Silly, Silly Book Series: Order of the Phoenix

by ShieldEcho

Summary

Because no matter how much we may love it, nothing is without flaws. Contains Voldemort's dumbest plan to date, Dumbledore always having the best ideas all the time, and I'm reasonably sure that Harry had an untreated concussion the whole time.
Well This Got Off To A Splendid Start...

A/N: This whole parody was written in twenty-five days for National Novel Writing Month last month. Won by like twenty-four words or something and I still ain't quite done yet, there's a part at the end I need to sort out quite carefully indeed. Also editing. Which is why you ain't getting the whole thing in one day. So nyah. I needed NaNoWriMo to force me to get through this one, frankly, I seriously don't think I would've been able to get through a single one of the Umbridge sections without some serious motivation. Or Snape's Worst Memory. Or St. Mungo's. Jesus Christ that section. The worst thing about them is that there are rarely any plot holes and even less opportunities to crack a joke, it's the worst, all you can do is fondly imagine her dying in horribly gruesome ways that get more and more nasty and disgusting as the book goes on, and sometimes that just isn't enough. Actually most times it isn't enough; it's never enough and will never be enough.

...SO HERE'S SOME FUNNY CRAP NOW I GUESS!

Disclaimer: This time Dracarot helped me write like a third of the fic because he is very knowledgeable about all the things and can also use words to say things and stuff betterer than I could. Yes. Also Monty Python's Flying Circus and Jimmy Neutron and A Very Potter Sequel and the OotP Rifftrax and the Marx Brothers are things that amuse me, as does this magical series about magical people doing magical things with their magical magic that is magical. 'N stuff.

__________________________

Deprived of their usual car-washing and lawn mowing pursuits, because those were so exciting to begin with, the inhabitants of Privet Drive had retreated into the shade of their cool houses, windows thrown open in the hope of tempting in a nonexistent breeze and leaving American readers to wonder why no one in the United Kingdom owns an air conditioner, especially when people like the Dursleys would totally be concerned enough with their own comfort that they would definitely shell out a couple hundred pounds for something they might never use again, they did it enough with Dudley so why not now?

__________________________

Harry Potter's appearance did not endear him to the neighbors, who were the sort of people who thought scruffiness ought to be punishable by law and were just thick enough to never wonder exactly why he would go about in such rags when the people he lived with were so obviously well-off, but as he had hidden himself behind a large hydrangea bush this evening he was quite invisible to passersby.

__________________________

Harry was very pleased that he was concealed behind the bush; Mrs. Figg had recently taken to asking him around for tea whenever she met him on the street. Maybe if she'd dropped a hint that she knew about the wizarding world, he would have stopped by.

__________________________

The opening notes of the music that heralded the seven o'clock news reached Harry's ears and his stomach turned over. Perhaps tonight — after a month of waiting — would be the night —

"NATO allies have agreed to extend their air power over all Bosnian Safe Havens following the fall of the safe havens in Srebenica and Zepa. We now go to Dracarot in Massachusetts for more
"I'm here sir, and indeed the NATO allies are ready to make sure the remaining safe havens for the Muslim population within Bosnia are protected from further Serbian aggression.

"It was just a few weeks ago on July the eleventh when Bosnian Serbs overran the UN-declared safe haven in Srebrenica, resulting in a mass slaughter. Two weeks later, on the twenty-fifth, another UN safe haven, Žepa, was overrun, though thankfully most of the women and children had been evacuated to Sarajevo, and the male fighters had already withdrawn. Now NATO, under pressure to show its legitimacy, will now extend air protection to the remaining safe havens in Sarajevo, Bihać, Tulza, and Goražde. UN military commanders will now be able to call in NATO aircraft to launch air strikes without waiting for UN approval. While this will do nothing for the skirmishing, artillery fire, and snipers that still plague these safe havens, any further massed assaults on the safe havens will be met with staunch resistance. Last winter, the Bosnian Serbs rejected a peace deal that would have given them fifty-one percent of Bosnia; the remaining forty-nine percent would go to the Muslim population of the region. The question now becomes: will this new effort by NATO bring the Serbs back to the negotiation table, or are we witnessing what will become a full scale war in the region as Serbia continues to try and hold onto as much of what used to be Yugoslavia as possible?

"Also, it is my sad duty to remind our viewers that Group Captain (that's Colonel for us Americans) Colin Falkland Gray passed away at Kenepuru Hospital, Porirua, New Zealand today at the age of eighty, marking the end of one of Churchill's 'few' who were paramount in defending the British isles during the summer of 1940. Group Captain Gray had joined the RAF in 1939 as a New Zealand Native, despite two previous failures in entering the service due to not passing the physical requirements. His brother Ken was killed in a flying accident during May of 1940 while patrolling the English Channel. The time soon came to prove his mettle when he finally encountered the enemy. By September 1940 he had already confirmed fourteen-and-a-half kills, the vast majorities of these occurring during the Blitz. For these, among other feats, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. He would go on to serve in North Africa and Sicily and was confirmed to have shot down an additional thirteen planes, bringing his total number of kills to twenty-seven-and-a-half. An ace 5 times over. After the war he would continue to serve in the RAF until 1961, at which point he took his leave of the service. He then went on to serve as the Director of Unilever a multinational consumer goods company. He would retire from that in 1979. He went on to publish an autobiography in 1990, entitled Spitfire Patrol, in which he described his time in the RAF. He leaves behind his wife Betty, four children, and a step daughter. Our thoughts and prayers go out to them and to thank Colin Gray for his service.

"Oh and to any secret society of uninformed wizards out there, THE WORLD DOES NOT REVOLVE AROUND YOU WIZARDS! While you were getting ready for your first year at Hogwarts, the entire Soviet Union gave its last *BEEP* gasp! That news story about Bosnia? In the June before the Boy Who Lived went to Hogwarts, Yugoslavia began breaking up, leading to that very news story! The Somali Civil War started in January of '91 and on Oct 3-4 of '93 the Battle of Mogadishu that brought about the infamous "Black Hawk Down" incident, resulting in eighteen Americans, one Malaysian, and one Pakistani of the UN forces killed as well as eighty-two wounded, occurred, scaring the U.S. out of intervening in Africa. Which in turn is why the US did nothing during the Rwandan Genocide in April of '94, and that didn't wrap up till mid way through July! In the February of the Boy Who Lived's second year, the World Trade Center was bombed, and in the April of his fourth year the Oklahoma City Bombing occurred! In the April of his third year Apartheid ended in South Africa and Nelson Mandela became president of that country, may he rest in peace in the future! Just prior to the third task of the Triwizard tournament Quebec nearly voted to break off from Canada in a referendum! The Oslo accords were signed in September of his third year, resulting in the PLO recognizing Israel's right to exist and created the PNA to have some control in what was going on in the West Bank and Gaza strip! In the February of his first year the
European Union came into being! The Chunnel finally started taking passengers in the November of his fourth year! And that's just all the world changing stuff that British News would have probably focused on! I probably even missed some in there! You know what the point is? **THE REST OF THE WORLD IS STILL HAPPENING WHILE YOU GO AND ISOLATE YOURSELF IN YOUR HOCUS POCUS WORLD!!!!!**

"Reporting for the BBC, this is Dracarot, signing off."

"...Thank you, Dracarot. And now, something about water-skiing budgies. What the fuck is a budgie. Oh, that's a budgie. Cool."

Harry's heart stopped. Could Voldemort have been hiding out in Bosnia this whole time and that's why he hadn't heard anything in so long? Could he have been responsible for all those terrible events he'd just heard about? OR WAS HE BEHIND THE WATER-SKIING BUDGIE THE WHOLE TIME? OOOH IT'S SO MYSTERIOUS.

"Put — it — away!" Uncle Vernon snarled into Harry's ear. "Now! Before — anyone — sees!"

"Get — off — me!" Harry gasped; for a few seconds they struggled, Harry pulling at his uncle's sausage-like fingers with his left hand, his right maintaining a firm grip on his wand. Then, as the pain in the top of Harry's head gave a particularly nasty throb, Uncle Vernon yelped and released Harry as though he had received an electric shock — some invisible force that was probably accidental magic that apparently went completely unnoticed by the Ministry seemed to have surged through his nephew, making him impossible to hold.

Panting, Harry fell forward over the hydrangea bush, straightened up, and stared around. There was no sign of what had caused the loud cracking noise, but there were several faces peering through various nearby windows. Harry stuffed his wand hastily back into his jeans and tried to look innocent. This whole passage thus far is quite amusing if you consider a wand as a euphemism for penis.

"Lovely evening!" shouted Uncle Vernon, waving at Mrs. Number Seven, who was staring at him in horror from behind her net curtains. "Did you hear that car backfire just now? Gave Petunia and me quite a turn!"

"Were you just strangling your nephew?" Mrs. Number Seven shouted back at him, her look of horror slowly turning into one of anger.

"Er…no?" said Uncle Vernon.

"I just saw you strangling your nephew," Mrs. Number Seven insisted loudly.

"So did I," yelled Mr. Number Six.

"Said nephew of yours has lived on this street his whole life, how does he not know any of our names," said Ms. Number Five.

"I'm calling child services," announced Mrs. Number Seven.

"I'll be a witness!" said Mr. Number Six.

"Hey, boy, want to take refuge in here for the night so your uncle doesn't straight-up murder you before the authorities even make it to your house?" asked Ms. Number Five.
Harry shrugged before heading over, ignoring Uncle Vernon's shouted threats to get back inside. Even an orphanage had to be better than the Dursleys…

Dear Ron and Hermione,

I can gather from the vague hints in your letters that you're in the same place together. As great as it is that you're finally getting some alone time with each other, you don't know how much it hurts me to know that the two of you are having fun together this summer while I'm stuck alone in this hellhole. You said you'd see me soon and "tell me everything" then, but unless I see a precise date in the next letter, don't bother writing to me again. Although just turning up and kidnapping me again would not go without thanks in the slightest, nudge, nudge, wink, wink, grin, grin, say no more. But seriously, if I don't see you again until Hogwarts, and you don't tell me anything useful until that time either, then I'm seriously going to consider expanding my circle of friends to people who visibly give a shit.

Harry

"How long have you been 'Big D' then?" said Harry.

"Since a couple of my school rivals' mums found out that the D stands for my wiener," snarled Dudley instantly.

"So you've you been beating up tonight?" Harry asked, his grin fading. "Another ten-year-old? I know you did Mark Evans two nights ago—"

"He was asking for it," snarled Dudley.

"Oh yeah?"

"He's got a certain last name that made far too many people think he's our cousin or whatever to the point that JKR herself had to come out and tell everyone to stop it."

"Huh. Still don't think that warranted the dislocated shoulder, the cracked ribs, and the fractured skull."

"Oh what do you know."

"Keep your wand out," Mrs. Figg told Harry, as they entered Wisteria Walk. "Never mind the Statute of Secrecy now, there's going to be hell to pay anyway, we might as well be hanged for a dragon as an egg."

"…The fuck does that even mean."

"I have no idea."

"Why didn't you tell me you were a Squib?" Harry asked Mrs. Figg, panting with the effort to keep
walking. "All those times I came round your house — why didn't you say anything?"

"Dumbledore's orders. I was to keep an eye on your but not say anything, you were too young. I'm sorry I gave you such a miserable time, but the Dursleys would never have let you come if they'd thought you enjoyed it."

"So why didn't you wait till I was about six or seven, explain to me that if I let on that I was having a good time I wouldn't be able to come back 'round, and then at least let me enjoy the day and pretend to have had a horrible time when Aunt Petunia picked me up again?"

"Because I am the dumb."

"No argument here…"

________________________________________

"Dementors?" repeated Mundungus, aghast. "Dementors here?"

"Yes, here, you worthless pile of bat droppings, here!" shrieked Mrs. Figg. "Dementors attacking the boy on your watch!"

"Blimey," said Mundungus weakly, looking from Mrs. Figg to Harry and back again. "Blimey, I…"

"And you off buying stolen cauldrons! Didn't I tell you not to go? Didn't I?"

"Actually, I stopped by headquarters to let everyone 'oo was there know that 'Arry's apparently gone super nuts, laying about in bushes and things. Sirius was still shouting at Dumbledore when I left, and even Lupin didn't think 'e was in the right anymore."

Mrs. Figg let out a low whistle.

"I know, right? But after that…yeah, went after the cauldrons," Mundungus admitted shamefacedly.

"Fucking called it."

________________________________________

"I hope Dumbledore murders him!" said Mrs. Figg. "Now come on, Harry, what are you waiting for?"

"Hey, how 'bout you open your eyes, you fat bitch," Harry choked out, finally collapsing under Dudley's weight.

"Huh. Maybe I could've helped with that."

"YA FUCKIN' THINK?!!"

________________________________________

"Well it's no good crying over spilled potion, I suppose…but the cat's among the pixies now…"

"No one talks like that, not even the most magical people I know talk like that."

"I'm so ostracized and disconnected from that world that I want to be as much a part of it as I possibly can, even if that means I have to limit myself to saying dumb phrases no one ever uses?"
"I suppose that's a decent explanation. Can you stop it?"

"I don't see how it matters, you'll only see me one more time before I disappear forever."

"Oh, okay then."

"So," Harry panted, "Dumbledore's…been having…me followed?"

"Of course he has," said Mrs. Figg impatiently. "Did you expect him to let you wander around on your own after what happened in June?"

"Well if he felt like that, why not confine me to the house where theoretically no one, including dementors, would be able to get at me? Or at least outline a radius that I would've been safe inside from, say, a dementor attack or something similar?"

"Oh don't be ridiculous, Harry, he wouldn't limit your freedom like that! Apart from forcing you to stay with your abusive relatives who clearly don't give a shit about you and have people spy on you and report every move you make back to him, of course! Good Lord, boy, they told me you were intelligent…"

"…And not one of them noticed that I was clearly wandering around in a rage, not having recovered at all from my traumatic experience of watching a friend fucking DIE right before my eyes and being repeatedly tortured via Crucius Curse due to a clear lack of a supportive environment? Did not one of them think that maybe they should, I dunno, talk to me or something? I get that Dumbledore's trying to avoid me this year, it doesn't mean he has to force everyone else to do the same thing!"

"I am so high right now," muttered Dudley.

"Right…get inside and stay there," said Mrs. Figg as they reached number four.

"Oh, so those things can't get in the house?" said Harry hopefully.

"Well of course they can," chortled Mrs. Figg, "the walls will just mute the screams for your neighbors!"

"…Brilliant."

"I expect someone will be in touch with you soon enough."

"I've been hearing that all fucking summer and NOTHING'S HAPPENED."

"What did he do to you, Diddy?" Aunt Petunia said in a quavering voice, now sponging sick from the front of Dudley's leather jacket. "And what on Earth are you doing wearing that thing in this weather? Did you just get heat stroke and want to blame the boy for it, 'cause your father and I would be totally down with that."

Dear Mr. Potter,
We have received intelligence—stop laughing this instant—that you performed the Patronus Charm at twenty-three minutes past nine this evening in a Muggle-inhabited area and in the presence of a Muggle.

Upon further investigation, we have come to the conclusion that this particular Muggle was already aware of the existence of magic, and was also, for the most part, completely unaware and half-conscious when it was happening.

We're still expelling you, though.

Hoping you are well,

Yours sincerely,

Mafalda Hopkirk

Improper Use of Magic Office

Ministry of Magic

"Get out and never darken our towels again!"

Harry paced the bedroom waiting for Hedwig to come back, his head pounding, his brain too busy for sleep even though his eyes stung and itched with tiredness. His back ached from carrying Dudley home, and the two lumps on his head where the window and Dudley had hit him were throbbing painfully.

…I've got a theory, and it's a doozy. I also have done some simple Google searches on various health-related and seemingly validated websites to back it up, and I think it holds up decently well.

I'm pretty sure Harry might have a concussion at this point.

He hit the window really hard and then he was hit again by Dudley. Concussions can be caused by something as simple as a bad fall, it doesn't have to be a really big impact for symptoms to start. Symptoms include headaches, which Harry had throughout his frustrating conversation with the Dursleys, a sensitivity to noise which might explain why he was begging Ron and Hermione to shut up when they were arguing that one time plus again with the Dursleys, feeling mentally foggy and having difficulty concentrating which might just be from pressure of the O.W.L.s but still, feeling slowed down which Harry feels outright stalled by everything at every turn this year so it may be outside influences that could well be heightened by internal ones, and sleep troubles which were admittedly caused by PTSD flashbacks and Voldemort and seventy other things but again with the not helping.

More symptoms that I found interesting was the injured party having unequal pupils, which the Dursleys would not have cared enough to notice, and neck stiffness, which the movie of all things actually added as if it supports my theory or something, how weird is that.

Even MOAR symptoms include irritability, becoming more emotional than usual, and having severe personality changes and even admitting to not feeling like oneself. The fanbase seems really divided between how horrible it is that Harry's suddenly this whiny emo little bitch, and how great it is that JKR wrote a completely realistic and believable teenager who should actually be way more messed
up than this and it's about time he got this off his chest. While I lean towards the latter, he might have a medical excuse for his actions now as well. Huzzah.

Fun fact: Concussions are also known as MILD TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES. There's also something called second impact syndrome that only occurs in people under twenty-one, where a second blow to a head that already has a concussion can cause extremely severe symptoms such as death. How's that for a plot bunneh; Dudley punches Harry and Harry flat-out dies and then Dudley gets his soul sucked out right after he just murdered his cousin.

Recovery times vary from case to case; most recover in less than three months, sans magic of course and assuming they even know there's a problem in the first place. However, a second injury can make recovery time longer, and of course some people just take longer to recover anyway, especially if they don't know they have a problem and therefore don't seek medical attention of any kind. And also kids sometimes take longer to recover in general. This might contribute to why Harry was arguably at his bitchiest in the first half of the book.

Strenuous mental activity should be avoided during recovery, so BOY does it suck that it's O.W.L. year.

Harry goes to sleep not long after Hedwig finally gets back and he sends her off again; the whole thing about people with concussions slipping into comas or dying is actually a myth, though it's advised to wake the injured person a couple of times throughout the first night just to make sure they can wake up in any case. Which, if the Dursleys had figured out that Harry did have a concussion, they probably would have happily let him sleep through the night without losing any sleep themselves, as they're such wonderful people like that. Also this is 1995 and the website I found this on seemed to imply that the knowledge that this is a myth only came about very recently, so there's that too…

So yeah, it's just a theory, but it's now my new headcanon, so yay.

"Harry, what form does your Patronus take?" said Lupin.

"A stag," said Harry nervously.

"That's him, Mad-Eye," said Lupin.

"I thought everyone saw Potter perform it at the Gryffindor vs. Ravenclaw match two years ago," said Moody.

"Oh. Right. Bugger."

Lupin held out his hand and shook Harry's.

"How are you?" he asked, looking at Harry closely.

"Are you one of the people that's apparently been stalking me everywhere?" Harry shot back.

"…Maybe," Lupin admitted at length, looking uncomfortable.

"Then how 'bout you tell me."
"...You haven't been looking that great."

"NO FUCKING WAY."

"How're we getting — wherever we're getting?" Harry asked.

"Brooms," said Lupin. "Only way. You're too young to Apparate, Side-Along Apparition won't be invented until next year and still might trigger something because of the inconsistent-as-hell Trace, we're not sure, it's really unclear, they'll be watching the Floo Network, and it's more than our life's worth to set up an unauthorized Portkey."

"...So I suppose cars, taxis, the Underground, or the Knight Bus are all out of the question," said Harry flatly.

"Remus says you're a good flyer," said Kinglsey Shacklebolt quickly.

"Very clean, aren't they, these Muggles?" said the witch called Tonks, who was looking around the kitchen with great interest. "My dad's Muggle-born and he's a right old slob. I suppose it varies, just like with wizards?"

"That was rather racist of you," said Harry.

"Funny place," said Tonks, "it's a bit too clean, d'you know what I mean? Bit unnatural. It's almost as though these Muggles are attempting to conceal some perceived abnormality in their midst so they overcompensate in other areas."

"..."

"Right — got everything?" asked Tonks after casting a spell that sent everything Harry owned into his trunk. "Cauldron? Broom? Wow! A Firebolt?"

"Wouldn't you have sent my cauldron into my trunk already, and how come brooms are never seen outside of their trunks, wouldn't they be somehow shoved inside them as well?" asked Harry, but Tonks was too busy gushing over the Firebolt to listen.

Just then, a tawny owl flew into Harry's open window, dropped an envelope onto the bed, and sped out again.

"Oh crap," muttered Tonks as Harry opened the letter with some trepidation.

Dear Mr. Potter,

We have received intelligence—FOR GOD'S SAKE SHUT UP!—that several spells were used in quick succession at your place of residence at thirty-seven minutes past one on the morning of the sixth of August. These spells include but are not limited to a Repairing Charm, an Illumination Charm, and a Packing Charm.

As we are currently operating under HBP rules for the purposes of this gag, all knowledge of the
Trace is for the moment unknown to any of us and instead we're going with the part where any magic in your vicinity would logically have been cast by you since there is no other wizard living anywhere near you, anyone wishing to pick you up has always followed Ministry guidelines before so we knew that Arthur Weasley would have performed any magic that occurred at your place of residence the previous year, and obviously we're monitoring you more closely than ever nowadays.

You are now definitely expelled and may well have to pay a fine for breaking the Statute of Secrecy and the Reasonable Restriction of Underage Sorcery so many times in such a short period.

What the fuck is wrong with you,

Yours sincerely,

Mafalda Hopkirk

Improper Use of Magic Office

Ministry of Magic

Harry looked up at Tonks, who was reading over his shoulder.

"I think I might murder you," he said calmly.

Tonks gulped.

________________________________________

"We ought to double back for a bit, just to make sure we're not being followed!" Moody shouted.

"ARE YOU MAD, MAD-EYE?" Tonks screamed from the front. "We're all frozen to our brooms!"

"Couldn't you lot have used magic to keep us warm?" asked Harry loudly.

"DO NOT SPEAK OF THAT WHICH YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND," yelled Emmeline.

________________________________________

"But where's—?"

"Think about what you've just memorized," said Lupin quietly.

"I have been, why isn't anything happening?"

