Sirius said, as he absently grabbed the plates and began to put them around the table so there was more than enough for everyone.

"Sounds divine," Roxy said, "I saw Harry and the kids today."
"Oh?" Sirius said giving her a curious look, it was nothing new for them to see Harry even though they normally just let the cousins talk and made awkward small talk themselves they certainly didn't act like brother and sister. "How are they doing?" he asked despite the fact he had just seen them all on Friday night.

"Yes," Roxy nodded, "They're doing good, and they were shopping for grade three potion kits."

Sirius laughed, "Hunter, he's got both Harry and Severus' talents when it comes to potions. If they don't watch the kids going to be so bored when it comes to potions class at Hogwarts." for twins Hunter and Hector couldn't be more different when it came to certain things, Potions was one of them, Hector had no patience for the subtle art of potion brewing, yet he liked charms and transfiguration and loved reading with his granny.

"Its grade three, he's already going to be bored," Dennis pointed out wryly; grade three was actually third year curriculum at Hogwarts.

"Wait, Harry's sending the twins to Hogwarts?" she was genuinely surprised, "I thought he wanted to send them somewhere else…Durmstrang I thought."

"Neither Severus nor Harry had a good time at Hogwarts, it's little wonder they contemplated the idea," Sirius sighed feeling wretched just thinking about it. "But I'll bet most of the others are sending their kids to Hogwarts, except the Krum's, now they'll be going to Durmstrang. With Fleur having a boy, Beauxbaton is out of the question, Hogwarts is a logical choice for her now." Sirius explained as he set the cutlery up.

"Wait why would Viktor and Lukas Krum send their kids to Durmstrang when all their friends will be at Hogwarts?" Roxy asked it made no sense.

"Tradition," Remus pointed out, "Just like Hogwarts is for us,"

"Charles, stop that!" Roxy called out, "Jamie, stop hitting Reg."

"Sorry!" they called out apologetically.

"Why don't you go up to your rooms? I'll call you when Dinner is ready, go on," Remus urged them out of the kitchen before they ended up burnt.

The five of them scampered out of the room all that could be heard was feet running on the stairs and laughing.

"Roxy has her first case," Dennis said proudly, saying something since it appeared Roxy didn't want to say anything. Not that she could since she really shouldn't talk about things like that.

"Really? Well I hope things work out, it's going to be a very demanding department from what I've seen," Sirius pointed out.

"I know, they're planning on having a few others once it gets going," Roxy said, "And it is demanding but I've really liked the challenge."

"I'm su-" Sirius stopped when the door opened, "Hey; they're up the stairs go join them,"

"Hi Uncle Sirius, Uncle Remus!" they called out, before both red heads stomping up the stairs to join the others.

Susan shook her head in exasperation, wondering what she was thinking having another one, she
did hope for a little girl though, so she could name it after her mother and aunt who had raised her as her own. They had named the children Edgar Nick Potter and Andrew Harry Potter.

"You should sit down," Sirius said, moving out a chair for her, he knew how it felt having given birth to three of his own - a novel concept, a man knowing how it felt for women but it was true. There had been a huge baby bloom that allowed Hogwarts to restart several subjects at Hogwarts now that they had the funds with so many people now entering her halls. Admittedly it wasn't until next year you'd see the full extent of just how much the magical world was flourishing.

"Is Narcissa, Andromeda and the baby coming?" Nick asked as he joined his wife.

Narcissa had been the first female to give birth using the potion; she'd given birth to a girl, the girl she had so desperately wanted. She had named her Andromeda, after her favourite sister. Just a week ago she'd given birth again, this time to a boy, and using Severus' advice she had a child with Aston Dolohov, to say he was probably over the moon to hear Narcissa had a boy would be putting it lightly. They didn't know the baby's name yet.

"Yes," Sirius nodded his confirmation as Remus continued to make sure the food didn't burn.

"Good, we bought a present with us, I didn't want to send it through an owl," Susan said, rubbing his stomach.

"She said yes!" James called out causing them all to jump they hadn't even heard him coming in. "We have more news too…"

Sirius grinned it had been a long time coming, Marian truly was the breath of fresh air James needed.

"We're having a baby," James said seriously.