No sooner had the words left his mouth than a battered door emerged out of nowhere between numbers eleven and thirteen, followed swiftly by dirty walls and grimy windows. It was as though an extra house had inflated, pushing those on either side out of its way. Harry gaped at it, wondering why he was so surprised that magical things were happening right in front of his face after a solid five years of knowing magic existed.

________________________________________

"Dumbledore could still've kept me informed if he'd wanted to," Harry said shortly. "You're not telling me he doesn't know ways to send messages without owls."

Hermione glanced at Ron and then said, "I thought that too. But he didn't want you to know anything."
"Why not?" said Harry, endeavoring to keep his voice as calm as possible and just barely managing it.

"I think he just didn't want you to worry so much about things that were entirely out of your control, especially so soon after you experienced so much nightmare-inducing trauma two months ago," Hermione theorized. "And also he didn't want you to worry about any pesky little things like therapy or at least someone to talk to, either, obviously."

"…And he didn't think that leaving me in the dark about everything, basically not letting me be in contact with you guys considering how little we were able to talk about apparently, and leaving me alone at a place where everyone knows I'm absolutely miserable with apparently no chance of getting away short of Hogwarts or attempted soul-removal would worry me in any way," said Harry flatly. "I mean, why would he want to keep me in the dark, considering I've been doing his job of keeping the school safe for him for, if not last year, than the three years before that? Does my track record prove that I'm somehow incapable of handling anything? This is just like with Sirius two years ago, only Voldemort really is after me, he really does want to kill not only me, but everyone I love, so shouldn't I know what he's up to so I'm able to protect myself?"

"We tried to tell him that," Hermione insisted, "but again, he seemed to think it was best."

"And you couldn't have told him flat-out that he was wrong?"

"I'm sorry, Harry, we're just not that brave."

"Where's Neville when you need him," Harry muttered, "he would've stood up for me…"

"We tried as best we could, and we even talked to some of the people tasked to watch you to try and convince Dumbledore about how clearly miserable you were, but apparently he still wouldn't listen."

"Yeah, about that, did no one think of how betrayed I might feel once I found out that wizards were stalking me everywhere and that I could've talked to them at any time, and that I was apparently the only one in the entire wizarding world who didn't know about it?"

"…I'm not entirely sure they ever intended for you to find out, to be honest," said Hermione ponderously.

"Oh, brilliant."

"It could be that Dumbledore's a gargantuan arsehole and both we and he are so used to following his orders without question that the minute we do try to question him he freaks out and runs away," said Ron, shrugging.

"…You know what, I'll accept that theory," said Harry, stroking Hedwig.

"Snape?" said Harry quickly. "Is he here?"

"Yeah," said George, carefully closing the door and sitting down on one of the beds; Fred and Ginny followed. "Giving a report. Top secret."

"Git," said Fred idly.

"He's on our side now," said Hermione reprovingly.
"I see no difference," said Ron in a scarily-impressive Snape impression, picking at his teeth. "…You know, you're right, fuck that guy," said Hermione grumpily.

"ONE OF US," chorused the Weasleys, "ONE OF US, ONE OF US…"

Wouldn't it be an interesting fanfic idea if Percy agreed to pretend to abandon his family to spy on the Ministry for Dumbledore, and his family didn't know in order to make the rift as realistic as possible? If he'd come back with that excuse I'd have thought it was a great moment with a fantastic last-minute twist instead of just thinking it's a ham-fisted last-minute ass-pull…

If werewolves really had superhuman strength in the Potterverse Lupin would've been able to close the curtains around Walburga's portrait on his own with ease. But as he doesn't would you please stop writing it, unless the rest of it is absolutely phenomenal you lose at least one reader every time she sees it.

A/N: YAY LEARNING ABOUT WORLD EVENTS I NEVER WOULD'VE KNOWN OTHERWISE! Seriously, didn't hear about any of this until now. I'm really not all that fond of America's habit of being so focused within itself that it barely touches on world events, especially when we could be talking about a celebrity's new brand of nail polish instead, but I have no idea how to change that mentality beyond starting to at least condition myself to do more outside research on current events and world history. Except the only "world" history I've been exposed to really just boils down to European history and how that relates to the start of America anyway. And then we go over the Revolutionary War for about six or seven years in a row. Which basically conditioned me to despise all history with the fiery passion of a thousand suns. And people wonder why our test scores are stagnated while other countries pull so much farther ahead all the time. The rest of you keep up the good work, I honestly don't even know what we're doing anymore.

Updates are every Saturday until I finish this bitch.

Review or loads of people will stalk you and absolutely everyone on the planet will know about it except you and won't think it's such a big deal when you finally try to call them out on it.
Damn It, I Really Like Molly. :( 

A/N: Watching a Harry Potter movie: EEEEEEEE THIS IS GONNA BE SO AWESOME I CAN'T WAIT TO LOVE ALL OF THE THINGS okay that's wrong that's wrong that doesn't seem right EEEEEEEE THAT WAS AMAZING AND NOT EVEN BECAUSE IT WAS GOOD I JUST LIKE THAT PARTICULAR CHARACTER AND/OR MOMENT THOUGH IT STILL MIGHT HAVE BEEN GOOD ANYWAY okay that just makes no sense out of context how would anyone who hasn't read the books understand anything EEEEEEEE THAT WAS LEGITIMATELY AWESOME IN EVERY POSSIBLE WAY okay that was shoddily acted that music choice seems off i'm not sure i like it THIS TRACK IS SO PERFECT FOR EVERYTHING why the balls is everyone dressed in Muggle attire even the most insane of pureblood bigots who designed this shlock wow way to completely contradict all of canon did you even read the books at all this is terrible OMAGAWD HOW MANY TEARS DID I JUST SHED THAT WAS SO SAD WHY IS EVERYONE I LOVE DEAD that didn't really make sense in the book either come to think of it why is dumbledore so crappy in over half of these things that was terrible casting on all counts.

Watching a Lord of the Rings/Hobbit movie: EEEEEEEE THIS IS GONNA BE SO AWESOME I CAN'T WAIT TO LOVE ALL THE THINGS OH WOW IS THAT FROM THE SILMARILLION THAT'S SO COOL THAT THEY MANAGED TO INCLUDE THAT HOLY SHIT EVERYONE'S SUCH A GOOD ACTOR EVERYTHING FEELS REAL EVERYONE LOOKS AND DRESSES AND FEELS EXACTLY HOW THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO dad shut up about the beards they had to differentiate everyone so they could be told apart god OH WOW EVERYTHING IS SO WELL-PUT TOGETHER I COULD EASILY EXPLAIN THIS YES SOME OF THE NAMES ARE HARD TO REMEMBER/PRONOUNCE BUT SO THE FUCK WHAT wait dad you know this series better than me was that a thing oh it wasn't well work yeah i thought so too SERIOUSLY THIS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN HANDLED BETTER THE MUSIC IS NEVER POORLY DONE AT ALL EVER I NEED TO OWN ALL OF THEM IMMEDIATELY wait dad was that a thing oh it was okay YOU COULD NOT HAVE PICKED A BETTER GANDALF HOLY SHIT.

...So Desolation of Smaug was okay I guess. XD

Disclaimer: Dracarot pitched an idea and I ran with it again. Also Kitty279's ideas are back now too and stuff. And I'm starting to realize that I get a lot of my good lines from the father person. Aaaand I think the only other thing I stole things from was the Rifftrax for the movie adaptation of this particular installment that is also not mine to start with. Cool.

"Hasn't anyone told you? This was my parents' house," said Sirius.

"Of course no one's told me, no one ever tells me anything ever," muttered Harry.

"Knew you'd be upset about that," said Sirius, grinning wryly. "But yeah, I'm the last Black left, so it's mine now. I offered it to Dumbledore for headquarters — about the only useful thing I've been able to do."

"You could do the dishes—"

"Go to hell, Mrs. Weasley!"
"Journey all right, Harry?" Bill called, trying to gather up twelve scrolls at once. "Mad-Eye didn't make you come via Greenland, then?"

"He tried," said Tonks. "And you know, for wanting to leave secretly and all, it might not have been the best idea to all line up in the street and mount brooms where anyone could've looked out a window at any time since Mad-Eye didn't use the Deluminator until we got to this street, not to mention that using what are basically fireworks for the signal to leave might have also been a bit much." Shrugging, she strode over to help Bill and immediately sent a candle toppling onto the last piece of parchment. "Oh no — sorry —"

"Here, dear," said Mrs. Weasley, sounding exasperated, and she repaired the parchment with a wave of her wand: In the flash of light caused my Mrs. Weasley's charm, Harry caught a glimpse of what looked like the plan of a building.

Mrs. Weasley had seen him looking. She snatched the plan off the table and stuffed it into Bill's heavily laden arms.

"This sort of thing ought to be cleared away promptly at the end of meetings," she snapped before sweeping off toward an ancient dresser from which she started unloading dinner places.

Bill took out his wand, muttered "Evanesco!" and the scrolls vanished.

"...If you were just going to vanish them anyway, why'd you get so butthurt when I set one on fire and why'd you bother to repair it," muttered Tonks.

"Do shut up, dear."

________________________________________

"I've been stuck inside for a month," grumbled Sirius.

"How come?" asked Harry, frowning.

"Because the Ministry of Magic's still after me, and Voldemort will know all about me being an Animagus by now, Wormtail will have told him, so my big disguise is useless. There's not much I can do for the Order of the Phoenix...or so Dumbledore feels."

"Did Dumbledore forget about Invisibility Cloaks or Polyjuice Potion?" said Harry. "And I just learned about Disillusionment Charms and I'm sure there are many other ways to disguise oneself magically considering we'll be learning about it next year and Ron gets away with the Dragomir Despard look two years from now."

"Yeah, Dumbledore's just being kind of a dick this year," said Sirius regretfully.

"Also why do we keep referring to Pettigrew as Wormtail, wasn't that some honored nickname that symbolized you four's friendship or whatever, why would you want to continue to sort of pay tribute to him by continuing to call him that."

"Stop saying things that make sense."

________________________________________

"At least you know what's going on," Harry said bracingly.

"Oh yeah," said Sirius sarcastically. "Listening to Snape's reports, having to take all his snide hints
that he's risking his life while I'm sat on my backside here having a nice comfortable time…asking me how the cleaning's going—"

"What cleaning?" asked Harry.

"The cleaning Hermione just told you about fifteen pages ago, learn to pay attention."

"But why are the underage kids helping with the cleaning when you lot can just flick your wands and have everything spotless in less than a minute."

"Because some of this crap is intensely magical and therefore cannot be cleaned magically."

"...That's the dumbest bullshit I think I've ever heard," said Harry flatly.

"Oh, just wait till the rest of the book!" said Sirius brightly. "Also I think Kreacher might be dirtying everything up again while we sleep."

"...How."

"I really prefer not to think about it."

"— none of your brothers caused this sort of trouble!" Mrs. Weasley raged at the twins, slamming a fresh flagon of butterbeer onto the table and spilling almost as much again. "Bill didn't feel the need to Apparate every few feet! Charlie didn't Charm everything he met! Percy—"

"Totally Apparated every few feet, Mum, we went over this last year," argued George.

"And frankly I just kept the fact that I Apparated every few feet from you two," Bill added sheepishly. Mrs. Weasley shot a look of betrayal in his general direction.

Mr. Weasley, Bill, and Lupin were having an intense discussion about goblins.

"They're not giving anything away yet," said Bill. "I still can't work out whether they believe he's back or not. Course, they might prefer not to takes sides at all. Keep out of it."

"I'm sure they'd never go over to You-Know-Who," said Mr. Weasley, shaking his head. "They've suffered losses too. Remember that goblin family he murdered last time, somewhere near Nottingham?"

"I think it depends on what they're offered," said Lupin. "And I'm not talking about gold; if they're offered freedoms we've been denying them for centuries they're going to be tempted."

"That reminds me," said Mr. Weasley, "I know you don't canonically work with the werewolves until next year, but what are your thoughts on which side they'll take?"

"They'll take Voldemort's side for sure," said Lupin immediately. "He'll promise them freedoms the wizarding world has been denying them for centuries and they will be tempted."

"But what about the part where the others working for You-Know-Who think all of them are disgusting abominations—no offense—"

"None taken."
"—and will want to commit genocide on them as soon as they’ve taken over the world or at least country?" asked Bill.

"Which is why I'm not joining him, I'm fully aware of that, but he won't tell them that and they'll just follow him blindly even if he just promises them food."

"And we're just pushing them toward him more and more with each law that gets passed these days," said Mr. Weasley wearily.

"Pretty much," said Lupin.

"And joyous times were had by all," muttered Bill.

"Molly doesn't approve of Mundungus," said Sirius in an undertone.

"How come he's in the Order?" Harry said very quietly.

"He's useful," Sirius muttered. "Knows all the crooks — well, he would, seeing as he's one himself. But he's also very loyal to Dumbledore, who helped him out of a tight spot once. It pays to have someone like Dung around, he hears things we don't. But Molly thinks inviting him to dinner is going too far. She hasn't forgiven him for slipping off duty when he was supposed to be tailing you. Heh heh, duty."

"And you have, then, I take it?" said Harry, looking at his godfather curiously.

"Well if you hadn't gotten into this mess I might not have seen you at all this year, I'm bloomin' grateful to the ruddy bastard!"

"Fair point, I like him too now."

"There you go. Plus, hey, it's my house, I do what I want."

"Sounds good to me!"

"You're too young, you're not in the order," said Fred, in a high-pitched voice that sounded uncannily like his mother's. "Harry's not even of age!"

"It's not my fault you haven't been told what the Order's doing," said Sirius calmly. "That's your parents' decision. Harry, on the other hand—"

"It's not down to you to decide what's good for Harry!" said Mrs. Weasley sharply. Her normally kind face looked dangerous.

"It's not up to a godparent chosen by the child's parents to have a say in what's good for their charge?" Sirius asked politely, but with an air as though readying himself for a fight.

"Dumbledore has more of a say in his life than you do!" said Mrs. Weasley. "Apparently!"

"And what if I don't agree with what Dumbledore's choice was?" said Sirius.

"When has Dumbledore ever been wrong before?" shot back Mrs. Weasley.
"When he thought I was guilty," Sirius immediately replied, "when he set dementors around the school, when he put a highly desired magical object in a school full of children, when he didn't fight harder for Harry to not have to participate in the tournament, when he refused to even heal his leg before forcing him to relive the worst moment in his life, when he had fifty years to clear Hagrid's name and didn't do a bloody thing about it, when he left a baby old enough to walk alone and unguarded on a doorstep in November and never checked up on him ever, and also right now in my opinion."

"DUMBLEDORE IS WIZARD GOD AND CAN DO NO WRONG."

"So if he ordered you to slit the throat of one of your children, you'd do it without hesitation."

"What?! No, of course not."

"Well that's what we'd be metaphorically doing by not telling Harry, or any of them really, anything. One way we could prevent them or anyone else from dying is by telling then what the hell is going on, so they won't risk their lives trying to find out what we're not telling them like they end up doing every single year, and also so they might actually start trusting us to know what's best for them instead of resenting us for assuming we know what's best for them and always talking down to them and stuff! They're not children anymore, Molly, I doubt Harry ever has been!"

"He's not an adult either!" said Mrs. Weasley, the color rising in her cheeks. "He's not James, Sirius!"

"I'm perfectly clear who he is, thanks, movie," said Sirius coldly.

________________________________________

"Well," said Mrs. Weasley, breathing deeply and looking around the table for support that did not come, "Well…I can see I'm going to be overruled. I'll just say this: Dumbledore must have had his reasons for not wanting Harry to know too much, and speaking as someone who has got Harry's best interests at heart—"

"He's not your son," said Sirius quietly.

"He's as good as," said Mrs. Weasley fiercely. "Who else has he got?"

"He's got me!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Weasley, her lip curling. "The thing is, it's been rather difficult for you to look after him while you've been locked up in Azkaban, hasn't it?"

"You are a guest in this house!" Sirius yelled, starting to rise from his chair. "If you will not address the one who is permitting you to stay here with more respect, I am going to have to ask you to leave and only come here for Order meetings!"

"You can't just kick my family out like this!" Mrs. Weasley spat.

"I never said anything about your children or your husband, I was speaking directly to you. And you, unlike me, can leave whenever you want, and I strongly encourage you to do so at this point in time. If you insult me like that again, you know where the door is." Sirius made a motion toward the kitchen door.

"I'm only saying what everyone in here is thinking—"
"If Hagrid had given me Harry in the first place, we wouldn't be having this conversation," said Sirius darkly.

"Molly, you're not the only person at this table who cares for Harry," said Lupin sharply. "Sirius, sit down."

Mrs. Weasley's lower lip was trembling. Sirius sank slowly back into his chair, his face white.

"Good boy," said Lupin, patting Sirius on the head. Ron, Fred, George, and Ginny snorted. "I think Harry ought to be allowed a say in this," Lupin continued. "He's old enough to decide for himself."

"I want to know why none of you seem to think that a psychotic murderer who wants to kill me and everyone I care about would be any of my business," said Harry flatly.

"It worked well enough two years ago, didn't it?" said Mrs. Weasley desperately.

"Not really," said Harry, Ron, Hermione, Sirius, and Lupin in unison.

"Very well," said Mrs. Weasley, her voice cracking. "Ginny — Ron — Hermione — Fred — George — I want you out of this kitchen, now."

There was instant uproar.

"We're of age!" Fred and George bellowed together.

"If Harry's allowed, why can't I?" shouted Ron.

"Mum, I am as old as Harry was when he was forced to go through the tournament, a year older than he was when he was forced to fight off dementors and thought Sirius was after him, two years older than he was when he killed a basilisk, and three years older than he was when he came face-to-face with You-Know-Bloody-Who!" wailed Ginny.

"Language, young lady," Mrs. Weasley scolded, "and you won't be fourteen for roughly another week anyway!"

"Oh yeah, because a few days make so much of a difference!" scoffed Ginny.

"And I really don't know where you get the nerve to order me to do anything," said Hermione coldly, "as I am not your daughter."

"So what's the Order been doing?" said Harry, looking around at them all.

"Working as hard as we can to make sure Voldemort can't carry out his plans," said Sirius.

"How d'you know what his plans are?" Harry asked quickly.

"Dumbledore's got a shrewd idea," said Lupin, "and Dumbledore's shrewd ideas normally turn out to be accurate. Except for all the times he's been horribly wrong, of course."

"So what does Dumbledore reckon he's planning?"

"Well, firstly, he wants to build up his army again," said Sirius. "Dumbledore thinks this because it's
fairly obvious. In the old days he had huge numbers at his command; witches and wizards he'd bullied or bewitched into following him, his faithful Death Eaters, a great variety of Dark creatures. You heard him planning to recruit the giants; well, they'll be just one group he's after. He's certainly not going to try and take on the Ministry of Magic with only a dozen Death Eaters even though that's exactly what he's going to do at the end of this school year."

"…Right…"

________________________________________

"Who said none of us was putting the news out?" said Sirius. "Why d'you think Dumbledore's in such trouble?"

"What d'you mean?" Harry asked.

"They're trying to discredit him," said Lupin. "Didn't you see the Daily Prophet last week? They reported that he'd been voted out of the Chairmanship of the International Confederation of Wizards because he's getting old and losing his grip, bit it's not true, he was voted out by presumably British Ministry wizards after he made a speech announcing Voldemort's return. One would hope that someone from a different country would know to at least listen to Dumbledore over Fudge since Dumbledore's just one of those guys probably even in other countries; after all, it wasn't just British people he was addressing. On the other hand, however, it didn't seem like we had any outside help during the last war so it might be par for the course for other nations to ignore our pleas for help. Humanity's awesome like that, you know."

Why can't most people get voted out of something and have it be reasoned as they're getting old and losing their grip. Like Congress, for example. :( GUESS WHEN THIS CHAPTER WAS WRITTEN LOL.

________________________________________

"The Order is comprised only of overage wizards," said Lupin. "Wizards who have left school," he added, as Fred and George opened their mouths. "There are dangers involved of which you can have no idea, any of you…"

"Anything worse than having to face and kill a basilisk?" said Harry swiftly. "Or continuously facing and escaping from Voldemort himself?"

"…You know what, sign here."

"Boo-yah."

________________________________________

"I want you all to go straight to bed, no talking," said Mrs. Weasley as they reached the first landing. "We've got a busy day tomorrow. I expect Ginny's asleep," she added to Hermione, "so try not to wake her up."

"Asleep, yeah, right," said Fred in an undertone, after Hermione bade them good night and they were climbing to the next floor. "If Ginny didn't grab for the Extendable Ears we snuck into her room last week as soon as Mum went back downstairs and had already heard absolutely everything, then I'm a flobberworm…"
"But there can't be anything worse than the Avada Kedavra curse," said Ron. "What's worse than death?"

"The Cruciatus Curse and the Dementor's Kiss, to name a few," replied Harry promptly.

"If you say so."

"I do say so."

"Maybe it's something that can kill leads of people at once," suggested George.

"Okay, you lot cannot be so ignorant that you don't know about biological warfare, blitzkriegs, nuclear fucking warfare, or other numerous ways that Muggles have long since mastered to murder hundreds of thousands of people at once," spat Harry disdainfully. "Also how do wizards not even have magical equivalents of bombs, is it only 'lowly Muggles' who have international wars or what, I refuse to believe that this is the case."

________________________________________

"Joke shop still on, then?" Harry muttered, pretending to be adjusting the nozzle on his spray.

"Well, we haven't had a chance to get premises yet," said Fred, dropping his voice even lower as Mrs. Weasley mopped her brow with her scarf before returning to the attack, "so we're running it as a mail-order service at the moment. We put advertisements in the Daily Prophet last week."

"All thanks to you, mate," said George. "But don't worry…Mum hasn't got a clue. She won't read the Daily Prophet anymore, 'cause of it telling lies about you and Dumbledore."

Harry grinned, but soon frowned as he realized that what followed in the narrative was one of the more blatant bits of recapping information from other books. Thus far, Order of the Phoenix had been rather subtle about it, which was a HUGE relief to those who had spent the past three years feverishly rereading the first four books anyway, but occasionally the narrative felt the need to relapse to its old tricks from the previous three books. What made this particular passage even more insulting to the fans was that it spelt out and simplified what the twins and Harry were just talking about, so it was doubly needless repetition.

________________________________________

"I think we'll tackle those after lunch."

Mrs. Weasley pointed at the dusty glass-fronted cabinets standing on either side of the mantelpiece. They were crammed with an odd assortment of objects: a selection of rusty daggers, claws, a coiled snakeskin, a number of tarnished silver boxes inscribed with languages Harry could not understand and, lease pleasant of all, an ornate crystal bottle with a large opal set into the stopper, full of what Harry was quite sure was blood. So it was completely understandable why one would want to try cleaning up that stuff immediately after they'd just eaten.

"Wait, you won't let us hear about You-Know-Who may or may not be up to but you'll let us attempt to tackle clearly Dark objects that none of us have any experience with and could probably kill us all?" said Fred incredulously.

"Well I do need all the help I can get to make this place at least semi-fit to live in—"

"Amen to that," grumbled Sirius.
"—and you're the only help I've got," said Mrs. Weasley, shrugging.

"The Mudblood is talking to Kreacher as though she is my friend, if Kreacher's Mistress saw him in such company, oh what would she say—"

"Don't call her a Mudblood!" said Ron and Ginny together, very angrily and a little late.

"It doesn't matter," Hermione whispered, "he's not in his right mind, he doesn't know what he's—"

"Are you going to use that excuse for every pure-blood bigot who talks like that?" said Fred, eyeing Kreacher with great dislike. "Because…You know what, try it, I would pay to see dear old Draco's reaction to you implying that he wasn't in his right mind."

"Kreacher would never move anything from its proper place in Master's house," said the elf, then muttered very fast, "Mistress would never forgive Kreacher if the tapestry was thrown out, seven centuries it's been in the family, Kreacher must save it, Kreacher will not let Master and the blood traitors and the brats destroy it—"

"I thought it might be that," said Sirius, casting a disdainful look at the opposite wall. "She'll have put another Permanent Sticking Charm on the back of it, I don't doubt, but if I can get rid of it I certainly will. Or maybe I'll just paint over it or cover it up with something…Hell, why don't I paint over my dear mother's portrait, how come I've not thought of easy solutions to dumb things…Or I could just remove the wall, I think I saw that in a fic once, can't believe I'm not even trying this stuff, I have unlimited time to think in here…Bloody Permanent Sticking Charm on the curtain so it's always covering her no matter what, that's at least using magic like we're programmed to always do at all times, I am the dumbest idiot…"

"He was younger than me," said Sirius. "And a much better son, as I was constantly reminded."

"Bill, Charlie, and Percy are so much better than you will ever be," Fred muttered under his breath, and George and Ron nodded grimly.

"Why aren't we saying anything in this section, anyway?" asked Ginny. "Mum could've come back with lunch earlier and nothing would've changed."

"But he died," said Harry to Sirius, ignoring everything.

"Yeah," said Sirius. "Stupid idiot…"

"And you know of any smart ones?"

"Quiet you."

"Was he killed by an Auror?" Harry asked tentatively.

"Oh no," said Sirius. "No, he was murdered by Voldemort. Or on Voldemort's orders, more likely…where the balls did I get my information, he went fucking missing after goin' nuts, what the hell."
"I see Tonks isn't on here. Maybe that's why Kreacher won't take orders from her — he's supposed to do whatever anyone in the family asks him..."

"But if he doesn't take orders from anyone not on the tapestry, why does he take orders from you?" asked Harry.

"...I suspect it might have something to do with the part where I have a penis," said Sirius after a moment.

"Oh, okay then."

"Also maybe because I was never properly convicted? My accounts sure as hell weren't frozen, I bought that Firebolt for you somehow."

"Why is everything super unclear."

"It's ideal for headquarters, of course," Sirius said. "My father put every security measure known to Wizard-kind on it when he lived here. It's Unplottable, so Muggles could never come and call — as if they'd wanted to — and now Dumbledore's added his protection, you'd be hard put to find a safer house anywhere."

"Which is why he stuck me at the place where I was easily attacked by dementors," said Harry dryly.

"Let's face it, kid, he's not that smart."

They found an unpleasant-looking silver instrument, something like a many-legged pair of tweezers, which scuttled up Harry's arm like a spider when he picked it up, and attempted to puncture his skin; Sirius seized it and smashed it with a heavy book entitled Nature's Nobility: A Wizarding Genealogy. There as a musical box that emitted a faintly sinister, tinkling tune when wound, and they all found themselves becoming curiously weak and sleepy until Ginny had the sense to slam the lid shut; also a heavy locket that none of them could open, a number of ancient seals and, in a dusty box, an Order of Merlin, First Class, that had been awarded to Sirius's grandfather for "Services to the Ministry."

"It means he gave them a load of gold," said Sirius contemptuously, throwing the medal into the rubbish sack.

Several times, Kreacher sidled into the room and attempted to smuggle things away under his loincloth, muttering horrible curses every time they caught him at it. When Sirius wrestled the locket from his grip Kreacher actually burst into furious tears, begging Sirius, "Master must give back Master Regulus's locket, Kreacher hasn't been able to destroy it yet, no matter how hard Kreacher has tried he could not do it, oh what would Master Regulus say..."

"Hold on a moment," said Sirius, bending down to Kreacher's level. "This was Regulus's? Wow, he had bad taste...Wait, did you say he ordered you to destroy it?"

"It's the reason Master Regulus is dead, oh my poor Master, Kreacher has failed you, Kreacher is sorry, Kreacher has failed..."
"…Kreacher," said Sirius firmly, "I order you to tell me the story behind this locket."

And so everyone learned about what an actual cool guy Regulus was, and Ron prompted Harry to try speaking Parseltongue to it, and the drawing room basically exploded as the Horcrux started shouting shit at Kreacher, and eventually Dumbledore got called in and he beat it up with the Sword of Gryffindor and turned and left in a considerably good mood, and everyone was wondering what the fuck had just happened but from that moment on Kreacher was a lot nicer now that his main goal in life had been fulfilled, and he was much more cheerful for it and even helped them clean the house as long as Sirius let him keep a couple of mementos, which Sirius agreed to readily enough, amazed at this new change Kreacher had undergone.

The china, which bore the Black crest and motto, was all thrown unceremoniously into a sack by Sirius, and the same fate met a set of old photographs in tarnished silver frames, all of whose occupants squealed shrilly as the glass covering them smashed, which shouldn’t have happened because only wizarding portraits can make noise, right? And also why didn't Sirius give all this crap to Dung to sell and help fund the Order, Invisibility Cloaks can't come cheap and would always be useful.

Lupin, who was staying in the house with Sirius, PROBABLY BECAUSE HE WAS DIRT POOR, COULDN'T GET A JOB, AND DIDN'T HAVE ANYWHERE ELSE TO GO, but who left it for long periods of time to do mysterious work for the Order that we now know had nothing to do with Greyback until next year so who knows what the bloody hell he was doing, helped them repair a grandfather clock that had developed a nasty habit of shooting heavy bolts at passersby. Why would a magical clock that was probably built with magical magic require bolts of any kind.

Harry felt as though a brick had dropped into his stomach when Mrs. Weasley turned to him during dinner on Wednesday evening, which was also Ginny's birthday but no one gave a shit, and said quietly, "I've ironed your best clothes for tomorrow morning, Harry, and I want you to wash your hair tonight too. A good first impression can work wonders, which is why you should only wash your hair and not the rest of you because we magical folk do love us some stinky dudes."

"Mrs. Weasley," said Harry shortly, momentarily dredging up something that had been brought up in a previous parody, "I've told you before that I don't appreciate you going through my things without my knowledge. I'd really prefer it if you adhere to my wishes concerning my property, which is neither yours nor any of your children's, from now on."

"But you're like my son, though!"

"Still doesn't give you the right."

"I DON’T LIKE BASHING MOLLY!" wailed ShieldEcho, sniffling loudly.


"I kind of want to know why I'm wearing a T-shirt and jeans," said Harry. "You said you washed my best clothes, I expected to have to wear my dress robes today."
"Well, Arthur thought it would be more fitting that you dress like a Muggle today, given what you're being charged for, you understand."

"I suppose...I didn't even know I had decent Muggle clothes, even what I'm wearing should be at least three sizes too big for me or something, when would I ever have found the time to pick up clothes that aren't school robes?"

"Weren't you left alone for two weeks the summer before your third year where you could go wherever you wanted?"

"Yeah, in Diagon Alley, which would never sell Muggle clothes probably since y'all insist on never wearing trousers ever."

"You don't normally walk to work, do you?" Harry asked Mr. Weasley, as they set off briskly around the square.

"No, I usually Apparate," said Mr. Weasley, "but obviously you can't, and me taking you there with Side-Along Apparition would just be silly and not time-efficient whatsoever, and I think it's best we arrive in a thoroughly non-magical fashion...makes a better impression, given what you're being charged for..."

"Where are we?" said Mr. Weasley blankly, and for one heart-stopping moment Harry thought they had gotten off at the wrong station despite Mr. Weasley's continual references to the map; but a second later he said, "Ah yes...this way, Harry," and led him down a side road.

"Sorry," he said, "but I never come by train and it all looks rather different from a Muggle perspective. As a matter of fact I've never even used the visitor's entrance before, and at a time when if we're late it could be extremely detrimental to whether or not you're allowed to still go to school might not have been the best time to experiment."

"So using Floo Powder—"

"The Floo Network's watching everything, I've told you this."

"So using the Knight Bus to get here or else using it or brooms or Side-Along Apparition to travel to the Burrow last night so we could use Floo Powder to get to the Ministry in a timely and stress-free fashion was completely out of the question, then."

"Well of course, my boy!"

"I think I hate you."

"Welcome to the Ministry of Magic. Please state your name and business."

"Er..." said Mr. Weasley, clearly uncertain whether he should talk into the receiver or not; maybe he should've asked someone precisely how this worked before he was in danger of getting his son's friend expelled; he compromised by holding the mouthpiece to his ear, "Arthur Weasley, Misuse of Muggle Artifacts Office, here to escort Harry Potter, who has been asked to attend a disciplinary hearing..."
"Thank you," said the cool female voice. "Visitor, please take the badge and attach it to the front of your robes."

There was a click and a rattle, and Harry saw something slide out of the metal chute where returned coins usually appeared. He picked it up: It was a square silver badge with Harry Potter, Disciplinary Hearing on it. He slipped it into the pocket of his jeans.

"…Harry, you're supposed to pin it to your shirt," said Mr. Weasley slowly, staring at him as though he'd gone mad.

"No it didn't," Harry replied calmly, "it said for me to attach it to the front of my robes, and I'm not wearing robes."

"You catty bitch!"

"X3"

________________________________________

What would've happened if, for fear of being expelled and losing his best defense against Voldemort, Harry deliberately left his wand at home to make absolutely certain that it wouldn't be snapped?

________________________________________

As they passed the fountain Harry saw silver Sickles and bronze Knuts glinting up at him from the bottom of the pool. A small, smudged sign beside it read:

_All proceeds from the Fountain of Magical Brethren will be given to St. Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries_

_Ah shit, I didn't think to bring my money bag since we're here to see if I'm expelled or not and we're not about to go shopping for any reason because that's really not important right now, Harry found himself thinking weirdly."

________________________________________

Harry found himself jammed against the back wall of the lift. Several witches and wizards were looking at him curiously; he stared at his feet to avoid catching anyone's eye, flattening his fringe as he did so. Then they looked at his badge and gaped at him anyway, and Harry cursed himself for not thinking to cross his arms as well.

________________________________________

Once again the lift doors opened and four or five witches and wizards got out; at the same time, several paper airplanes swooped into the lift. Harry stared up at them as they flapped idly around above his head; they were a pale violet color and he could see MINISTRY OF MAGIC stamped along the edge of their wings.

"Just Interdepartmental memos," Mr. Weasley muttered to him. "We used to use owls, but the mess was unbelievable…droppings all over the desks…that is to say our offices were engulfed in their fecal matter…the fumes from the piles of their excrement were overwhelming in poorly ventilated areas—"

"OKAY that's enough."
"You sure?"

"Quite."

As the female voice went on describing the layout of level five for three additional hours, one frustrated person on the other side of Mr. Weasley yelled out, "Why are we being told what's on which floor when we work here and should know perfectly well by now? What's wrong with a normal plaque that Harry can just casually glance at, what if we're in a hurry and don't have time to listen to all of the crap that's on each floor before the doors finally open?!" Everyone looked at them oddly.

"Level four, Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, incorporating Beast, Being, and Spirit Divisions, Goblin Liaison Office, supposedly also containing the Committee for the Disposal of Dangerous Creatures considering it doesn't appear to be anywhere else, and Pest Advisory Bureau."

"Why have they changed the time?" Harry said breathlessly as they hurtled past the Auror cubicles; people poked out their heads and stared as they streaked past. Harry felt as though he had left all his insides back at Perkins's desk.

"I've no idea, but thank goodness we got here so early, if you'd missed it it would have been catastrophic!"

Mr. Weasley skidded to a halt beside the lifts and jabbed impatiently at the down button.

"Fortunately we can teleport, so there's no danger of ever arriving any place late ever."

"Brilliant, can we Side-Along Apparate to other sections of the Ministry beside just the Atrium, 'cause that'll probably really help loads—"

"Now shut up and ride your elevator."

"Okay, they will need to put me in Azkaban for something much worse than I'm currently being charged for if this keeps up, arsewipe."

Harry's heart was beating a violent tattoo against his Adam's apple—wait, does that mean his voice finally dropped this year? Huh, cool. When's Ron's or anyone else's gonna do that? Hello? Ms. Rowling? Hellooo?

A/N: So all of the people I either love or don't mind so much are all-around terrible people in this book I guess. I think it's Umbridge, I think her very presence within any part of the text itself just brings out the worst in everyone else involved in it. Which would also explain Remus and Ron's dickish behaviors in DH. Hurrah. I am so overjoyed. -_- 

And I know I'm gonna get crap for not talking about the forty-line stare, but I've kind of already
addressed it elsewhere where I said I think Remus needed to keep an eye on Sirius to make sure he wouldn't leap over the table and rip Molly's throat out, which he may have almost done, really. (Also I don't overly ship them much so I don't really care. *shrugs sheepishly*)

Review or the worst decoration or poster or whatever you've ever put on your wall will never come off it.
A/N: Mother person's sister visiting today. She's basically a half-as-old Aunt Muriel. I kinda wanna crawl under my bed and hide there all day. Worst part of the holiday season for me, right here. I know that's small potatoes compared to other crap in the world but that's not gonna make me not feel shitty about it, sorry. You know, it's kinda funny, if you celebrate Christmas at least in the States then as kids you were taught to not lie and be good so Santa would bring you things, but then on Christmas Eve when we were forced to go to the mother person's side of the family's get-together I was told to lie through my teeth to everyone and pretend to like both the shit presents and the shit relatives who always treat my folks like shit, and somehow this didn't count and maybe Santa would even give me something a little extra for being such a lying sack of shit. I'm saying everything's made of fecal matter. And now even though I'm a grown-ass adult I'm still not allowed to tell the truth, 's great. Which is why I rant on places they'll never read and everyone else skips. HOORAY!

On that note, HAPPY/MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HANUKKAH EVEN THOUGH IT'S ALREADY OVER AND HAPPY KWANZAA AND HAPPY WINTER SOLSTICE AND HAPPY WHATEVER ELSE DOESN'T OFFEND YOU AND THAT I'VE LEFT OUT BECAUSE I'M TOO IGNORANT TO KNOW ANY OTHERS! HAVE A DUMB EARLY PRESENT THING!

Disclaimer: Today's review threat was brought to you by Dndchk, and a couple of ideas were brought to you in part by Kitty279 and probably Dracarot again, I'm beginning to lose track, sorry. Also blatant stealing from Rifftrax and Naruto: The Abridged Comedy Fandub Spoof Series Show, plus mentions of Scooby Doo, Sweeney Todd, and some book series about some dude with glasses or something, Iunno, I wasn't really paying attention.

A cold male voice rang across the courtroom.

"You're late."

"Sorry," said Harry nervously. "I-I didn't know the time had changed."

"That is not the Wizengamot's fault," said the voice. "A letter was sent to you this morning. Take your seat."

"Isn't it your fault for not making sure I got the message?"

"NOPE."

"Joy."

"Disciplinary hearing of the twelfth of August," said Fudge in a ringing voice, and Percy began taking notes at once, "into offenses committed under the Decree for the Reasonable Restriction of Underage Sorcery and the International Statute of Secrecy by Harry James Potter—"

"I have a middle name?" Harry gasped in shock. "Why didn't anyone ever tell me?!!"

"—Witness for the defense, Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore," said a quiet voice from
behind Harry, who turned his head so fast he cricked his neck.

"Bwian, eh?" said Fudge.

"No no, Brian."

"Fully aware that you were in close proximity to a Muggle at the time?"

"One who already knew about magic so there's got to be some kind of loophole that says that's not as bad, and besides, I only used it because we were—"

"Don't you see, Amelia?" said Fudge, still smirking. "Let me explain. He's been thinking it through and decided dementors would make a very nice little cover story, very nice indeed. Muggles can't see dementors, can they, boy?"

"They can't?"

"…No, they can't, we know you know this."

"No, I just found out now."

"…Clearly another tale he's just created for this highly convenient story of his…so it's just your word and no witnesses…"

"I'm not lying!" said Harry loudly, over another outbreak of tittering from the court. "Why else would anyone perform a Patronus Charm in the first place unless they were being attacked by either a dementor or a lethifold?" He paused. "Also I've saved the school four times and have a flawless record of standing for truth and justice."

"LIES! LIES AND BLASPHEMY!"

Dumbledore cleared his throat. The Wizengamot fell silent again.

"We do, in fact, have a witness to the presence of dementors in that alleyway," he said.

Fudge's plump face seemed to slacken, as though somebody had let air out of it. He stared down at Dumbledore for a moment or two, then, with the appearance of a man pulling himself back together, said, "We haven't got time to listen to more taradiddles, I'm afraid, Dumbledore. I want this dealt with quickly—"

"I may be wrong," said Dumbledore pleasantly, "but I am sure that under the Wizengamot Charter of Rights, the accused has the right to present witnesses for his or her case? Isn't that the policy of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, Madam Bones?" he continued, addressing the witch in the monocle.

"True," said Madam Bones. "Perfectly true."

"But apparently not the right to counsel."

"What the fuck is that shit."

"Oh dear."
"Oh, very well, very well," snapped Fudge. "Where is this person?"

"I brought him with me," said Dumbledore. "He's just outside the door. Should I—?"

"No — Weasley, you go," Fudge barked at Percy, who got up at once, hurried down the stone steps from the judge's balcony, and hastened past Dumbledore and Harry without glancing at them.

A moment later, Percy returned, followed by Dudley Dursley. He his gaze darted around the courtroom in abject fear as he firmly held his fists at his sides, though Harry could see them twitch as if desperately wanting to cover his backside. Dumbledore stood up and guided Dudley gently to his own chair, conjuring a second one for himself. After recovering from his shock at seeing a chair appear out of thin air, Dudley glanced at Harry out of the corner of his eye and grimaced at him. Harry gaped at him. Just what did Dumbledore do to get Dudley to agree to do this?

"Oh come now!" Fudge exploded, making Dudley squeak and jump in fright, immediately sitting on his hands. "Muggles can't see dementors, Dumbledore, we just went through this!"

"I am well aware of that," said Dumbledore, putting a hand gently on Dudley's shoulder. "However, as I'm sure you know, sight is not necessarily the only sense that humans possess, and in fact recent research shows that eyewitness accounts can often be misinterpreted or incorrectly recollected, and that cues taken from other senses such as sounds and smells actually stay in a person's memory longer. Recent as in probably early twenty-first century but whatever."

"Very well," said Madam Bones before Fudge can retort; he shot her a look of utmost loathing before clearing his throat and glaring down at Dudley instead.

"Full name? said Fudge loudly.

"D-Dudley Daniel Dursley," said Dudley nervously, using the fake middle name I'd given him for no raisin.

"Fine, then," Fudge said coolly. "What's your story?"

Dudley fidgeted a little before he began.

"I was hanging about with my mates and started heading home about nine," he mumbled, looking anywhere but Fudge and the rest of the Wizengamot. "Met up with Harry on the way and we took a shortcut down an alley…we were talking, and suddenly it got really dark. And it had been boiling all day and suddenly it was cold for no reason, and I sort of thought Harry was the one doing it at first, 'cause I'd been kind of teasing him about having nightmares, or something…I couldn't see anything, it was really dark…"

"Started hearing…things…inside my head," Dudley went on, shuddering slightly. "I told Harry to stop it, he said he wasn't doing anything, then I punched him and ran…Harry shouted that I was running right at one of those…those things, and I did hear a sort of messed-up breathing noise but I just wanted to get away from Harry…Then I tripped, and Harry told me to keep my mouth shut, so I put my arms over my face…and there were these…" Dudley shivered and broke off.

"Yes?" Madam Bones prompted, not unkindly, her eyes widened slightly. Harry could see red marks under her eyebrow where the monocle had dug into it.

"These…These hands were trying to…to move my arms away from my face," Dudley continued in almost a whisper, visibly trembling. "They felt c-cold and dead, and skin was peeling and—" He broke off, shaking more violently, and took a deep breath before plowing on. "And the voices were just g-getting louder all the time — but then I saw a white light through my arms, and suddenly it all
stopped and it was warm again, so I guess Harry stopped them at that point, but I was kind of out of it at that point so Harry had to drag me home, I don't really remember the trip back." Dudley let out a breath of relief at having finished his story and slumped back in his chair.

Madam Bones looked down at Dudley in silence; Fudge was not looking at him at all, but fidgeting with his papers. Finally he raised his eyes and said, rather aggressively, "That's what you experienced, is it?"

Dudley jolted upright in his chair again and nodded fearfully.

"Very well," Fudge spat contemptuously. "You may go."

Dudley cast a frightened look from Fudge to Dumbledore, the latter of which nodded kindly to him, then got up and walked quickly toward the door again, looking back at Harry a couple of times as he went. Harry heard the door thud shut behind him.

"Not a very convincing witness," said Fudge loftily.