"Wait…we're going to have a sibling that's younger than our own kids? They're going to have an aunt or uncle that's younger than them…that's madness!" Nick chortled, "I'm happy for you dad," he said hugging him, Sirius quickly joined in.

"Another reason to celebrate!" Remus said before patting James on the back, giving his shoulder a squeeze.

The girls all crowded around Marian offering their own separate congratulations.

Harry made his way down to the potions lab an amused smile playing across his face, his husband still hated big gatherings, and he'd always find him brooding away down here tinkering with his potions. Opening the door silently, he stood there just watching him, they'd had their share of fights over the years (mostly when he was pregnant) but their relationship grew stronger each year. Moving closer, he wrapped his arms around him, he made a point to not make too many big dinners in a year but this was something they definitely needed to celebrate, it was going to be the last time they'd all get together to eat for nearly a year. Some things just didn't change and Harry loved that about his husband. "Dinner is ready, you need to at least eat, oh and you have the perfect excuse for later, Hunter is dying to brew the potion kit I got him earlier."

Severus turned and smirked at Harry, "I think he might even beat our scores if he keeps up the way he is," they'd never pushed the kids into any subjects, letting them learn their own likes and dislikes instead of trying to push anything on them.
"Perhaps," Harry said, they'd made it clear to Hunter that he didn't have anything to prove but he absolutely loved Potions, and he was good at it. "At least the teacher is competent, otherwise I wouldn't have considered letting them go." although revenge had been very sweet, Colin Reese had written to him requesting a batch of the male pregnancy potion. He had denied his request, stating that it was just unwise for him to brew a potion after his despicable potion grades putting as much contempt into it while seeming polite. Professor Slughorn had retired the same year as Dumbledore, having no reason to stay due to the fact he had merely remained out of a favour from an old friend, and when that old friend left Horace had too. Dumbledore was enjoying retirement in Devon, he had repaired his relationship with Severus but it hadn't quite been the same.

"Draco is more than competent," Severus replied dryly, giving Harry an amused look, "I taught him myself, remember." long before Hogwarts as well, so even with Reese he had been well prepared in advance.

"Just a little bit more," Harry conceded, compared to them he was just competent but he didn't say anything further.

"You shouldn't be in here," Severus reminded him absently, his hand on his stomach. They were having another little girl, Andy had managed to create a spell that could scan around the magical sac the potion created and give a proper image of the child. So this baby's sex wasn't a surprise, not like Cassia.

"I'll be fine, there's no potion simmering," Harry said, Merlin he always forgot how much he missed brewing potions until he ended up pregnant and then was forbidden from coming down here. Just because he was pregnant though didn't mean he was absent from the Potion community, he and Severus had created over ten potions over the last ten years, some were very low key.

One - one that got rid of colic (temporarily of course)

Two - A gel that eased the pain of teething without giving them pain relief potions, it was much safer.

Three - One that helped ease a child to sleep with nothing but herbal ingredients that wouldn't harm a baby.

Four - Harry made one that completely suppressed a vampires' blood thirst, they needed to eat of course, they just never felt the urge that kept them from being in complete control one that was still being acclaimed even after four or five years since it was created.

Five - Severus created one that allowed you to communicate with animals for a limited period, and snakes were included in that, although it wasn't something that was needed for anyone other than Severus in the Prince-Peverell family due to the fact they'd all received Harry's Parseltongue abilities. In fact the gift Severus had given Harry all those years ago…it was mostly the twins who played with it, but Hermes remained Harry's, he used him when he needed anything delivered. The twins were saddened they couldn't take the snake with them though; it was an asp so it was dangerous. Cassia had grinned behind her hand the entire time Hunter and Hector pleaded with their dads to let them take it with them. She as well as the twins knew their parents never changed their minds when it was made up, and so she knew the Asp was hers now…at least until she went to Hogwarts.

Six - One that thickened the hair for balding men, so it seemed as though there was more.

Seven - A patronus potion, Harry created it for Narcissa who visited Lucius in prison a few times, she'd been pregnant at the time and Harry had wanted her safe.
Eight - A potion that siphoned off dark residual magic, allowing those who had been cursed enabling them to have their limbs reattached or scars removed caused by Dark magic something Harry and Severus had created together.