"Oh, I don't know," said Madam Bones in her booming voice. "He certainly described the effects of a dementor attack very accurately. And I can't imagine why he would say they were there if they weren't."

"I've got another witness I can bring in, if you want!" said Dumbledore cheerfully.

"Oh for Merlin's sake!" yelled Fudge, throwing his papers down in front of him.

"Bring him in," said Madam Bones, shooting Fudge an amused look. Dumbledore obliged and got up to go to the door.

A moment later, Dumbledore returned, followed by Mrs. Figg. She looked more batty than ever. Harry wished she had thought to change out of her carpet slippers. Maybe if Dumbledore had prepped her better; he had one job!

"A Squib, eh?" said Fudge, eyeing Mrs. Figg closely. "We'll be checking that. You'll leave details of your parentage with my assistant, Weasley. Incidentally, can Squibs see dementors?" he added, looking left and right along the bench where he sat.

"No we can't," Mrs. Figg admitted, "but we can still feel the effects and I still saw the two boys falling over and try to fight back."

"Very well, please proceed," said Madam Bones before Fudge could say anything. He shot her a dirty look.

Hey Dumbledore, how 'bout coaching Mrs. Figg better so she doesn't fuck it up if you insist on making her lie in court. You had over a week, doucheface.

Hey, cool, an evil bitch from the depths of hell itself if not lower. LET'S MAKE HER AS HIDEOUS AS POSSIBLE, THAT WAY WE'LL KNOW SHE'S EVIL BECAUSE UGLY PEOPLE CAN NEVER BE DECENT HUMAN BEINGS, ESPECIALLY IF THEY'RE
FEMALE. Also Scooby Doo logic immediately dictates that she totally sent the dementors on Harry. We realize only upon subsequent rereads. /\

"I suppose you've forgotten the Hover Charm the boy used three years ago!" said Fudge at the top of his voice.

"If the Trace holds any relevance at all, you'd know that that wasn't me!" said Harry.

"Well who was it then?" said Fudge condescendingly.

"It was a house-elf!" said Harry. "I told you this two years ago in the Leaky Cauldron, you accepted it then!"

"Well now I'm not," said Fudge triumphantly, and Harry had to grip the arms of his chair very tightly to keep himself from losing his temper.

"In your admirable battle to ensure that the law is upheld," said Dumbledore, "you appear, inadvertently I am sure, to have overlooked a few laws yourself."

"Laws can be changed," said Fudge savagely.

"You know, the argument I should've come up with at this point would be that you were willing to endanger other children just to continue to alienate this one child right here. What if an underage wizard was suddenly forbidden from using underage magic under any circumstances and then suddenly found themselves faced by an armed robber, or an abusive family member who was about to take it too far, or Merlin knows what else, and there were no adult wizards around to protect them? The parents certainly wouldn't be very fond of you then, now would they? But who cares about them, we all know I only care about Harry anyway, so instead I'll bitch about you lot resorting to a full criminal trial for a simple matter of underage magic. Which, admittedly, is also extremely stupid."

"Well, well, well…Patronus Potter," said Lucius Malfoy coolly…which sounds like an awesome title, actually, way better than the Boy Who Lived crap which won't really sound that great when the poor guy's in his thirties, and it's even based on something that Harry worked really hard to achieve and is something he can feel really proud of; I can't be the only one who wanted more out of that.

Sirius stop being a poo-head.

Hermione stop being a poo-head.

"I feel like a house-elf," grumbled Ron.

"Why, they at least probably get to use magic to clean," said Harry before Hermione could say anything. Hermione gave him a dirty look.
On the very last day of the holidays Harry was sweeping up Hedwig's owl droppings from the top of the wardrobe when Ron entered their bedroom carrying a couple of envelopes.

"Booklists have arrived," he said, throwing one of the envelopes up to Harry, who was standing on a chair. "About time, I thought they'd forgotten, they usually come much earlier than this…"

"Does that mean first years didn't get their letters inviting them to Hogwarts until today either?" said Harry, staring at the envelope in his hands. "That doesn't give much time for Muggle-borns to acclimate to the knowledge that this whole new world exists, nor does it give their families much time to decide if they even want their kids to go or not. I mean, what if they already spent a crapload of their money so that their kid could go to some posh private school, or enrolled them in an exchange program outside the country even, and what if that school had started already and they suddenly had to yank their kid out so they could go somewhere else? Or do all schools open on the first of September in the UK, I can't believe how out of touch with the Muggle World I've become. Also, if that's the case, is every second of September a Monday for them like it is for us as well?"

"There's always the possibility that they already got their main letters inviting them to the school and the lists of supplies and things," suggested Ron, "and there was just a thing at the bottom that said they'd be getting a booklist eventually."

"Still makes it really inconvenient," said Harry, sweeping the last of the droppings into a rubbish bag and throwing the bag over Ron's head into the wastepaper basket in the corner, which swallowed it and belched loudly. "Now absolutely every family with a child of Hogwarts age is going to crowd into Flourish and Blotts, where there may well not be enough supplies to meet demand since this information is coming out so late. It's going to be an insane bloodbath comprised of first come, first serve." He paused. "So it's basically Black Friday, but with magic." He blinked as all of the implications that raised set in. "Oh God."

"We overheard Mum and Dad talking on the Extendable Ears a few weeks back," Fred told Harry, "and from what they were saying, Dumbledore was having real trouble finding anyone to do the job this year."

"Not surprising, is it, when you think about what's happened to the last four," said George. "And who cares what happened to the two before Quirrell that me and Fred know about, I guess."

"One sacked, one dead, one's memory removed, and one locked in a trunk for nine months," said Harry, counting off on his fingers. "Yeah, I see what you mean."

"Hey fuck you, man, I resigned!" said Lupin, sticking his head in the door.

"Are you even here right now?" said Harry, unfazed.

"I don't know."

"Ginny said the booklists had come at last," said Mrs. Weasley, glancing around at all the envelopes as she made her way over to the bed and started sorting the robes into two piles. "If you give them to me I'll take them over to Diagon Alley this afternoon and get your books while trying not to get super murdered by all the other crazy parents. Ron, I'll have to get you more pajamas, these are at least six inches too short, I can't believe how fast you're growing…nor do I believe that we can't just
charm or transfigure clothes to fit or look newer, you'd think that with all this *magic* we've got it would actually come in useful occasionally...what color would you like?"

Mrs. Weasley let out a shriek just like Hermione's.

"I don't believe it! I don't believe it! Oh Ron, that's wonderful! A prefect! That's everyone in the family!"

"What are Fred and I, next-door neighbors?" said George indignantly, as his mother pushed him aside and flung her arms around her youngest son.

"I exist too, fuck-o!" cried Ginny as she passed the doorway.

"Are you talking to me or Mum?" asked George.

"Yes, said Ginny. "Also was Charlie a prefect?"

"No idea," said Fred. "Hell, were Mum and Dad even prefects."

"Shrug," shrugged George and Ginny in unison.

Ron had not asked Dumbledore to give him the prefect badge. This was not Ron's fault. Was he, Harry Ron's best friend in the world, going to sulk because he didn't have a badge, laugh with the twins behind Ron's back, ruin this for Ron when, for the first time, he had beaten Harry at something that wasn't chess?

Mrs. Weasley returned from Dagon Alley with her face black and blue, chunks of her hair pulled out, her arm in a sling, bleeding profusely from a wound in her side, and limping on a leg that had been transfigured into a massive turnip, laden with slightly mangled and torn-up books and carrying a long package wrapped in thick brown paper that Ron took from her with a moan of longing.

HOW DOES MAD-EYE KNOW WHAT A BOGGART LOOKS LIKE. DOES IT TRANSFORM INTO HIS WORST FEAR FROM THAT FAR AWAY OR CAN HIS EYE JUST SEE THE REAL THING FOR WHAT IT IS WHICH IS WHY EVERYONE WAITED SO LONG AND STUFF. WHY ISN'T REMUS ASKING ALL OF THE QUESTIONS RIGHT NOW IF THAT IS THE CASE, AND WHY IS IT NEVER BROUGHT UP ON POTTERMORE.

"I was never a prefect myself," said Tonks brightly from behind Harry as everybody moved toward the table to help themselves to food. Her hair was tomato-red and waist length today; she looked like Ginny's older sister. "My Head of House said I lacked certain necessary qualities."

"Like what?" said Ginny, who was choosing a baked potato.

"Like the ability to behave myself," said Tonks.
Ginny laughed; Hermione looked as though she did not know whether to smile or not and compromised by taking an extra large gulp of butterbeer and choking on it.

"Also I'd like to randomly add that my Patronus happens to be a jack rabbit," Tonks went on casually, ladling herself some onion soup.

Sirius spat out his own butterbeer and started cackling loudly, hunched over in his chair and beating the table with his fist while Lupin whipped his head around and stared at Tonks with his mouth agape.

"…What?" said Tonks slowly, glancing between Lupin and Sirius in concern.

"N-Nothing," stammered Lupin, his face turning bright red, as Sirius fell out of his chair and onto the floor, still laughing madly. Everyone backed away slowly.

Hermione was talking very earnestly to Lupin about her view of elf rights.

"I mean, it's the same kind of nonsense as werewolf segregation, isn't it? It all stems from this horrible thing wizards have of thinking they're superior to other creatures—"

"Yes, it is horrible when someone believes that their knowledge of an 'Other's' situation is so profound and in-depth when they have never experienced such a thing themselves that they think they can educate an 'Other' all about it," said Lupin dryly. "Please, tell me more about werewolf segregation and how it is exactly identical to the plight of a different race of beings that wizards can actually stomach the sight of, as I certainly don't know enough about it."

Hermione turned pink and fell silent.

Harry took the photograph. A small crowd of people, some waving at him, others lifting their glasses, looked back up at him.

"There's me," said Moody unnecessarily, pointing at himself. The Moody in the picture was unmistakable, though his hair was slightly less gray and his nose was intact. Also he should've still had both his normal eyes by that point.

For one brief moment, the great black dog reared onto its — the fuck, his — hind legs and placed his front paws on Harry's shoulders, but Mrs. Weasley shoved Harry away toward the train door hissing, "For heaven's sake, act more like a dog, Sirius!"

"But he totally is, though," said Tonks, frowning. "You're drawing way more attention to us than he is by acting like this."

"Quiet you."

But as Hermione and Ron dragged their trunks, Crookshanks, and a caged Pigwidgeon off toward the engine end of the train, Harry felt an odd sense of confusion. It didn't make any sense for them to drag all their possessions all throughout the train twice if they wouldn't be spending the entire trip in
the prefects’ meeting, so why didn't they find a compartment with Harry and Ginny and then fuck off to their meeting?

"You're Harry Potter," said Luna dreamily.

"I know I am," said Harry.

Neville chuckled. Luna turned her pale eyes upon him instead.

"And I don't know who you are."

"I'm nobody," said Neville, "and nobody's perfect. Therefore, I am perfect."

"This is true," said Harry at the same time that Ginny said, "No arguments here." They looked at each other, blinked, and started furiously making out.

"Well that was weird," said Luna, munching on a goat leg while playing the tambourine with her spleen.

Oh fuck you, Harry.

Be on the lookout for an eventual Sweeney Todd song parody starring Cornelius Fudge. ;D

At last the train began to slow down and they heard the usual racket up and down it as everyone scrambled to get their luggage and pets assembled even though they should've been left on the train so it could be taken to the school separately but apparently the rules had changed because why not.

But as Ron continued to look bemused, a strange though occurred to Harry.

"Can't…can't you see them?"

"See what?"

"Can't you see what's pulling the carriages?"

Ron looked seriously alarmed now.

"Are you feeling all right, Harry?"

Harry stared at him, then grabbed Ron's arm once again and dragged him to the nearest winged horse, lifting Ron's hand for him and placing it on the horse's flank.

"Okay, mate, you are seriously starting to freak me HOLY SHIT WHAT AM I TOUCHING,"Ron yelled, his eyes moving rapidly as his hand slowly moved up and down the winged horse's flank.

"Oh good, they really are there," said Harry in relief, putting his own hand on the horse's side and rejoicing in how solid it felt. He blinked. "If not everyone can see them, how is no one walking into them all the time. Hell, how do they not at least see the vapor rising from their nostrils in the chilly
night air, these things make no sense."

"It's all right," said a dreamy voice from beside Harry as Ron vanished into the coach's dark interior. "You're not going mad or anything. I can see them too."

"Can you?" said Harry desperately, turning to Luna. He could see the bat-winged horses reflected in her wide, silvery eyes.

"Oh yes," said Luna, "I've been able to see them ever since my first day here. And if you had bothered giving the description of the anorexic horses to Hermione, she could probably have told you what they were. They've always pulled the carriages. You're just as sane as I am."

"...The Fantastic Beasts section on winged horses really should've gone into more detail on these things. Also kids should probably be informed in the letter from Hogwarts or something in case their childhood wasn't as idyllic as people like to believe a child's life always is and they saw some serious shit go down that would result in them being able to see thestrals and therefore immediately be considered mad by their classmates who can't see them and thus resulting in them being horribly bullied probably throughout their entire school careers for being different."

"Tell me about it."

"Did everyone see that Grubbly-Plank woman?" asked Ginny. "What's she doing back here? Hagrid can't have left, can he?"

"I'll be quite glad if he has," said Luna. "He isn't a very good teacher, is he?"

"That period after the word 'has' should've been a comma!" said Harry, Ron, and Ginny angrily. "Also he totally is."

Harry glared at Hermione; she cleared her throat and quickly said, "Erm...yes...he's very good."

"Way to stick up for your mates, Hermione," muttered Ginny, shaking her head at her.

"Well, we think he's a bit of a joke in Ravenclaw," said Luna, unfazed.

"Yeah well you're no prize," Ron snapped, as the wheels below them creaked into motion. Harry reflected that he would have to find out what Cho's viewpoint was; if she too considered Hagrid to be little more than a joke, it might well be time to turn his interest elsewhere.

…Pinkish hues are supposed to be not very magical at all, Pottermore said so, why is Umbridge so obsessed with it? Because stereotypical signs of femininity is bad? Then why is it cool if it's Tonks's preferred hair color? MAKE UP YOUR MIND, WOMAN. Also why does one who despises Muggles so much insist on wearing Muggle-designed cardigans.

Gryffindor does not rhyme with Ravenclaw, dude. Also way to make Slytherin only care about blood and not about ambition, and way to make sure the Hufflepuffs know once and for all that they are indeed the leftovers of the magical community. Dick. Least you admit the whole Sorting process
is kind of fucked up, so that's something I guess... Yes, I'm talking to a fictional hat as if it's a real thing, shut up.

"We have had two changes in staffing this year. We are very pleased to welcome back Professor Grubbly-Plank, who will be taking Care of Magical Creatures lessons; that should be teaching the class, what the balls, she ain't taking shit; we are also delighted to introduce Professor Umbridge, our new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher. She is here this year because she is so inconsequential to the Ministry that they can do entirely without her for a whole year."

Professor Umbridge's voice was high-pitched, breathy, and little-girlish and again, Harry felt a powerful rush of dislike that he could not explain to himself; all he knew was that he loathed everything about her, from her stupid voice to her fluffy pink cardigan. So basically everything that enhanced her femininity. I know Umbridge deserves all the hate but maybe it could be because she's the embodiment of all that is evil and not because she chooses to wear pink. Just sayin'. She gave another little throat-clearing cough ("Hem, hem") and continued: "Sorry, swallowed a dog toy. Well, it is lovely to be back at Hogwarts, I must say!" She smiled, revealing very pointed teeth. "And to see such happy little faces smiling up at me!"

Harry glanced around. None of the faces he could see looked happy; on the contrary, they all looked rather taken aback at being addressed as though they were five years old. This can happen sometimes in secondary education, though; occasionally you'll get that one art teacher in charge of a class of fourteen- to seventeen-year-olds, none of whom needed any kind of special needs education, and she'll spend the first lesson utterly convinced that none of them know how to make the color purple. True story, bro.

"Every headmaster and headmistress of Hogwarts has brought something new to the weighty task of governing this historic school, and that is as it should be, for without progress there would be stagnation and decay. There again, progress for progress's sake must be discouraged, for our tried and tested traditions often require no tinkering. Which is why we still knowingly enslave other humans of different skin colors and no one sees anything immoral about it; interracial marriages are still prohibited; Christianity is still the only religion allowed anywhere; homosexuality is still a mental disease; women are still property and can be traded for a goat and should never hold positions of power or be able to vote because their tiny little minds, so full of trivial things like housework and child-rearing and nothing else, would never be able to handle such complex things—Wait," Professor Umbridge cut herself off, staring at the floor in puzzlement.

He had been stupid not to expect this, he thought angrily, as he walked through much emptier upstairs corridors. Of course everyone was staring at him: He had emerged from the Triwizard maze two months ago clutching the dead body of a fellow student and claiming to have seen Lord Voldemort return to power. There had not been enough time last term to explain himself before everyone went home except he totally had over a week or two like always after the big event at the end of the school year, even if he had felt up to giving the whole school a detailed account of the terrible events in that graveyard.

He had reached the end of the corridor to the Gryffindor common room and had come to a halt in front of the portrait of the Fat Lady before he realized that he did not know the new password,
despite spending half a train ride and a whole dinner with two of Gryffindor's prefects who could've
told him at any time. What responsible role models they are. Dumbledore clearly made the right
choice when picking the leaders of the student body for their age group.

Harry got into bed and made to pull the hanging closed around him, but before he could do so,
Seamus said, "Look…what did happen that night when…you know, when…with Cedric Diggory
and all? I mean, it's not like we could see anything, considering that no one was able to watch any of
the third task in any way whatsoever, and besides I'd like to form my own opinion, so…"

Harry sighed and dropped the hangings.

"Well, when you put it like that…I don't want to be a dick and just shout in your face and insult your
mother, after all, so…” He sighed. "If I tell you, can you spread it around for me so I don't have to
rehash it?"

"YAY, STORY TIME!" cried Seamus, doing a happy spin dance of squee.

"YAY, I LOVE STORIES!" said Dean, getting comfortable on his bed and staring avidly at Harry
with his elbows resting on his crossed legs.

"Okay, this is the story of how a very decent person died horribly and an insane murderer came back
to murder more people."

"…YAAAY," said Dean.

"I hate happy endings," said Neville, adjusting the Mimbulus mimbletonia. "So cliché."

A/N: Man, how awesome a Dumbledore would Peter O'Toole have made. And he would've lived
through it, too. :'( RIP, dude.

Review or you'll be forced to wear Umbridge's cardigan.
Umbridge's Just Such A Joy To Work With, Ain't She

A/N: I enjoy working hard to edit a draft for this site only to come back and find it's not there anymore, this place is great. Actually it really is, I have so much more freedom here than I do on ff.net, I's just getting used to doing things differently and having stuff suddenly not work apparently. Woooo.

Disclaimer: Straight-up cameos of Dracarot all up in this bitch, plus MOAR Kitty279 input of the How Did I Miss That variety. Also weird things happening with Dragonball Z, the Shoebox Project, Star Trek: The Next Generation, Game of Thrones, Heavy Rain, A Series of Unfortunate Events, Annie, Pokémon, A Very Potter Sequel, and A Very Potter Senior Year.

…You know, it's pretty fucking lucky that the Ministry didn't put out the story that Harry actually killed Cedric and made up the whole Voldemort thing to cover that up, think of how much more difficult this year would've been. D:

"Does he think he'll turn into a nutter if he stays in a room with me too long?" asked Harry loudly, as the hem of Seamus's robes whipped out of sight.

"YEP!" called Seamus on his way down.

"…Oh."

"Actually I think he thinks you're a danger to yourself and others and you'll start madly attacking everyone in sight at any moment," said Dean cheerfully.

"…WELL GREAT."

"What are you still getting that for?" said Harry irritably, thinking of Seamus, as Hermione placed a Knut in the leather pouch on the owl’s leg even though we know from the first book that the paper costs five though perhaps Hermione's getting a student discount and it took off again. "I'm not bothering…load of rubbish."

"It's best to know what the enemy are saying," said Hermione darkly.

"…Don't you mean what the enemies are saying?" asked Harry.

"Or what the enemy is saying?" asked Ron.

"DO NOT SPEAK OF WHAT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND," said Hermione sweetly. Harry and Ron dove under the table and cowered in fright.

With all the poor grades History of Magic must continuously rake in due to nobody paying attention ever, why don't the school governors take the hint and force Dumbledore to just get bloody rid of Binns already? Or does everyone pass by the skin of their teeth because they just read the material
out of the book and use that instead, in which case why bother even showing up to class; unless the professor outright asked for a minimum class participation, people skived off the less important and more book-oriented classes all the time in college. Especially if it was at eight in the morning. What kind of demon do these people live in fear of that they schedule World History at eight in the morning, it was the only time I ever fell asleep during a class in my life.

"After this year, of course, many of you will cease studying with me," Snape went on. "I take only the very best into my N.E.W.T. Potions class, which means that some of us will certainly be saying good-bye and even the above average may not be able to get the jobs they wanted because I really care about your futures like that. And yes, if you were wondering, very few Hufflepuffs have ever made it through to my N.E.W.T. Potions class since that House's basic definition these days is just about being average; sometimes you get a hard-enough worker in there to remind you of how the books used to be, but that was before the sudden shift in tone."

"Did you do everything on the third line, Potter?"

"No," said Harry quietly.

"I beg your pardon?"

"No," said Harry, more loudly. "I forgot the hellebore..."

"I know you did, Potter, which means that this mess is utterly worthless. Evanesco."

The contents of Harry's potion vanished; he was left standing foolishly beside an empty cauldron. Huh. Snape never vanished anyone's potion before, even though it's a spectacular way to humiliate his students. It's almost as if the spell didn't appear until now because this will conveniently be the year when Harry and the others will be learning it or something. -_-  

THANK YOU, HARRY.

"Hermione and me have stopped arguing," said Ron, sitting down beside Harry.

"Until we meet up with her again, at least," grunted Harry.

"But Hermione says she thinks it would be nice if you stopped taking out your temper on us," said Ron.

"Especially when I'm in the right about something, right?" said Harry wearily.

"I'm just passing on the message," said Ron, talking over him. "But I reckon she's right. It's not our fault how Seamus and Snape treat you."

"You're just saying that because neither of you want to admit that you're wrong and that your constant arguing drives everyone up the wall and I'm always in the middle and the instant I pick a side it's guaranteed I'll lose one of you," Harry defended himself.

"Dude, we're practicing for when we're married and fighting over whether or not we name our
"Which one of you lost horribly," said Harry, smirking.

"Hey, least Hugo's still better than Albus Severus," Ron shot back.

"Which in itself is still better than Scorpius Hyperion," said Harry.

"This is true."

________________________________________

"I never remember my dreams," said Ron. "You say one."

"You must remember one of them," said Harry impatiently.

He was not going to share his dreams with anyone. He knew perfectly well what his regular nightmare about a graveyard meant, he did not need Ron or Professor Trelawney or the stupid Dream Oracle to tell him that… Apparently bringing up the one about the corridor ending with a locked door was out of the question…

"Well, I had one where Krillin from Dragonball Z and me were fighting something in a volcano and there was a pit of lava that blew up in our faces and Krillin got carried away by the waves of it when I was about eleven," said Ron, screwing up his face in an effort to remember. "What d'you reckon that means?"

"…That Krillin always loses?"

"Well, yeah, but we know that," said Ron impatiently. "What was with the volcano?"

"Iunno."

________________________________________

Yes, Harry, we know about the bow looking like a fly, do shut up.

________________________________________

"Why, I can't imagine any situation arising in my classroom that would require you to use a defensive spell, Miss Granger," said Professor Umbridge. "You surely aren't expecting to be attacked during class?"

"We're not going to use magic?" Ron ejaculated loudly. Heh heh, it's like sex.

"Students raise their hands when they wish to speak in my class, Mr.—?"

"Weasley," said Ron, thrusting his hand into the air. "And why are you trying to take away the wonder and whimsy of our secret society by taking away our magic? The only thing that separates us from Muggles? What you're implying is that you want all of us to live like Muggles once we leave school, which is contrary to absolutely everything your evil racist character that loathes everything to do with Muggles stands for. I mean, at the very least there are still bigoted pureblood students within the school who would willingly eat up the shit you're trying to spoon-feed us; are you saying you won't even teach them anything?"

"Twelve billion points from Gryffindor."
"As I thought."

"You will be learning about defensive spells in a secure, risk-free way…Well, mostly risk-free, anyway, you still might get a paper cut, but after all, learning things from books is the safest method of learning there is. Books are entirely harmless, after all, which is why governments keep banning them. Also, this particular installment, being just shy of nine hundred pages in the US, can be used successfully as a bludgeoning tool, but that's neither here or there."

"Well, it's like Harry said, isn't it?" said Dean. "If we're going to be attacked, it won't be risk-free—"

"I repeat, said Professor Umbridge, smiling in a very irritating fashion at Dean, "do you expect to be attacked during my class?"

"Verbally, yes," Dean replied promptly. "It happens in roughly seventy-five percent of the rest of our classes, why should this be any exception?"

"And what good's theory going to be in the real world?" said Harry loudly, his fist in the air again. Professor Umbridge looked up.

"This is school, Mr. Potter, not the real world," she said softly.

"But isn't the whole point of school to prepare us for the real world?" Harry spat.

"Of course not," said Professor Umbridge swiftly.

"You think school is merely about getting through a set of examinations?" shouted a random seventh year Slytherin, crashing the class and for some reason wearing a red Next Generation-era Starfleet uniform under his robes. "These students will become adults and need to be prepared for the responsibilities that ensues. School is about giving one the knowledge and critical thinking skills to actually function in the real world!"

"You're hilarious," giggled Umbridge sweetly. "Sure, most schools claim to do that, but anyone who's graduated from most anywhere know that that's an outright lie and that no class they've ever taken has prepared them for any kind of real world experience whatsoever. We're just being honest about it!" she concluded cheerfully.

"…Well anyway, I have more to say," said the Slytherin, who was actually Dracarot cameoing again because he is good at saying things.

"Oh goody," said Umbridge glumly.

"Do you really think that simply because there is no threat outside the school that their is no need to learn defensive spells? That is foolish beyond compare! Whether Voldemort is back or not is actually irrelevant to the entire issue!"

"But he's not, though."

"Exactly! Still doesn't matter! Your Ministry is not some invincible protective Umbrella! And even if it was, the ones staffing it will not live forever; every one of them will eventually be a corpse one
"Aha!" cried Umbridge, standing up and pointing at Dracarot. "So you admit that you are on Dumbledore's side and you want everyone in the Ministry dead, do you?!"

"...I think he just meant that everyone is mortal," said ShieldEcho slowly, "WOW you jump to conclusions like whoa."

"Because you are making me with your typing-ness."

"Shaddup, it's in character."

"...So it is."

"And besides," Dracarot went on, ignoring all the things, "you're supposed to be preparing these students for the jobs they may well eventually have at your Ministry, and if they're not qualified then the positions will be left empty and then we won't even have a Ministry!"

"Eh, that's later, I'm only really concerned about what's happening now."

"Spoken like a true politician," muttered Harry under his breath, and Ron and Hermione had to bite their fingers to keep from laughing.

"Now kindly GTFO," said Umbridge politely, flicking her wand so the door behind Dracarot opened.

"Okay, fine, whatever, but I'll be back!" Dracarot left with an epic musical fanfare of The Rains of Castamere heralding his exit.

"...Dafuq was that," said Seamus.

"That was the rare decent Slytherin," said Lavender, gazing at the door Dracarot had just existed in wonder.

"Who do you imagine wants to attack children like yourselves?" inquired Professor Umbridge in a horribly honeyed voice.

"Pedophiles?" Parvati spoke up, sticking her hand in the air.

"Kidnappers?" said Seamus, putting up his own hand.

"Abusive relatives?" said Harry, who'd kept his hand up this whole time.

"Murderers who don't care who their victims are or who specialize in murdering children, like the Origami Killer?" Neville tremulously spoke up, copying the others.

"Count Olaf?" Violet, Klaus, and Sunny cameoed.

"Most fictional and a lot of real children's homes in general?" said Annie.

"There are Muggle policemen for a reason," said Hermione, who had also kept her hand up for the duration of this tangent, "and I'm sure Aurors and the Magical Law Enforcement Patrol serve the same purpose in this world. Children are rarely as safe as people like to believe, you know."
"Also Lord Freakin' Voldemort, even if he's not back, which he totally is, tried to murder me when I was one, and I'm sure he's not the only psychopath to have attempted this and possibly succeeded," Harry added, glaring at Umbridge. "We really need all the help we can get."

"NONE OF THESE THINGS EXIST AND ALL OF YOU ARE HORRIBLE LIARS," Umbridge simpered cheerfully.

"We don't like you very much."

…Shit. Umbridge and the Ministry are kind of right about Harry constantly lying. Pettigrew killed Cedric, not Voldemort. Though granted it was on Voldemort's orders and trying to convince people that another supposedly long dead wizard is also walking about would probably be even harder so maybe simplifying things was the best move to make…

"Look, you don't understand what it was like after it happened," said Hermione quietly. "You arrived back in the middle of the lawn, clutching Cedric's dead body…None of us saw what happened in the maze, it was the most boring task ever, Seamus was complaining the whole time, said it was even worse than the second task because even though everyone was at least warmer this time the third task was supposed to be the big climax so we should've had something far more exciting…We just had Dumbledore's word for it that You-Know-Who had come back and killed Cedric and fought you."

"And Dumbledore's word is usually something that everyone in the Wizarding World accepts without question as he's basically Wizard Jesus," said Harry, "so what changed?"

"People don't want to deal with hard crap sometimes," said Ron, shrugging.

"Well this whole book is bullshit."

"Pretty much."

"You're leaving out hats for house-elves?" said Ron slowly. "And you're covering them up with rubbish first?"

"Yes," said Hermione defiantly, swinging her bag onto her back.

"That's not on," said Ron angrily. "You're trying to trick them into picking up the hats. You're setting them free when they might not want to be free."

"Would that even work, though?" said Harry before Hermione could retort. "Don't they have to be presented clothes by their masters? I don't really think students count as such. And what if a student hanging about in the common room is warmed by the fire and takes their jumper off and just leaves it there, if the house-elf picks that up I doubt they'd be freed then either."

"And I don't even think hats count as clothing, now that I think about it," said Ron, stroking his chin. "Don't most people just think they're accessories? Can someone free a house-elf with a wrist bracelet?"

"Still kind of wondering how house-elves do laundry," Harry admitted.
"I kind of loathe you two right now," said Hermione casually.

"Another thing," said Ron, turning his attention back to Hermione. "Where are all these house-elves supposed to go once they're freed, assuming this even works? Do you have any plans or ideas for where they should go or were you just going to let them fend for themselves and perhaps starve to death somewhere since it's unlikely that anyone'll take an elf that had been sacked from Hogwarts of all places."

"Oh I'm sure they'll go back to Dumbledore immediately, begging for their old jobs back," said Harry swiftly. "And of course he will because sometimes he really is an awesome person like that. And then there's every chance he might figure out what was going on and ask you to stop," he finished, also looking at Hermione. "Would you stop if it was Dumbledore telling you to?"

"Oh most definitely," said Hermione immediately, not a trace of regret on her face.

"Of course you would," Ron muttered grumpily.

Ron rolled up the parchment on which he had written the title of Snape's essay. "There's no point trying to finish this now, I can't do it without Hermione, I haven't got a clue what you're supposed to do with moonstones and there's absolutely no reason to go to a library or check with Professor Oak, is there?"

"Dumbledore would know if something had happened to Hagrid," said Hermione at once. "It's just playing into Malfoy's hands to look worried, it tells him we don't know exactly what's going on. We've got to ignore him, Harry, since that's worked out so well the last four years we've continuously failed at doing , hold the bowtruckle for a moment, just so I can draw its face..."

"I can't do that, I have to finish it before the class is over too, you know; besides, you can't even draw!"

"Oh I hate you so much right now."

"It's okay, Hermione," said Ron, grinning, "I'm no good at art either.."

"Oh, I saw what you did there," said Harry, smirking as Hermione smiled radiantly at Ron.

I love how Hermione, a girl who was constantly made fun of for not being like the other girls and had no friends before Harry and Ron, immediately picks on another girl just because she's a bit different and probably has no friends, it's great.

Oh, is Lavender's last name really Brown? I hadn't noticed that yet after five books, thanks for that.

Again and again Harry wrote the words on the parchment in what he soon came to realize was not ink, but his own blood. And again and again the words were cut into the back of his hand, healed, and then reappeared the next time he set quill to parchment. And again and again he apparently
managed to keep his handwriting exactly the same each time he wrote, which is kind of impossible no matter how hard you try especially if you start getting tired or are in pain, apparently for fear of adding layers upon layers of scars into his hand. What if he messed up a word or his hand slipped, would that show up on the back of his hand eventually too?

________________________________________

...Did Ron and Harry not tell Hermione about Harry's hand? Because she would have immediately freaked her shit and pestered Harry every second of the day about speaking to a teacher about it; either that or she would've taken matters into her own hands like she did with the Firebolt and just told McGonagall and/or Dumbledore anyway. Conclusion: She can't possibly know yet.

________________________________________

So the Ministry does have watch-wizards prowling around the place at night. Where were they that one convenient night in June.

________________________________________

Wood always flipped his shit at the thought of Slytherin spies and made sure they were alone on the pitch whenever he could, why isn't Angelina doing something similar? And why in Merlin's name are any of them getting offended at the “Gryffindors are losers” chant, that's like the lamest lame that has ever lamed, they should be cajoling the Slytherins into thinking of something more clever than that!

________________________________________

By the evening Harry felt as though somebody had been beating his brain against the inside of his skull. Probably because of that untreated concussion he may well have received a month ago and should not be doing loads and loads of exceptionally difficult schoolwork while he still has it. If only there was some magical way to treat head injuries, or at least some type of potion to help with headaches in general that one could easily go to Madam Pomfrey for so their heads don't explode in the library…

________________________________________

...The argument could well be made that Percy's Dumbledore's secret plan within the Ministry, and that he's really just trying to warn Ron that the Ministry’s planning to kick Dumbledore out and put Umbridge in more power, and even that he's trying to gently suggest that severing ties with Harry would make it easier for him in the long run, not just with the Ministry but possibly even with Voldemort if he believes it, but he has to continue to be a dick about it or Ron/whoever read over his shoulder as he was writing it would get suspicious about something. Iunno, it seems like it could've been such a great plot twist and it was utterly wasted by not happening.

________________________________________

"Sirius!" Hermione said reproachfully. "Honestly, if you made a bit of an effort with Kreacher I'm sure he'd respond, after all, you are the only member of his family he's got left apart from all the other ones we heard you mention next to the tapestry because we were totally there for half that conversation even if we didn't contribute anything at all, and Professor Dumbledore said—"

"Honestly, Hermione, if you made a bit of an effort with this Draco Malfoy I keep hearing about, I'm sure he'd respond," Sirius interrupted, glaring at Hermione. "After all, he is your classmate, and Professor Dumbledore said something about all houses working together last year."
"…Shut up."

"As I thought."

"So what are Umbridge's lessons like?" Sirius interrupted. "Is she training you all to kill half-breeds, 'cause trying to brainwash you into thinking like her actually sounds like something she'd do and at least you'd be able to defend yourself against Greyback and the like."

"Nope."

"Oh. That sucks."

"Yep."

Sirius, didn't you see the Daily Prophet?" said Hermione anxiously.

"Oh that," said Sirius, grinning, "they're always guessing where I am, they haven't really got a clue —"

"Yeah, but we think this time they have," said Harry. "Something Malfoy said on the train made us think he knew it was you, and his father was on the platform, Sirius — you know, Lucius Malfoy — so don't come up here, whatever you do, if Malfoy recognizes you again—"

"It still won't matter," said Sirius unconcernedly.

"What d'you mean it won't matter?" said Harry angrily. "Do you know how much it would destroy me if you got sent back to Azkaban?!"

"I know, but I didn't mean that, I mean neither Malfoy can do a single thing about it."

"…What're you talking about?" asked Ron.

"Well, they can't exactly just amble up to Umbridge and say, 'Hey, I psychically know that that dog over there's actually an escaped prisoner in disguise,' can they? How would they be able to explain where they got that information without mentioning Voldemort or Pettigrew, two people they're supposed to be pretending to think are dead?"

"…Huh," said Harry, "I didn't think about that."

"So see you in Hogsmeade then?" said Sirius eagerly.

"Absolutely!"

And fun times were had by all.

"I don't understand you," said Professor Trelawney, clutching convulsively at the shawl around her scrawny neck.

"I'd like you to make a prediction for me," said Professor Umbridge very clearly.

Harry and Ron were not the only people watching and listening sneakily from behind their books now; most of the class were—was—staring transfixed at Professor Trelawney as she drew herself up
to her full height, her beads and bangles clanking. Slowly, she turned to face Harry and Ron's table, and pointed a shaking finger at Harry.

"That boy there," she said in an attempt at her usual ethereal voice though the mystical effect was ruined somewhat by the way it was shaking with anger, "will meet a horrible, grisly death long before his time, I'm afraid."

The entire class gasped dramatically; Lavender and Parvati clapped their hands to their mouths and Ron put his hand on Harry's shoulder, a passable expression of great concern on his face. Harry looked down at the table and started breathing heavily in what he hoped was a panicky way. He knew what everyone was thinking; Most of the class knew that Professor Trelawney was an old fraud, but on the other hand, they loathed Umbridge so much that they felt very much on Trelawney's side and were willing to help her in any way that they could.

Professor Umbridge's eyebrows rose.

"I see," she said softly, scribbling on her clipboard once more. "And are their any more specific details you can give me?"

"I…I am afraid I cannot See the precise events," said Professor Trelawney, making a big show of pressing her hand to her forehead and closing her eyes. "The Inner Eye can often be clouded by the mundane world…All I see is his limp body, sprawled on the ground…blood everywhere…and his entrails—oh I feel faint," she finished in a whisper, collapsing into one of the chairs next to Dean and Neville.

Harry put his head in his hands and started to shake as whispers and murmurs broke out all around the classroom and Ron began gently rubbing his back, muttering words of comfort. Through it all, the scratching of the quill on Umbridge's clipboard could be heard.

"Well," she said at length, and Harry peeked at her from between his fingers," it looks like things will go very well for you indeed!"

Professor Trelawney audibly stifled a sigh of relief, and her students took great pains to not look too triumphant. The rest of the class went surprisingly smoothly, with Professor Trelawney interpreting all of Harry's dreams for Professor Umbridge's benefit (all of which, even the ones that involved eating porridge, apparently proving that he would die a gruesome and early death), and as soon as Umbridge descended the silver ladder at the end of the lesson, the whole class broke out into huge smiles and discretely started high-fiving each other discreetly in case she was still within earshot. Professor Trelawney smiled tremulously at them all, so grateful she was nearly in tears.

"I am here to teach you using a Ministry-approved method that does not include inviting students to give their opinions on matters about which they understand very little," said Professor Umbridge smoothly.

"OBJECTION!" shouted Dracarot, bursting into the classroom again for no raison. "Humanity is not a race of mindless automaton drones that must be ordered around! They have their own independent thoughts and have the right to them and to debate them! Your Minister is voted in and they have the eventual right to vote him out if they think it necessary. Like they totally will before the next book even starts."

"BEGONE, DEMON!"
"NEVER! I have been correcting ShieldEcho successfully for years and I shall continue to do so with you!"

"…You do know that a shitload of teachers actually do teach this way," said ShieldEcho morosely. "Even English teachers who are supposed to encourage thoughtful discussion and different interpretations of what symbolizes what can insist that only their interpretation of Emily Dickinson is the only correct one and look down on a student trying to give their own opinion with a simple 'Excuse me, do you have two English degrees? I didn't think so.' I'm not kidding, sophomore and junior year of high school, same teacher, did exactly this to a friend of mine and put her down in front of everyone, and we didn't learn a damn thing."

"Doesn't stop it from being wrong does it? Besides, I doubt he threw in political propaganda! Further while he's a failed teacher he at least had degrees in the subject! Ten Galleons says Umbridge isn't even competent in her subject!"

"Oh you know as well as I do that that's never a qualification for teaching DADA."

"I too am competent!" shouted Umbridge, putting on a pouty face and stomping her foot. "Cornelius said I was the bestest ever!"

ShieldEcho and Dracarot just stared blankly at her.

Okay, now Hermione clearly knows about Harry's hand. Why isn't she taking McGonagall aside and telling her exactly what goes on in Umbridge's detentions? She can't actually think Harry deserves it…can she? Or does she actually understands that the current political climate makes it impossible for anyone to do anything—Wait, why isn't she making Skeeter do a thing on this? If she spins it as an anonymous student getting punished like this, and maybe not even paint Umbridge as the one doing it other than an offhand mention that nothing like this has ever happened before she came to Hogwarts, the parents would totally lose their minds and demand that Fudge or even Umbridge herself change things. Hermione has this power at her disposal now and, like nearly every simple solution that could be brought back to solve any new problem in the series, immediately forgets about it.

Also why didn't Harry at least tell Angelina so she wouldn't be as pissed off at him all the time.

A/N: YAY THIS IS THE HAPPIEST BOOK OUT OF ALL OF THEM YAAAAAAAAY!

Review or Hermione'll force you to help her finish her bowtruckle drawing so you won't have any time to do it yourself so you'll have to finish it for homework on top of everything else you have to do and with no point of reference...BUT AT LEAST YOU'LL DRAW IT BETTER THAN SHE CAN! BOOM!
Disclaimer: Dracarot offered up a mere idea this time so he won't be cameoing in this chapter but still deserves credit where it's due. Also the usual blatant theft from Rifftrax, A Very Potter Sequel, Bonds Beyond Time Abridged, Attack on Titan, Monty Python's Life of Brian, and He's Not the Messiah: He's A Very Naughty Boy.

I HAD NO IDEA THAT DEAN'S LAST NAME WAS THOMAS DESPITE THAT REMINDER FROM THREE PAGES AGO, THANK YOU SO MUCH, I NEEDED THAT FOR I AM THE DUMB.

"Harry," said Hermione timidly, "don't you see? This…this is exactly why we need you…We need to know what it's r-really like…facing him…facing V-Voldemort…because if we hear about it…we can understand it perfectly and we'll know exactly how to deal with it when the time comes…never mind that one cannot actually understand what it's like to have to go through a traumatic event unless they actually go through it themselves…and even then different people deal with trauma in different ways…"

"Reparo," Harry muttered, pointing his wand at the broken pieces of china. They flew back together, good as new, but there was no returning the murtlap essence to the bowl. Except Slughorn shows us next book that there's totally a way, but why teach anything useful at Hogwarts when you can charm a teacup to sprout legs and dance around.

WHY WOULD YOU EVER WANT TO VANISH KITTENS THOSE POOR BABIES BETTER HAVE BEEN CONJURED IN THE FIRST PACE AND EVEN THEN DON'T THOSE IGNORANT BASTARDS KNOW THAT MUGGLES NEED CATS AND KITTIES IN ORDER FOR THE INTERNET TO FUNCTION WHAT IS WRONG WITH THESE PEOPLE.

"The trouble is," Hermione said to Harry, "until V-Voldemort — oh for heaven's sake, Ron, why do you still have to flinch violently when I only decided to stop doing that a couple weeks ago and still stutter a bit when using it, I'm looking down on you so much for continuing the behavior I only recently abandoned — comes out into the open, Sirius is going to have to stay hidden, isn't he? I mean, the stupid Ministry isn't going to realize Sirius is innocent until they accept that Dumbledore's been telling the truth about him all along. And once the fools start catching real Death eaters again it'll be obvious Sirius isn't one…I mean, he hasn't got the Mark for one thing, because that worked out so well during the last war and will continue to work out splendidly in this one when Stan Shunpike and the like get arrested, unless of course Stan really was a Death Eater but still."

"Where are we going anyway?" Harry asked. "The Three Broomsticks?"

"Oh — no," said Hermione, coming out of her reverie, "no, it's always backed and really noisy. I've
told the others to meet us in the Hog's Head, that other pub, you know the one, it's not on the main road. I think it's a bit...you know...dodgy...but students don't normally go in there, so I think we'll only be overheard by the dodgy people who normally frequent there, I'm positive nothing bad will happen if we go through with this."