Nine - Another example of Severus and Harry's joint ingenuity, they'd made a potion that allowed people to see magic for up to ten hours, it was extremely popular amongst the curse breakers.

Ten - The best of all inventions, a potion that allows a child born as a squib to have its magical core attached when it was practically impossible otherwise. They were far from powerful, but they could use spells, use a wand, which made them wizards and witches.

"Come, let's get this over with," Severus sighed, putting a charm over his workbench to preserve the freshly cut ingredients until he returned to brew it.

Harry laughed, "You're acting like you're going to the guillotine," allowing his husband to guide him from the room, before long they were in the dining room surrounded by friends and more importantly family who were all chattering away. Fleur was currently feeding her fussy two year old boy, while her husband Gary entertained their six year old daughter. Viktor and Lukas were laughing over something their five year old son was telling them - presumably a joke of some kind. Cedric and Cho (who had married last) were babbling to their one year old daughter while their eight year old son conversed with Hector and Hunter. Neville and Luna were answering a question from their eleven year old son, who was also going to Hogwarts with Hector and Hunter, the only one this year actually who would be joining Harry and Severus' eldest.

"Uncle Nev, I'm hungry when's dinner going to be ready?" Cassia asked, her long black hair swaying as she moved around restlessly, she had Severus' hair and Harry's green eyes, and she had both her parents wrapped firmly around her little fingers.

"I'm sure it will be ready soon," Neville answered, "Did you like the book I got you for your birthday?" engaging the eight years old in a conversation seeing she was bored.

"I loved it!" Cassia proudly exclaimed, "My name is in it!"

"Yes, yes it is," Neville grinned; it was one of the more normal names that came with being an herb or a spice so she should be entirely grateful. He was pretty sure Severus had been the one to name her.

A wide smile appeared on Harry's face, he loved this, them all being together, he had gone from being entirely invisible during his childhood with a family that barely looked at him to having a large extended family that meant the world to him. Turning to face Severus properly, he said, "I love you," and he did with all his heart.

"I know," Severus replied, that was one thing he never doubted, not only did he have proof that Harry loved him above all else, he saw it in his eyes every single day. Especially in moments like this, it was why it was worth going through these blasted dinners, Harry knew Severus did it for him...and later at night well lets just say it became even more worth it. That was as long as nobody interrupted them, he thought sardonically, he could remember every time one of the kids had barged into the room and interrupted them. Pressing his hand against Harry's stomach, the wedding ring glimmering in the light, his little girl was in there, they'd already decided on a name, Serenity Sage Prince-Peverell and he couldn't wait to hold her. "I love you too," he added despite the company.

"You're just looking forward to tonight," Harry teased giving him a nudge.
Severus just gave a low chuckle, shaking his head in amusement at the banter before he guided Harry over to their family. It was time to celebrate before Hunter, Hector and Neville and Luna's son Liam Lorcan Longbottom were off to Hogwarts.

"Come out of your bat cave son?" Eileen teased, her white hair tied back in a bun.

"Dad was brewing potions granny, not in a bat cave," Cassia insisted, as the adults around her laughed at her statement.

"Of course he was," Eileen said in mock seriousness, her black eyes gleaming with love.

"Dad can we brew that potion later?" Hunter asked, more like begged.

"Told you," Harry laughed his hand in his husband's.

"Not funny, Da," Hunter pouted, he just wanted to brew with his dads one last time before he had to be taught with a teacher.

"We may," Severus replied, as always correcting their grammar, but that just flew over Hunter's mind and he just cheered excitedly.

Yes, life despite its tremulous start, had been very good to him in later life, he wouldn't trade it in for anything. He wasn't invisible anymore…he was loved.

The End

Chapter End Notes

There we go it's officially completed! Now what did you think? Is there something missing that you would like to see? something that annoys you about the chapter? Please please let me know so it can be changed if it requires it - its much better than it lying a disappointment! so let this story end with a bang and give a review and let me know what you thought of it! one last single review! I hope you've enjoyed the ride it's been by far one the most challenging stories i've written and its definitely up there as my number one favourite to write and apparently read for those who've read it! I honestly hope you've enjoyed the last chapter and if not give me a little shout! R&R

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!