Wait, what was Lee's last name again, I didn't catch it the first four-and-a-half books. -_- 

"So who did you say is supposed to be meeting us?" Harry asked, wrenching open the rusty top of his butterbeer and taking a swig.

"Just a couple of people," Hermione repeated, checking her watch and then looking anxiously toward the door. "I told them to be here about now and I'm sure they all know where it is — oh look, this might be them now—"

The door of the pub had opened. A thick band of dusty sunlight split the room in two for a moment and the vanished, blocked by the incoming rush of a crowd of people.

First came Neville with Dean and Lavender, who were closely followed by Parvati and Padma Patil with (Harry's stomach did a backflip) Cho and one of her usually giggling girlfriends from her harem, then (on her own and looking so dreamy that she might have walked in by accident) Luna Lovegood; then Katie Bell, Alicia Spinnet, and Angelina Johnson, for some reason the repetition of everyone's surnames isn't as irksome this time around, Colin and Dennis Creevey even though the latter was only a second year and therefore shouldn't have been allowed to come to Hogsmeade so the twins must've told him about one of the secret passageways into the village, Ernie Macmillan, Justin Finch-Fletchley, Hannah Abbott, and a Hufflepuff girl with a long plait down her back whose name Harry did not know despite taking Herbology with her for more than four years; three Ravenclaw boys he was pretty sure were called Anthony Goldstein, Michael Corner, and Terry Boot even though Gryffindors and Ravenclaws don't ever get mentioned as having a single class together within Harry's age group and he would have absolutely no reason to know their names as he rarely interacts with anyone from Ravenclaw in the first place; Ginny, closely followed by a tall skinny blond boy with an upturned nose whom Harry recognized vaguely as being a member of the Hufflepuff Quidditch team, and bringing up the rear, Fred and George Weasley with their friend Lee Jordan, all three of whom were carrying large paper bags crammed with Zonko's merchandise.

"A couple of people?" said Harry hoarsely to Hermione. "A couple of people?"

"Yes, well, the idea seemed quite popular," said Hermione happily.

"Once we get back to Hogwarts, I'm not speaking to you until you learn to be honest with me," said Harry coldly, "this is the last straw."

"Wha...But—"

"Nope, I'm done."

"Hi," said Fred, reaching the bar first and counting his companions quickly. "Could we have... twenty-five butterbeers, please?"

The barman glared at him for a moment, then, throwing down his rag irritably as though he had been
interrupted in something very important, he started passing up dusty butterbeers from under the bar.

"Cheers," said Fred, handing them out. "Cough up, everyone, I haven't got enough gold for all of these…"

"You don't have three galleons so I can give a sickle back?" the barman grunted.

"Oh. Never mind, guys, I got this."

"HOW CAN YOU HAVE THIS," shouted Ron and Ginny.

"Don't worry about it," said George, smirking. Harry hid under the table.

________________________________________

"Is it true," interrupted the girl with the long plait down her back, looking at Harry, "that you can produce a Patronus? I apparently missed the Gryffindor versus Ravenclaw match two years ago, you see."

There was a murmur of interest around the group at this, presumably because they all finally put two and two together and realized that that was what it had been.

"Yeah," said Harry slightly defensively.

"A corporeal Patronus?"

The phrase stirred something in Harry's memory.

"Er — you don't know Madam Bones, do you?" he asked.

The girl smiled.

"She's my auntie," she said. "I'm Susan Bones, you might remember me from going on five years of taking Herbology together. She told me about your hearing even though that kind of thing's probably supposed to be extremely confidential. So — is it really true? You make a stag Patronus?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"Blimey, Harry!" said Lee, looking deeply impressed. "I never knew that even though I was commenting for that game and none of us could possibly have missed it!"

"Mum told Ron not to spread it around even though everyone already totally knew about it," said Fred, grinning at Harry. "She said you got enough attention as it was."

________________________________________

"We think the reason Umbridge doesn't want us trained in Defense Against the Dark Arts," said Hermione, "is that she's got some…some mad idea that Dumbledore could use the students in the school as a kind of private army. She thinks he'd mobilize us against the Ministry."

Nearly everybody looked stunned at this news; everybody except Luna Lovegood, who piped up, "Well, that makes sense. After all, Cornelius Fudge has got his own private army."

"What?" said Harry, completely thrown by this unexpected piece of information.

"Yes, he's got an army of heliopath," said Luna solemnly.
"No, he hasn't," snapped Hermione.

"Yes, he has," said Luna.

"What are heliopaths?" asked Neville, looking blank.

"They're spirits of fire," said Luna, her protuberant eyes widening so that she looked madder than ever. "Great tall flaming creatures that gallop across the ground burning everything in front of them —"

"They don't exist, Neville," said Hermione tartly.

"Oh yes they do!"

"I'm sorry, but where's the proof of that?" snapped Hermione.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa!" said Zacharias angrily. "I can't demand proof that You-Know-Who's back but you can demand proof for something else that can't possibly happen? I'm sorry, but where's the logic in that?!"

"This is different!" said Hermione.

"How?" Zacharias narled. "Because Potter's your friend but Lovegood isn't?"

"That's not it at all!" Hermione insisted, turning pink.

"Uh-huh, right."

"And if Fudge thinks we're forming an army," said Padma, "shouldn't it be reasonable to expect that he's got a private one of his own in the works, even if it may not be specifically one of heliopaths?"

"...Okay, I'll give you that one," said Hermione grudgingly.

But Ernie was looking rather hesitant about signing too. Hermione raised her eyebrows at him.

"I — well, we are prefects," Ernie burst out. "And if this list was found...well, I mean to say...you said yourself, if Umbridge finds out..."

"So you don't want to pass your Defense O.W.L at all, do you?" asked Harry pointedly. "Not to mention you just said this group was the most important thing you do this year."

"I — yes," said Ernie, "yes, I do believe that, it's just..."


"Ernie, do you really think I'd leave that list lying around?" said Hermione testily.

"You mean like you're totally going to?" said Ernie in the same tone of voice.

Harry had never before appreciated just how beautiful the village of Hogsmeade was. Probably because of all the death and horror that continually surrounded the neighboring castle.
How did Oliver not make them learn the Sloth Grip Roll before, why is Angelina just making them do it now.

________________________________________

By Order Of

The High Inquisitor of Hogwarts

All Student Organizations, Societies, Teams, Groups, and Clubs are henceforth disbanded.

An Organization, Society, Team, Group, or Club is hereby defined as a regular meeting of three or more students. Students are no longer allowed to have more than one friend, or may only meet with them one at a time.

Permission to re-form or continue to casually hang out may be sought from the High Inquisitor (Professor Umbridge).

No Student Organization, Society, Team, Group, or Club may exist without the knowledge and approval of the High Inquisitor.

Any student found to have formed, or to belong to, an Organization, Society, Team, Group, or Club that has not been approved by the High Inquisitor will be expelled.

Gangs, Mobs, Associations, Squads, Bands, Factions, Unions, Guilds, Alliances, Crews, Bunches, Hordes, Packs, Posses, Flocks, Masses, Hosts, Coalitions, Leagues, Swarms, Throngsl Multitudes, Orders, and Armies are all totally permissible, though.

The above is in accordance with Educational Decree Number Twenty-four.

________________________________________

"Er — I don't think we're allowed in the girls' dormitories," said Harry, pulling Ron to his feet and trying not to laugh.

Two fourth-year girls came zooming gleefully down the stone slide.

"Oooh, who tried to get upstairs?" they giggled happily, leaping to their feet and ogling Harry and Ron.

"Me," said Ron, who was still rather disheveled. "I didn't realize that would happen. It's not fair!" he added to Harry, as the girls headed off for the portrait hole, still giggling madly. "Hermione's allowed in our dormitory, how come we're not allowed—?"

"Well, it's an old-fashioned rule," said Hermione, who had just slid neatly onto a rug in front of them and was now getting to her feet, "but it says in Hogwarts, A History that the founders thought boys were less trustworthy than girls."

"Well why didn't they change that in the last thousand years?" said Ron grumpily. "What if we needed to reach a friend in an emergency?"

"And girls can do just as much damage to boys," said Harry darkly, thinking of all the encounters he'd have with Romilda Vane next year. "Why don't they even it out, make it so girls can't get into boys dorms as well?"

"Because we'll barely be aware of this nearly twenty years from now, even," said Hermione,
"Someone must have blabbed to her!" Ron said angrily.

"They can't have done," said Hermione in a low voice.

"You're so naïve," said Ron, "you think just because you're all honorable and trustworthy—"

"No, they can't have done because I put a jinx on that piece of parchment we all signed," said Hermione grimly.

"What, does it prevent everyone who signed it from telling her anything?"

"No, but if anyone's run off and told Umbridge, we'll know exactly who they are and they will really regret it."

"...That doesn't mean they 'can't have' told her anything," said Harry, "that just means we'll know who did do it after that fact, that's practically useless."

"I'M THE SMARTEST PERSON THAT I'VE EVER MET."

"I'm sure you are."

"Bet Umbridge is in History of Magic," said Ron grimly, as they set off for Binns's lesson. "She hasn't inspected Binns yet even though she could have totally inspected it already during someone else's class like she did with Flitwick...Bet you anything she's there..."

Harry probably could've just left the class and Binns wouldn't even have looked up, he didn't have to draw attention to himself at all.

Two stone gargoyles flanked the staffroom door. As Harry approached, one of them croaked, "You should be in class, sunny Jim."

"Since when did you talk?" said Harry curtly.

"Since like forever," said the other gargoyle in a high-pitched voice. "Kind of a big deal."

Oh yeah, I can totally see why chicks love Draco Malfoy after that comment he made about people in St. Mungo's, he's so charming! (What is wrong with you people, HE IS NOT TOM FELTON, HE IS AN ASSHOLE, AND THAT IS NOT! CHARMING!)

"You can't skive off Divination," said Hermione severely.

"Hark who's talking, you walked out if Divination, you hate Trelawney!" said Ron indignantly.
"I don't hate her," said Hermione loftily. "I just think she's an absolutely appalling teacher and a real old fraud…But Harry's already missed History of Magic and I don't think he ought to miss anything else today!"

"Don't care, skipping it," said Harry.

"But—"

"I'd like to sleep some time this week, Hermione, and I'd rather use a completely useless period of time for something actually productive if you don't mind, I don't have a Time-Turner to help me study better."

Hermione didn't speak to him for the rest of the day, but Harry got an essay and a half done in that time so he considered the work he was able to complete to be totally worth the silent treatment, especially when Snape begrudgingly gave him an Acceptable the following week.

________________________________________

I just realized that Trelawney didn't make the kids buy the copies Dream Oracle for her class that year and just provided them herself, that was weirdly nice of her.

________________________________________

Lee's last name is Jordan. This will come up in some way later.

________________________________________

Hermione, Harry, and Ron watched George projectile-vomit into the bucket, gulp down the rest of the chew, and straighten up, beaming with his arms wide to protracted applause.

"You know, I don't get why Fred and George only got three O.W.L.s each," said Harry, watching as Fred, George, and Lee collect gold from the eager crowd. "They really know their stuff…"

"Oh, they only know flashy stuff that's no real use to anyone," said Hermione disapprovingly.

"Yes, because memorizing the Pythagorean Theorem and the Quadratic Equation will mean so much in your average job that doesn't involve becoming a mathematician," said Ron scathingly. "They probably only concentrated on what they would need for their dream jobs and were more focused on making and coming up with ideas for products than studying pointless dates no one's going to remember or random star positions."

"But it's always useful to have a back-up plan," Hermione insisted, "and you need good grades for that!"

"I'm sure they'll still manage to succeed in whatever they do," said Ron, "even if they just continue with the mail-order system they've set up, that'll probably at least pay for food and maybe a little rent. Besides, in case you hadn't noticed, they've got about twenty-six Galleons already…Almost entirely from female buyers, that's weird, why are they so eager to continuously throw up…"

Hermione's eyes widened.

"I'm…I'm going to have to talk to them about a couple of things their products imply that they might not have thought of…"

Ron watched her get up and walk over to the twins, talking to them in an undertone. He blinked as
Fred and George looked at each other, looking disturbed, and glanced over at Harry.

"Am I missing something?"

"...Might be just a Muggle thing," Harry began, "or it used to be, but...sometimes people intentionally throw up to lose weight, and since there's more well-publicized pressure for girls to be thin than boys..."

"Merlin's pants," Ron breathed, staring at the gaggle of girls who were now eagerly rushing back to their dormitories, Puking Pastilles clutched tightly in their hands.

________________________

"First of all, Ron," said Sirius, "I've sworn to pass on a message from your mother."

"Oh yeah?" said Ron, sounding apprehensive.

"She says on no account whatsoever are you to take part in an illegal secret Defense Against the Dark Arts group. She says you'll be expelled for sure and your future will be ruined because every single job on the planet requires education and no drop-outs ever manage to forge their own way in the history of forever. She says there will be plenty of time to learn how to defend yourselves after you've already died since Voldemort clearly doesn't care how old you are which is why he goes around attempting to slaughter one-year-olds at will, but you are too young to be worrying about something that could happen at any moment right now. She also" —Sirius's eyes turned to the other two— "advises Harry and Hermione not to proceed with the group, though she has finally accepted that she has no authority over either of them and simply begs them to remember that she has their best interests at heart. Ginny can do whatever she wants as usual since she's the special favorite on account of possessing fallopian tubes and clearly she's given up on the twins, otherwise I'd be asking you to pass this on to your siblings as well."

________________________

"And if we do get expelled?" Hermione asked, a quizzical look on her face.

"Hermione, this whole thing was your idea!" said Harry, staring at her. "I refuse to let you back out of this on me!"

"I know it was, and I know you won't...I kind of think I'm still stuck in the 'better killed than expelled' mentality a little bit," she mumbled sheepishly, blushing and staring at the rug.

"That would explain so much about your sudden change in attitude next chapter..." said Ron, nearly falling over with the force of this realization.

"I think that enemies will hunt you no matter what you do," said Sirius, "and better expelled and able to defend yourself than sitting safely in school without a clue."

"Especially since the school has proven over and over again that it isn't safe anyway," muttered Ron, and Harry and Sirius chuckled.

"But if we get expelled, our wands get snapped and we won't be able to defend ourselves anyway," Hermione argued.

"Which is when you run," said Sirius as if it was the most obvious thing in the world.
"I was just wondering," said Hermione, her voice stronger now, "Whether we're doing the right thing, starting this Defense Against the Dark Arts group."

"What?" said Harry and Ron together.

"Hermione, it was your idea in the first place!" said Ron indignantly.

"I know," said Hermione, twisting her fingers together. "But—"

"No," said Harry firmly, cutting her off. "You're the one who came up with the idea. You're the one who talked me into it. You're the one who forced everyone to sign that little contract of yours. Guess what? If you don't want to do it anymore, you'll be the one to tell each and every person who showed up to the Hog's Head that you are calling it off, and you'll tell them exactly why: that you're chickening out. And when Zacharias or whoever else has also had cold feet the whole time immediately goes to Umbridge anyway since they'll think the deal's off, it'll be entirely your fault."

"I know that," said Hermione softly, "I just think that Snuffles thinking it was a spectacular idea made me realize that maybe it's not."

Peeves floated over them on his stomach, peashooter at the ready; automatically all three of them lifted their bags to cover their heads until he had passed.

"Let me get this straight," said Hermione angrily, as they put their bags back on the floor, "Sirius agrees with us, so you don't think we should do it anymore? When did you become such a Sirius-basher?"

Hermione looked tense and rather miserable. Now staring at her own hands she said, "Do you honestly trust his judgment?"

"Yes, I do!" said Harry at once. "He's always given us great advice, and I couldn't find a single thing wrong in anything he said last night!"

"Neither could I," said Ron, "he was definitely right about someone outside Hogwarts wanting to kill us all, do you think he's wrong for wanting us to know how to defend ourselves so we have less of a chance of dying horribly?"

Katie's last name is Bell, by the way.

"Which is what the whole point of your plan was," Harry reminded her, still furious. "Do you now want us and the other twenty-five kids to die by Voldemort or a Death Eater's hand, is that it?"

"Of course not!" Hermione protested tremulously.

"Then what is the problem."

Ron's eyes widened.

"You don't like him anymore because he owns a house-elf, hasn't freed him, and isn't exceedingly polite to him every second of every day," he breathed.

"That's not it at all!" said Hermione, turning red. "Though admittedly I think Snuffles should've freed him the instant he found him in the house so we wouldn't have a massive security leak if we freed him now…"

"…Okay, I'll accept that as a massive oversight on the part of the entire Order," said Harry, "but that
still doesn't excuse your entire attitude towards Sirius."

"Look, I'm just saying he might not have the best judgment anymore—"

"Neither did your parents, they chose to be dentists, the most vile Muggle profession imaginable," said Harry fiercely. "See, I can say mean, undeserving things about adults you care about too."

"Oh piss off," Hermione snapped.

"How shall I piss off, O Lord?"

Wow, it's almost like Dumbledore distancing himself from Harry was a really bad idea in the long run. Who'da thunk it!

Harry returned hungrily to his sausage and mash. When he looked up to take a drink of pumpkin juice, he found Hermione watching him.

"How long have you been doing that?" he said thickly.

"Enough to feed the shippers," said Hermione.

"Well, what?"

"Well...it's just that Dobby's plans aren't always that safe. Don't you remember when he lost you all the bones in your arms?"

"Let me get this straight," said Ron, putting his fork down. "You'll stick up for house-elf rights and you'll defend Kreacher when he says the most hate-filled things imaginable, but you won't listen to their ideas or opinions on anything."

"And Lockhart lost me all the bones in my arm," Harry reminded her, "Dobby only broke it. And besides, this room isn't just some mad idea of his; Dumbledore knows about it too, he mentioned it to me at the Yule Ball."

Hermione's expression cleared.

"Dumbledore told you about it?"

"Yes, the guy who thought it was a good idea to leave me alone without any information this summer when I was suffering PTSD in an exceptionally unsupportive environment and also did all the other stuff we usually complain about him fucking up stupendously mentioned a dumb room to me in passing," said Harry, shrugging.

"Oh well, that's all right then," said Hermione briskly and she raised no more objections. Dum dee dum dee dum dee dum/We all love sheep!

At half-past seven Harry, Ron, and Hermione left the Gryffindor common room, Harry clutching a certain piece of aged parchment in his hand.

"How the hell'd you get that thing back, anyway?" asked Ron curiously.
"Summoned it from the fake Moody's office off-page," said Harry nonchalantly, "it's not a big deal, you don't have to see absolutely every single minute thing I do in my entire life, you know."

"When it's something as important to you as the thing your dad, Snuffles, and Professor Lupin took ages to make and was always supremely useful in every situation?" said Hermione incredulously. "Yeah, in this case, we kind of do."

"How much does it suck that JKR actually regretted bringing it back?"

"Well to be fair, there are a lot of ways we could easily use this thing that we never take advantage of because the plot said so and it's almost way too super-powered," said Harry, "but yeah, that does kind of suck since I am rather fond of this old thing."

"EXACTLY," said Ron and Hermione in unison.

______________________________

"I also think we ought to have a name," Hermione said brightly, her hand still in the air. "It would promote a feeling of team spirit and unity, don't you think?"

"Can we be the Anti-Umbridge League?" said Angelina hopefully. "Leagues aren't banned by Educational Decree Number Twenty-four, we won't even get in trouble for it!"

______________________________

Something very odd was happening to Zacharias; the reader had to be constantly reminded that his last name was Smith. Also, every time he opened his mouth to disarm Anthony Goldstein, his own wand would fly out of his hand, yet Anthony did not seem to be making a sound. Anthony had clearly moved on a bit from the fifth year syllabus and was starting to teach himself nonverbal magic—Oh, or it could've been Fred and George dicking around, either way…

______________________________

Cho laughed. Her friend Marietta looked at them rather sourly and turned away.

"Don't mind her," Cho muttered. "She doesn't really want to be here but I made her come with me."

"Why?" asked Harry.

"Because otherwise she would constantly be asking where I was and what I was doing and might well tell on me," said Cho. "Trust me, this is better in the long run."

"…Great friend you got there."

"I know, isn't she great?" Cho giggled, hugging Marietta who tried in vain to pull away.

"…"

______________________________

Harry pulled out the Marauder's Map again and checked it carefully for signs of teachers on the seventh floor. While he looked at the area of the map that housed the seventh floor, he didn't bother noticing whether or not the Room of Requirement even appeared on the map (and as Sirius hadn't mentioned it, it probably didn't); if he had, maybe he wouldn't have been as confused the following year when he couldn't find Malfoy on it and stuff. He let them all leave in threes and fours, ensuring that they would be punished if caught by Umbridge on the way back since groups larger than two
weren’t allowed to even casually hang out anymore. Also it was really good of the members of the D.A. not in the know about the map to never question him about it or anything.

Harry was finding it almost impossible to fix a regular night of the week for D.A. meetings, as they had to accommodate three separate Quidditch teams' practices, which were often rearranged depending on the weather conditions; Angelina and the other Gryffindor players always stared at the other two captains whenever they rescheduled because of this as if they couldn't even conceive of such a concept; but Harry was not sorry about this, he had a feeling that it was probably better to keep the timing of their meetings unpredictable. If anyone was watching them, it would be hard to make out a pattern, other than the part where they always seemed to meet whenever the Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, and Ravenclaw Quidditch teams didn't have practice.

Review or your friend'll start a club and force you to head it even though you really have issues with the whole idea and want to do everything you can to back out of it only no one will let you and when the person who originally had the idea gets cold feet you STILL have to go through with it.
Fine, DON'T Reassure The Traumatized Kid, See If We Care.

**Disclaimer:** Dracarot, stop being intelligent, you're adding to the story and making it funnier, no one wants that. Also theft from *Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip, Firefly, Two Best Friends Play Harry Potter Kinect,* and *The Producers.*

When Alicia Spinnet turned up in the hospital wing with her eyebrows growing so thick and fast that they obscured her vision and obstructed her mouth, Snape insisted that she must have attempted a Hair-Thickening Charm on herself and refused to listen to the fourteen eyewitnesses who insisted that they had seen the Slytherin Keeper, Miles Bletchly, hit her from behind with a jinx while she worked in the library, and who apparently didn't bother alerting another teacher besides Snape who wouldn't be quite as much of a dick. Not McGonagall, though, she'd probably expel him since she's about as dickish as Snape right now, maybe Flitwick or Sprout or someone who usually doesn't suck.

…So why exactly are the Slytherins allowed to taunt one of the Gryffindor players, is there technically no rule against it? 'Cause if Gryffindors tried that on a Slytherin player you know Snape'd be hammerin' down on that shit, that's kind of obscenely irksome that McGonagall doesn't even try.

The Snitch skirted the foot of one of the goal hoops and scooted off toward the other side of the stands; its change of direction suited Malfoy, who was nearer. Harry pulled his Firebolt around, he and Malfoy were now neck and neck…

Feet from the ground, Harry easily pulled ahead with his vastly superior broom, lifted his right hand, and his fingers closed around the tiny, struggling ball with little effort whatsoever.

Harry heard a snort behind him and turned around, still holding the Snitch tightly in his hand: Draco Malfoy had landed close by; white-faced with fury that no one would know his name after four-and-a-half books of being a major player, he was still managing to sneer.

"Saved Weasley's neck, haven't you?" he said to Harry. "I've never seen a worse Keeper…but then he was born in a bin…Did you like my lyrics, Potter?"

"Was he really?" said Harry, feigning interest. "How do you know that, you weren't even born yet so you can't have been there…Or did your father stalk Mrs. Weasley while she was pregnant or something, how creepily obsessed is your family with Ron's, they could probably easily press charges against your family by now, do you realize how out of hand this shit's getting?"

Draco stared at him.

"—but you like the Weasleys, don't you, Potter?" said Malfoy, sneering. "Spend your holidays there and everything, don't you? Can't see how you stand the stink, but I suppose when you've been dragged up by Muggles even the Weasleys' hovel smells okay—"
Harry grabbed hold of George; meanwhile it was taking the combined efforts of Angelina, Alicia, and Katie to stop Fred leaping on Malfoy, who was laughing openly. Harry looked around for Madam Hooch, but she was still berating Crabbe for his illegal Bludger attack.

"Or perhaps," said Malfoy, leering as he backed away, "you can remember what your mother's house stank like, Potter, and Weasley's pigsty reminds you of it—"

"Yes," Harry snapped, pulling George back with all his strength and throwing him to the ground behind him as he faced Malfoy, "I suppose the scent of parental and familial love can be a little disconcerting to someone who's never experienced it before!"

Malfoy stopped in his tracks, an ugly, dark look settling over his face. Fred had stopped struggling and was now hanging limply in Angelina, Alicia, and Katie's arms as they all turned as one to gape open-mouthed at Harry. George started a slow clap from his sprawled position on the grass which the rest of the Gryffindor team sans Ron soon picked up on, and it slowly spread to the rest of the non-Slytherin students in the stands as word swiftly traveled throughout the stadium.

"So you couldn't use magic to get there?" asked Ron, looking thunderstruck. "You had to act like Muggles all the way?"

"Yeah, an' it was kinda easy, me not knowin' much magic an' all, wha's yer problem, Ron?"

"Nothing, just impressed, is all."

"Oh. Well tha's all righ', then."

"And you talked to him?"

"Oh yeah. Firs' we presented him with a nice battle helmet—goblin-made an' indestructible, yeh know, though one has ter wonder why, with the whole goblin issues of ownership, why they would even make one fer giants, unless Dumbledore struck a deal with 'em an' agreed ter pay the rent on it forever or summat…Or maybe it was just a regular-sized helmet tha' Dumbledore was able ter permanently enlarge, sounds like the kind of insane magic he'd be able ter pull off…Still don' know how the goblins'd feel abou' it, but there yeh go…"

Hagrid sighed deeply. "Well, we hadn't bargained on a new Gurg two days after we'd made friendly contact with the firs' one; even though we knew we'd be enterin' an area made up of a group of beings with an insanely long history o' violence we never expected 'em ter kill each other!"

"Of course you didn't," muttered Harry, Ron, and Hermione.

"Did Golgomath rip off more heads?" asked Hermione, sounding squeamish.

"No," said Hagrid. "I wish he had."

"What d'you mean?"

"I mean we soon found out he didn' object ter all wizards — just us."
"Death Eaters?" said Harry quickly.

"No, the Chudley Cannons, O' COURSE DEATH EATERS!"

________________________________________

...Dumbledore couldn't have given a story to Hagrid to tell when he'd gotten back explaining his absence? Really smart guy, that Dumbledore, really excellent at covering all the bases, he is.

________________________________________

They were so busy that Hermione had stopped knitting elf hats and was fretting that she was down to her last three.

"All those poor elves I haven't set free yet, having to say over during Christmas because there aren't enough hats!"

"Hermione," said Harry, looking up from his History of Magic essay and utterly fed up with her behavior, "Dobby has been taking all the hats. You haven't freed a single elf."

Hermione turned and stared at him.

"How could he do that?" she cried in a shrill voice. "Doesn't he know how much his kin wants to be free?"

"Absolutely," said Harry coldly. "He knows that they don't want to be freed at all. When he told me about the Room of Requirement, he told me that he had to clean all of Gryffindor Tower all by himself because all the other house-elves were so offended that they didn't want to come up here anymore. You've just created more work for Dobby and didn't solve a single problem."

"Why didn't you tell me sooner?!"

"Because I wanted to spare your feelings, but this is getting out of control and needs to end now."

________________________________________

"Mistletoe," said Cho quietly, pointing at the ceiling over his head.

"Yeah," said Harry. His mouth was very dry. "It's probably full of nargles, though."

"What are nargles?"

"No idea," said Harry. She had moved closer. His brain seemed to have been Stunned. "You'd have to ask Loony. Luna, I mean."

Cho made a funny noise halfway between a sob and a laugh.

"It's strange," she sniffed, even nearer him now. He could have counted the freckles on her nose.
"I've been in her House with her for nearly four years, and yet I haven't heard her mention those ones yet."

"Yeah," said Harry. He could not think. A tingling sensation was spreading throughout him, paralyzing his arms, legs, and brain. "And me mentioning them implies that I was thinking of her instead of you as we were talking."

"Charming," she muttered. She was much too close. He could see every tear clinging to her
"Are you that bad at kissing?" said Ron, his smile fading slightly.

"Dunno," said Harry, who hadn't considered this, and immediately felt rather worried. "Maybe I am."

"Of course you're not," said Hermione absently, still scribbling away at her letter.

"How do you know?" said Ron in a sharp voice.

"Because Cho spends half her time crying these days," said Hermione vaguely. "She does it at mealtimes, in the loos, all over the place."

"If Harry's as good as you claim he is with supposedly no evidence," said Ron, "you'd think she'd at least feel wanted and appreciated by a guy who likes her and who she seems to like in return."

"Oh please," said Hermione in a dignified voice, dipping the pint of her quill into her ink pot, "no girl wants that! Don't you know anything about women?"

"...Evidently not," said Ron, eyeing her warily, "and I see now that I never will."

"Who're you writing the novel to anyway?" Ron asked Hermione, trying to read the bit of parchment now trailing on the floor. Hermione hitched it up out of sight.

"Viktor."

"Krum?"

"How many other Viktors do we know?"

"And what exactly are you writing to him?" said Ron sharply, gaping at her. "You know we can't put too much in letters these days, and you're filling up an entire roll of parchment! What in the name of Merlin's SpongeBob-themed tampons are you telling him?!"

"...I don't really know," Hermione admitted.

"Well brilliant, then."

"What does she see in Krum?" Ron demanded as he and Harry climbed the boys' stairs.

"You know, I'm pretty sure she doesn't see anything," said Harry, considering the matter, "I think she's just trying to make you jealous."

"Oh really," said Ron dubiously, "and how's she gonna manage that?"

"Look, she's annoyed that you haven't done anything to show your own interest in her, right?" said Harry, "so she's visibly showing that she's still on good terms with someone she used to sort of be involved with, and now you feel crazy, the way she feels, the way she wants you to feel."
"I don't feel crazy!" said Ron, sounding aggravated.

"He's a professional athlete, Ron, he's physically superior to you in every possible way."

"I feel a little crazy."

"Exactly."

How did Neville know where McGonagall's sleeping quarters was?

Harry felt as though the panic inside him might spill over at any moment; he wanted to run, to yell for Dumbledore. Mr. Weasley was bleeding as they walked along so sedately, and what if those fangs (Harry tried hard not to think "my fangs") had been poisonous? Come to think of it, why were they strolling through the castle so sedately, especially if McGonagall believed him; shouldn't they have at least been doing a light jog over to Dumbledore's office? Especially since it was basically on the other side of the castle and probably took about twenty minutes or so to get to normally? However, when Harry voiced his thoughts aloud to McGonagall, his words backed up eagerly by Ron, McGonagall merely slapped him on the back of the head and told him not to give any thought to things that were not his concern and that he was too young to understand, like virtually every other useful piece of information in this gorram book.

"How did you see this?" Dumbledore asked quietly, still not looking at Harry.

"Well…I don't know," said Harry, rather angrily — what did it matter? "Inside my head, I supposed —"

"You misunderstand me," said Dumbledore, still in the same calm tone. "I mean…can you remember — er — where you were positioned as you watched this attack happen? Were you perhaps standing beside the victim, or else looking down on the scene from above?"

"Erm, the victim is apparently my father," Ron burst out, now looking seriously panicked. "So could you get a move on with the saving of him instead of wasting time interrogating Harry about whether or not his vision had Dutch angles?!"

"In a minute, my dear boy," said Dumbledore cheerfully. "Finding out random, minute details about some dream your friend Harry had is far more important than saving a dying man suffering from multiple snake bites!"

"I HOLD YOU IN SUCH HIGH ESTEEM," Ron yelled at him sarcastically.

"I know, right?" said Dumbledore happily, beaming brightly.

"The man has red hair and glasses," said Dumbledore. "Everard, you will need to raise the alarm, make sure he is found by the right people, which will totally be possible in the dead of night when presumably no Ministry worker ever works due to it being absolutely deserted at the end of the year even though it wasn't all that late at the time, we're clearly told that there are watch-wizards hanging around, and people work late at government establishments all the time, which of course means that
there's absolutely no way that Arthur will be found by a random Unspeakable pulling a night shift —"

Harry sat down, watching Dumbledore over his shoulder. Dumbledore was now stroking Fawkes's plumed golden head with one finger. The phoenix awoke immediately. He stretched his beautiful head high and observed Dumbledore through bright, dark eyes.

"We will need," said Dumbledore very quietly to the bird, "a warning. Not for you to travel directly to Arthur, heal him, and get him out of there, thus insuring that an exceptionally important Order member lived and could still be used and also that I don't get mauled to death by eight other people, because that would just be highly intelligent and keep with the whole secrecy thing that we're failing so much at right now."

"Wait, you're not going to do that?" snapped Ron, whipping his head around.

"Of course not!" said Dumbledore laughingly.

"Why not? Would phoenix tears not work on the types of wounds Dad has?"

"I don't see why they wouldn't," said Harry, "they worked on my basilisk wound three years ago."

"Well then make him do the smart thing!" cried Ron, getting up and stomping over to Fawkes, but there was a flash of fire and the phoenix had gone. "Is he going to do the smart thing or the dumb thing?" he demanded of Dumbledore.

"Why, the dumb thing, of course!" cheered Dumbledore, his eyes twinkling.

"Damn it!" screamed Ron, kicking Fawkes's stand. "And now I can't even slap the bird! What the fuck's the point of a magic world if I can't slap a phoenix in the face!"

Dumbledore now swooped down upon one of the fragile silver instruments whose function Harry had never known, carried it over to his desk, sat down facing them again, and tapped it gently with the tip of his wand.

The instrument tinkled into life at once with rhythmic clinking noises. Tiny puffs of pale green smoke issued from the miniscule silver tube at the top. Dumbledore watched the smoke closely, his brow furrowed, and after a few seconds, the tiny puffs became a steady stream of smoke that thickened and coiled in the air...A serpent's head grew out of the end of it, opening its mouth wide. Harry wondered whether the instrument was confirming his story: He looked eagerly at Dumbledore for a sign that he was right, but Dumbledore did not look up.

"Naturally, naturally," murmured Dumbledore apparently to himself, still observing the stream of smoke without the slightest sign of surprise. "But why is Voldemort suddenly able to possess his own Horcrux? Can he do this with any Horcrux or only with living ones? And how exactly did he figure out he could do this? Hell, could Harry see into any Horcrux or just the living ones? Was Voldemort possessing the snake at all or was Harry just looking through another Horcrux and I fed the whole possession thing to the Order to stop everyone from flipping their shit at the fact that Harry was a Horcrux? And why in the name of Merlin's Better Than Sex mascara does this never come up again?!"

Harry could make neither head nor tail of any of these questions. Nor, it seemed, could the smoke serpent, for it instantly transformed into several small question marks hovering above the silver instrument.
"Well bugger me," said Dumbledore crossly.

"Fawkes!" said Sirius at once, snatching up the parchment. "That's not Dumbledore's writing — it must be a message from your mother — here—"

He thrust the letter into George's hand, who ripped it open and read aloud, "Dad's dead 'cause Dumbledore dicked around too long and also because he didn't make his super bird with awesome powers use them in any way that would be efficient. I'm going to go murder him now. Love Mum."

George looked around the table.

"I'm so glad we have such a wise, intelligent leader, don't you," he said thickly through his tears.

"...Look on the bright side," said Harry hesitantly, "at least Teddy'll have parents now!"

"Arthur did raise five kids to adulthood and two more near enough," Sirius added thoughtfully, "I think he'd want a new set of parents to have a chance to raise their newborn, he was a great guy like that. What do you guys think?"

But Ron, Ginny, Fred, and George didn't answer him, for they were out in the hall ripping down Sirius's mother's portrait with their bare hands because grief can make people do very strange things sometimes; they soon returned and beat Harry and Sirius to death with it. All was well.

...Actually, has anyone seen a thing done where Arthur does die at this moment? That was, y'know, good and well-written and stuff? 'Cause I'd love to see it, what a great "What If?" prompt…

"Breakfast!" said Sirius loudly and joyfully, jumping to his feet. "Where's that accursed house-elf? Kreacher! KREACHER!"

But Kreacher did not answer the summons even though he totally should have since it was a direct order from his master…unless of course Narcissa was even at that moment explaining to him that since Walburga had cast Sirius out of the family he had actually never needed to answer to him and was reprimanding him for never going immediately to her in the first place since she or at least Draco was technically next in line to inherit all the things since Sirius was also a prisoner of Azkaban and could therefore not really own anything…or he could just be punishing himself so he wouldn't really have to go back, either way…

Without preamble Harry told his godfather every detail of the vision he had had, including the fact that he himself had been the snake who had attacked Mr. Weasley.

When he paused for breath, Sirius said, "Did you tell Dumbledore this?"

"Yes," said Harry impatiently, "but he didn't tell me what it meant. Well, he doesn't tell me anything anymore…"

"I'm sure he would've told you if it was anything to worry about—I'm sorry," Sirius cut himself off, choking back a laugh, "I just could not say that with a straight face."
"It must have been the aftermath of the vision, that's all," said Sirius. "You were still thinking of the dream or whatever it was and—"

"It wasn't that," said Harry, shaking his head. "It was like something rose up inside me, like there's a snake inside me—"

"That's called an erection," said Sirius slowly, putting his hand on Harry's shoulder. "Either that or malaria. But don't worry, they have potions for everything now."

"That's not what I meant and you know it, Sirius!"

"You need to sleep," said Sirius firmly. "You're going to have breakfast and then go upstairs to bed, and then you can go and see Arthur after lunch with the others. You're in shock, Harry; you're blaming yourself for something you only witnessed, and it's lucky you did witness this or Arthur might have died. Just stop worrying—"

"I can't stop worrying, it's a bit difficult to forget the sensation of sinking my own teeth into Mr. Weasley's face, all right?!" Harry snapped. "Jesus you're bad at this today!"

"I know, I sowwy."

"There isn't any Seer blood in your family, is there?" Tonks inquired curiously, as they sat side by side on a train rattling toward the heart of the city.

"Fucked if I know," said Harry, thinking of the tapestry on Sirius's drawing room wall and wondering if Charlus and Dorea Potter were his paternal grandparents or perhaps his great aunt and uncle or something so maybe he could ask Sirius about it later except not because when would that ever happen.

"Wasn't easy to find a good location for a hospital," grunted Moody. "Nowhere in Diagon Alley was big enough even though we've already shown that we're good at making things bigger on the inside and we couldn't have it underground like the Ministry — unhealthy. Somehow. You'd think we'd be able to fix that with magic but enh. In the end they managed to get hold of a building up here. Theory was sick wizards could come and go and just blend in with the crowd, because people with extra hands jutting out of their chests or small children who've just sprouted wings or blokes who've just been torn apart by werewolves would naturally blend in with any normal Muggle crowd, never mind the way we normally fail to dress to their satisfaction…"

Harry, stop being amazed by the constant magic that's always happening around you, it's getting annoying. And here I though the films were just making you look dumb; turns out you're actually just that dumb, who knew.

And people say we have problems with women's health issues, at least hospitals in the States have bloody maternity wards!
Molly stop being a poo-head.

The flesh-colored strings wriggled like long skinny worms, then snaked under the door. For a few seconds Harry could hear nothing, then he heard Tonks whispering as clearly as though she were standing right beside him.

"...they searched the whole area but they couldn't find the snake anywhere, it just seems to have vanished after it attacked you, Arthur...But You-Know-Who can't have expected a snake to get in, can he?"

"Let's put this conversation on hold for the moment," growled Moody, "the kids are using Extendable Ears again, I can see you, you know."

"I WILL MURDER THOSE TWO!" screamed Mrs. Weasley, and Harry, Ron, Ginny, Fred, and George all had to stay at St. Mungo's for a couple hours themselves to get their eardrums repaired.

There was only one thing for it: He would have to leave Grimmauld Place straightaway. He would spend Christmas at Hogwarts without the others, which would keep them safe over the holidays at least...But no, that wouldn't do, there were still plenty of people at Hogwarts to maim and injure, what if it was Seamus, Dean, or Neville next time? He stopped his pacing and stared staring at Phineas Nigellus's empty frame, idly wondering why the narrative had to use the guy's full name every single fucking time he appeared. A leaden sensation was settling in the pit of his stomach. He had no alternative: He was going to have to kill himself. He had momentarily thought about returning to Privet Drive and cutting himself off from other wizards entirely, but not even the Dursleys deserved to be killed by him during the night, how would he explain that to the Muggle authorities, and if that happened there was no way whoever survived would let him stay...And besides, if Voldemort could transport him anywhere he liked, then just leaving wouldn't save everyone either. Getting rid of the problem permanently was, unfortunately, his only solution. And he would have to do it soon, too, before it happened again...He would sneak a knife from the kitchen table tonight at dinner, wait until everyone else was asleep, leave the house and walk a short ways so at least Sirius wouldn't have to be the one to find his body...Harry wrapped his arms around himself to stop shaking. He didn't want to die, but if it was the only way to save the people he cared about, or anyone else who got in Voldemort's way, then so be it.

"Fine, go then!" Harry bellowed at the empty frame. "And tell Dumbledore thanks for nothing!"

The empty canvas remained silent. Fuming, and thinking it a tad odd that no one else in the house had heard him shouting, Harry took up his trunk again and slipped out of the house miraculously without anyone noticing and took the Knight Bus back to the Dursleys anyway despite Dumbledore ordering him to stay because he didn't give a fuck what Dumbledore wanted anymore and he was still terrified of hurting the people he cared about and that was his main priority at the moment, not following the instructions of someone who so clearly didn't care about the safety of others that he was willing to delay rescuing a man dying of snake poison and blood loss to interrogate some kid about whether his dream was first-person or third-person when THAT'S THE THING THAT COULD'VE WAITED JESUS CHRIST THIS GUY.
The empty canvas still remained silent. Fuming, Harry dragged his trunk back to the foot of his bed, then climbed on the bed and hunched himself against the bedstead again to make sure he didn't fall asleep. It was tough; he had to keep slapping his face to stay awake, though he nearly nodded off when Ron entered the room.

"Harry, Mum says…What're you doing?"

"Keeping myself awake," said Harry in a monotone.

"Don't want to have another vision?" Ron guessed.

"Basically." He didn't want to voice his real fear of attacking them all during the night.

"Well Mum says dinner's ready, you wanna come down?"

"Not that hungry," said Harry honestly.

"Might keep you awake," said Ron.

"She feeds me so much I will fall asleep afterwards."

"Just slip it onto my plate when she's not looking, then."

"…Think I'm good for now."

"Okay, she says she'll save you something, so…" Ron shrugged.

"Mm." Harry watched Ron leave, waited till he was out of earshot, then banged his head against the top of the bedstead; it probably wouldn't help his untreated concussion any but the sharp pain it provided might keep him up a bit longer.

After dinner, Ron came back in, nodded at him, changed into pajamas, and collapsed into bed where he started snoring within minutes. Envying him while his insides began to ache with hunger, Harry pinched himself a bit to try and keep himself awake again. He must've nodded off at one point because the next time he was conscious of his surroundings it had become much darker, his stomach hurt even more, and he saw the dark outline of Phineas standing again in his portrait. It had occurred to Harry that Dumbledore had probably sent Phineas to watch over him, in case he attacked somebody else.

The feeling of being unclean intensified and Harry quickly got up and went in search of a room that didn't have any portraits, finding one easily in one of the bathrooms. As paranoid as he was about attacking someone again he did not like the idea of someone he barely knew watching him while he slept, that was just beyond creepy.

Thankfully the cold tiles on the bathroom floor kept him awake the rest of the night, putting up decorations around Grimmauld Place with Sirius kept him awake during the day, and he was able to keep up this routine for two more days and nights, though once he started throwing chairs at what he thought were massive clusters of writhing snakes that actually turned out to be Sirius and Ginny, Mrs. Weasley forced a Dreamless Sleep Potion down his throat, and after he woke up everyone finally sat him down for an intervention, and then Sirius had a lovely shouting match with Dumbledore about keeping shit from Harry causing him to be a danger to himself and others, it was great.
When Harry heard Mrs. Weasley calling his name softly up the stairs around lunchtime he retreated farther upstairs and ignored her, and she didn't come after him herself nor did Sirius get concerned enough to go up and try to talk to Harry himself and none of the kids cared enough to confront him directly like Hermione ended up having to do because everyone's totally awesome like that.

"Well, can you remember everything you've been doing?" Ginny asked. "Are there big blank periods where you don't know what you've been up to?"

Harry racked his brains.

"No," he said.

"Then You-Know-Who hasn't ever possessed you," said Ginny simply.

"It might be different considering you had an outside physical object and I've just got this weird incorporeal thing going on with my scar that is actually attached to my face, though," said Harry.

"…Bugger, that's actually a really good point."

__________________________

_A/N: Every adult in the series is just playing Quidditch with the Idiot Ball in this book, aren't they. -_-

Review or no one'll confirm that you didn't actually transform into a snake and attempt to murder one of your best friend's parental units._
Okay Seriously, Hermione, Stop Doing What You're Doing

A/N: Roger Lloyd-Pack's passing affected me far more than I expected it to. We'll miss you, Owen Newitt; you were one of the funniest characters Dibley had to offer, and that's saying a great deal indeed. :'( 

...SO HOW 'BOUT THAT PARODY, EH. The trigger warning for suicide is meant to be for this chapter, since with all of the ones caused by bullying happening more and more everywhere I was always sadly able to see it happen in the scene coming up. Just be aware.


"Good haul this year," Ron informed Harry through a cloud of paper. "Thanks for the Broom Compass, it's excellent, beats Hermione's — she's got me a homework planner—"

Harry sorted through his presents and found one with Hermione's handwriting on it. She had given him too a book — that is actually how the beginning of that sentence is structured, I'm not even kidding, look it up, hardcover US got-it-the-day-it-came-out edition page 501, it's right there near the bottom, it's terrible — that resembled a diary, except it said things like "Do it today or later you'll pay!" every time he opened a page. Harry immediately stood up and threw it in the bin.

"What're you playing at?" Ron asked sharply, though he was looking longingly at the bin himself.

"What happened last time we got hold of a diary that talked back?" said Harry simply. "Which is exactly what we'll tell her when she asks about them, I personally don't think I can take the flashbacks," he finished with a wink.

"...Ohhh, I get it," said Ron, grinning and tapping his nose. "Don't be hasty," he finished with a broad smile.

"Exactly," said Harry, grinning back and smoking his pipe weed.

...Tonks's present sucks.

"Who's that for anyway?" said Ron, nodding at the neatly wrapped present Hermione was carrying.

"Kreacher," said Hermione brightly.

"What, you send darling Draco a present too?" said Ron warningly. "Or how 'bout...who else do we know that's incredibly prejudiced toward everyone else we know?"

"Besides the entirety of Slytherin House that we've met so far?" said Harry darkly.

"Oh shut up," said Hermione scathingly, "I'm just trying to show him a little kindness so he'll show kindness back to me—"
"He was brainwashed to hate everyone who's not a pureblood wizard who believes the same garbage he believes!" Ron exploded. "Some people take that shit to the fucking grave!"

"Well he might not!" Hermione insisted. "We just need to make this a group effort!"

"Bit hard when every other word that comes out of his mouth is so hateful and hurtful that one of us will end up seriously hurting him if he pushes us too far," said Harry, "remember what me and George did to Malfoy?"

"Malfoy's different," said Hermione, "Kreacher actually has a chance."

"No, Kreacher's a house-elf so you're forcing yourself to care and to try more," said Ron.

"YOU KNOW NOTHING."

"Prove me wrong, then."

"FUCK YOU."

"Snappy comeback."

"You can put them in envelopes," Lockhart—oh, sorry, it's Gilderoy now—said to Ginny, throwing the signed pictures into her lap one by one as he finished them. "I am not forgotten, you know, no, I still receive a very great deal of fan mail…Gladys Gudgeon writes weekly…I just wish I knew why…and also why, if she's so obsessed with me, that she never comes to visit me in person; is it because she's too shy or worried that she might embarrass herself or is it because she's married to that Davey Gudgeon bloke that was mentioned offhand that one time and so actually coming to see me would be seen as being unfaithful? I mean, she could just be Davey's sister, we don't know, it might not be a problem at all so why are you lot my first ever visitors…?" He paused, looking faintly puzzled, then beamed again and returned to his signing with renewed vigor. "Eh, who gives a shit, amirite?"

Neville looked as though he would rather be anywhere in the world but here. A dull purple flush was creeping up his plump face and he was not making eye contact with any of them. Which forced him to glance at the plant beside Broderick Bode's bedside.

"That's Devil's Snare!" he cried, pointing at the plant. "Get that thing away from him before it kills him!"

"W-What?" asked the Healer, looking between him and the plant in surprise. "A-Are you quite sure, dear—"

"No, he's right, I can't believe I didn't recognize it!" cried Hermione, staring at the swaying plant herself with wide, shocked eyes. "What's that thing doing in a hospital? Why would anyone buy a patient a plant like that?"

"Who sent it to him?" said Harry swiftly as the Healer quickly picked the pot back up again.

"I don't know, it was sent anonymously!" cried the Healer in dismay. "I need to report this, I'm so sorry, I can't believe I managed a E on my Herbology N.E.W.T. but I wasn't able to recognize one of the more basic plants you learn about as a frelling first year…I'm sorry again, I'll be right back!"
She hurriedly shuffled out the door.

"...Well that was a fun adventure," said Ron, looking shaken. "So anyway, Neville, what brings you here?"

"Bugger," muttered Harry and Neville under their breaths.

FUCK YOU, AUGUSTA.

For the first time in his life, Harry was not looking forward to returning to Hogwarts. Going back to school would mean placing himself once again under the tyranny of Dolores Umbridge, who had no doubt managed to force through another dozen decrees in their absence. Then there was no Quidditch to look forward to now that he had been banned; there was every likelihood that their burden of homework would increase as the exams drew even nearer; Dumbledore remained as remote as ever; in fact, if it had not been for the D.A., Harry felt he might have gone to Sirius and begged him to let him leave Hogwarts and remain in Grimmauld Place. Why hasn't someone written something where he totally does so anyway and lets Hermione run the shit since it was her idea in the first place.

Sirius pushed his chair roughly aside and strode around the table toward Snape, pulling out his wand as he went; Snape whipped out his own. They were squaring up to each other, Sirius looking livid, Snape calculating, his eyes darting from Sirius's wand tip to his face.

"JUST FUCK ALREADY," Harry bellowed.

"Gwhah?" sputtered both Sirius and Snape in shock, gaping at Harry as though he'd just announced he was pregnant. Harry looked innocently back at them, muttering, "What?"

The kitchen door opened and the entire Weasley family, plus Hermione, minus Percy because he's a git and apparently no longer counts as family and also minus Charlie because who even is that, all looking very happy, with Mr. Weasley walking proudly in their midst dressed in a pair of striped pajamas covered by a mackintosh. What the fuck is a mackintosh. Oh that's a mackintosh. Well just say coat, then, I got five rows of pictures of chairs and weird stain glass and things before Google images showed a single coat, Jesus, Americans are dumb, you know, we need simple things which is totally why you keep repeating Lee's last name fuck my life.

"Dumbledore wants to stop you having those dreams about Voldemort," said Hermione at once. "Well, you won't be sorry not to have them anymore, will you?"

"If it means I could've saved someone's life again then yeah, probably," said Harry immediately.

"I'm totally with him on this one," said Ron, nodding in the direction of where his father sat, cheerfully discussing something with Bill. "And besides, I'd much rather have the nightmares over extra lessons with Snape, imagine how much worse the nightmares would get!"
I like how Snape is able to remove certain memories that he doesn't want Harry to see but that Harry is not granted the same luxury or even told that such a thing is possible, that's nice and trust-building.

"I am about to attempt to break into your mind," said Snape softly. "We are going to see how well you resist. I have been told that you have already shown aptitude at resisting the Imperius Curse… You will find that similar powers are needed for this… Brace yourself now…"

"How do I do that?" asked Harry. "Sir?"

"Legimens!"

"Oh thanks, that was helpful OW MY BRAIN. I THINK I NEED THAT FOR THINGS."

"Well, for a first attempt that was not as poor as it might have been," said Snape, raising his wand once more. "You managed to stop me eventually, though you wasted time and energy shouting. You must remain focused. Try not to let the fact that there's a creepy guy in a black dress jabbing a stick into your face distract you in any way. Repel me with your brain and you will not need to resort to your wand."

"I'm trying," said Harry angrily, "but you're not telling me how! I have no idea what I'm doing and I don't know how to discipline my mind or repel you with it or any of that crap! You're supposed to be teaching me how to do this, not just telling me to do it! I have to crawl before I can run marathons, you prick!"

"Manners, Potter," said Snape dangerously.

"Sorry, I have to crawl before I can run marathons, Professor Prick."

"That's better."

Oooooh, if that concussion hasn't healed yet he really shouldn't be doing Occlumency… Nyang…

Fools who wallow in sad memories and allow themselves to be provoked easily?! YOU FUCKING HYPOCRITE!

"There are many things in the Department of Mysteries, Potter, few of which you would understand and none of which concern you aside from that one ultra-specific thing that totally concerns you and is also directly my fault for it concerning you, do I make myself plain?"

"Well, write it in your homework planner then!" said Hermione encouragingly. "So you don't forget!"
"Yeah..." said Harry, glancing sideways at Ron, "I've been meaning to reimburse you for those, actually, since Ron and I got rid of them almost immediately."

"What?" said Hermione, looking hurt. "Why? I thought you'd really appreciate them since it's O.W.L. year and all!"

"We would if they didn't talk back," Ron lied smoothly, "since, you know, the last time a diary-like object talked back to us my sister ended up being possessed by You-Know-Who and Harry's arm was impregnated with basilisk venom."

"Also you'd just remind us to do our homework again anyway," said Harry, "so they would've been a bit redundant in any case."

"...I suppose...Well, they cost me about three Galleons and nine Sickles apiece, so—"

"So I'll run up and get seven Galleons and a Sickle," said Harry easily. "No, Ron, shut up, I got this."

"I really wasn't gonna say anything this time," said Ron.

"Oh. Well okay then."

________________________________________

The Ministry of Magic announced late last night that there has been a mass breakout from Azkaban.

Speaking to reporters in his private office, Cornelius Fudge, Minister of Magic, confirmed that ten high-security prisoners escaped in the early hours of yesterday evening, and that he has already informed the Muggle Prime Minister of the dangerous nature of these individuals.

"We find ourselves, most unfortunately, in the same position we were two and a half years ago when the murderer Sirius Black escaped aside from the fact that that was just one guy and there are now eleven insane murderers roaming the streets but never mind that just now," said Fudge last night. "Nor do we think the two breakouts are unrelated, being the only two breakouts in the public eye to ever happen ever. An escape of this magnitude suggests outside help, and we must remember that Black, as the first known person ever to break out of Azkaban, would be ideally placed to help others follow in his footsteps. We think it likely that Black, after failing to kill Harry Potter two years ago, dicked around and did absolutely nothing for that entire length of time before suddenly deciding that it would be a totally awesome idea to break his cousin, Bellatrix Lestrange, and other fellow Death Eaters out of jail, kicking himself the whole time for not doing it in the first place when he initially escaped which would have made more sense. We are, however, doing all we can to round up the criminals, aside of course from stationing dementors around a boarding school once again since there is absolutely no way whatsoever that Lestrange might pull a Black and try to go after the only person she failed to severely fuck up the last time she went around killing and torturing people. And even if she did, more power to her, we really don't care about anyone involved in the educational system this year, they can do whatever the hell they like. On no account should any of these individuals be approached, not that it matters, they'll probably just kill you in your sleep or catch you totally unawares and torture you till you beg for death. Don't panic, guys, we got this."

________________________________________

Hermione ripped open the newspaper and began to read the report inside while Harry looked around the Great Hall. He could not understand why his fellow students were not looking scared or at least discussing the terrible piece of news on the front page, but very few of them took the newspaper
every day like Hermione. That made him understand. He stood up.

"So there was another breakout from Azkaban, a mass one this time," said Harry in a carrying voice, pointing to the paper in Hermione's hands. Everyone turned to look at him, some looking scared but most disbelieving.

"Come off it," said Zacharias from the Hufflepuff table, "how the hell is that possible? At least make something up that people would actually believe!"

"I must not tell lies," said Harry slightly pointedly, shrugging. "Check out anyone with a newspaper, you'll see that I'm telling the truth."

He sat back down and Hermione was instantly mobbed by nearly all the Gryffindors as everyone in the Great Hall started clambering around for the news. Neville, who had already gotten up to check the Prophet as soon as Harry made the announcement, met Harry's eyes and mouthed "Thanks" at him. Harry nodded back. This was something that shouldn't be kept from anyone.

"Where are you going?" said Ron, startled.

"To send a letter," said Hermione, swinging her bag onto her shoulder. "It...well, I don't know whether...but it's worth trying...and I'm the only one who can..."

"I hate when she does that," grumbled Ron as he and Harry got up from their table and made their own, slower way out of the Great Hall. "Would it kill her to tell us what she's up to for once? Does she keep forgetting that she almost did die one time before she told us anything, delaying the entire plot of the second book for like another month or something?"

Rumors were flying that some of the convicts had been spotted in Hogsmeade, that they were supposed to be hiding out in the Shrieking Shack and that they were going to break into Hogwarts, just as Sirius Black had done. And yet no one went to the headmaster or the Ministry's puppet teacher to demand where Hogwarts's protection was this time around because everyone's super proactive like that.

Those who came from Wizarding families had grown up hearing the names of these Death Eaters spoken with almost as much fear as Voldemort's; the crimes they had committed during the days of Voldemort's reign of terror were legendary. Which is why we only get told like one big murder or crime per Death Eater because that's enough to imply that they've killed and tortured and ruined the lives of hundreds if not thousands of dudes.

This latest decree had been the subject of a great number of jokes among the students. Lee Jordan had pointed out that Jordan was his last name, and also he told Umbridge that by the terms of the new rule she was not allowed to tell Fred and George off for playing Exploding Snap in the back of the class.

"Exploding Snap's got nothing to do with Defense Against the Dark Arts, Professor! That's not information relating to your subject!"

When Harry next saw Lee, which couldn't have been too long since they're in the same common room and he shows up all the time, the back of his hand was bleeding rather badly. Harry talked to
him, asking about how he could have started continuously bleeding so quickly since it took four
detentions for his scars to set in, and unfortunately Lee didn't have an answer for him. They traded
horror stories, wondered how no one else outside of their close friends noticed when Harry was able
to spot Lee's hand easily enough, figured that terrible detentions were not information relating to any
of the subjects the professors were paid to teach so they still couldn't really tell anyone, and Harry
recommended essence of Murtlap.

Every single Divination and Care of Magical Creatures lesson was now conducted in the presence of
Umbridge and her clipboard. Somehow. Even though she has to teach four different classes from
first years to six and two additional classes for the combined N.E.W.T. years, which is, what,
twenty-two different classes of her own that she has to somehow fit into her schedule every week?
The hell does she fit in all this other bullshit as well? Especially since…wait…There are five school
days in a week, and according to the schedule Harry and the others were handed at the beginning of
the year there can be up to four classes a day…which is only twenty classes…so how do even the
normal teachers fit all their shit in…MATH IS HARD.

"Shut up, Ron," said Hermione angrily. "How many times have you suspected Snape, and when
have you ever been right? Dumbledore trusts him, he works for the Order, that ought to be enough."

"He used to be a Death Eater," said Ron stubbornly. "And we've never seen proof that he really
swapped sides…"

"Dumbledore trusts him," Hermione repeated. "And if we can't trust a guy who leaves Harry alone
with PTSD in an exceptionally unsupportive environment, made it so he was convinced he was
being possessed by Voldemort and nearly leave us forever, forced him to participate in the
tournament, didn't heal his leg until he talked about the most horrible thing he's witnessed so far, sent
us to break the laws of time and space that one time, didn't do anything productive to ensure our
safety while there was a basilisk hanging around the school, put something Voldemort was sure to go
after in a school full of children and practically goaded us to go after Quirrell alone, hired Quirrell in
the first place when he knew there was something wrong with him, hired Lockhart when he knew he
was a fraud and lying through his teeth and probably Memory Charming people to teach a bunch of
underage children, and left a baby unguarded on a doorstep in November when it might've rained
that night and he could've just woke up and walked away, we can't trust anyone."

"Right," said Ron dubiously. "So about that thing you went off to do several weeks ago by this
point, what was up with that?"

"Oh, I needed to talk to Rita Skeeter about setting up an interview with Harry and force him to tell
the truth this time."

"...Well if I'd known that," said Harry angrily, "I might've been able to prepare what I wanted to say
and also to prepare myself emotionally for the inevitable flashbacks, been able to tell Cho about it so
our date wouldn't have been a complete mess, and wouldn't be comparing you unfavorably to
Dumbledore right now for keeping me in the dark about something that I should've known about and
that you could've easily told me about at any time."

"Well she didn't agree yet, it's not even set in stone so I figured I shouldn't prepare you just so you'd
get let down if she refused."

"But she can't refuse it because you're blackmailing her."
"Eh, details."
"I dislike you with great intensity."

________________________________________

"Are you coming?" Harry asked Ron, but he shook his head looking glum.

"I can't come to Hogsmeade at all, Angelina wants a full day's training. Like it's going to help — we're the worst team I've ever seen, and I support the Chudley Cannons. You should see Kirk and Sloper, they're pathetic, even worse than I am."

"...So basically you can go join up with your favorite Quidditch team whenever you want."

"I HAVE A NEW DREAM IN LIFE."
"Called it."

________________________________________

"You really miss it, don't you?" said Cho.

He looked around and saw her watching him.

"Yeah," sighed Harry. "I do."

"Remember the first and frankly only time we played against each other, in the third year?" she asked him.

"Yeah," said Harry, grinning. "You were in fourth year, weren't you?"

"Yes, I was," she said, giggling a little, "I don't know why I phrased it like that."

________________________________________

"Oh, there's a really nice place just up here, haven't you ever been to Madam Puddifoot's?" Cho said brightly, and she led him up a side road and into a small tea shop that Harry had never noticed before. It was a cramped, steamy little place where everything seemed to have been decorated with frills or bows. Harry was reminded unpleasantly of Umbridge's office.

"Cute, isn't it?" said Cho happily.

"It looks like Umbridge's office," said Harry before he could stop himself. Just as he started to panic and rushed to try and backtrack, he found Cho looking at him sympathetically.

"Three Broomsticks?" she asked understandingly.

"Yeah, that sounds nice," he said, holding the door open for her as they exited the tea shop again. "Sorry, it's just—"

"I'm not going to be responsible for giving you flashbacks," Cho said firmly as she led him back to the main road. "Unless it's about Cedric and You-Know-Who, of course."

"Well, those memories are more pleasant," said Harry darkly, and Cho laughed slightly uncomfortably.
Then they met up with Hermione, Luna, and Rita at the Three Broomsticks and Cho didn't get all delusional and was really supportive during the interview even though she cried a little and they happily stayed together for a couple months into the following school year until she dumped him because he was staring at Ginny too long. All was well.

"Women!" Harry muttered angrily, slooshing down the rain-washed street with his hands in his pockets. "What did she want to talk about Cedric for anyway? Why does she always want to drag up a subject that makes her act like a human hosepipe? Why am I talking to myself out loud like this? Why am I asking you?"

"Family," said Hagrid gloomily. "Whatever yeh say, blood's important…"

"Oh yeah," said Harry quietly, glaring up at Hagrid. "I'm sure Sirius would be thrilled with that analysis now that his cousin's escaped from prison, and also every time he goes past his mother's portrait."

"Quiet, yeh."

Hermione glanced over at the back of Cho's head and sighed. "Oh Harry," she said sadly. "Well, I'm sorry, but you were a bit tactless."

"Me, tactless?" said Harry outraged. "Says Miss Oh How I Wish I Could See Thestrals?"

"That was a sensitivity issue, this is a gender differences issue that actually wouldn't even make much sense to some women since you did do exactly what I said and thought it was so obvious that you and I were just friends that you're unable to even conceive that others might see things differently so every single one of your actions are perfectly understandable and I'm just kind of being a bitch to you right now."

"You're the best sister figure ever," Harry snarled sarcastically.

"That's what I'm here for. And that's probably what you should go over and tell her right now, actually, that you only see me as a friend and like a sister and that you think incest is icky, she'll probably forgive you instantly. And tell her about the interview too, that'll make her feel better."

"No it won't, I'll talk to three other women about Cedric but not to her? She won't go for that!"

"Point. Well you're screwed then."

"Oh hurrah."

"You should write a book," Ron told Hermione as he cut up his potatoes, "translating mad things girls do so boys and frankly other girls half the time can understand them."

"That's the trouble with Quidditch," said Hermione absently, once again bent over her Rune translation, "it creates all this bad feeling and tension between the Houses since the House Cup
system and Snape and McGonagall's constant, visible enmity does absolutely nothing to have perpetuated that in the first place."

________________________________________
It wasn't a very fast Snitch?! No wonder Ginny managed to go pro!

________________________________________
"I haven't got the heart to take the mickey out of him, even," said Fred, looking over at Ron's crumpled figure. "Mind you...when he missed the fourteenth..."

He made wild motions with his arms as though doing an upright doggy-paddle.

"Well, I'll save it for parties, eh?"

Ron dragged himself up to bed shortly after this. Out of respect for his feelings, Harry waited a while before going up to the dormitory himself, so that Ron could pretend to be asleep if he wanted to. When Harry finally entered the room, Ron was nowhere to be found, but one of the windows was wide open. Harry ran to his trunk and ripped out the Map, but Ron wasn't anywhere on it either. He rushed back down to the common room and ran as fast as he could to McGonagall's office, ignoring everyone staring after him as he went.

They didn't find his body until the following morning when it was finally bright enough to see Ron's limp form impaled on a spire atop one of the lower towers. Harry and Hermione were utterly destroyed from that moment on and Fred and George finally learned that **MAYBE THEY TAKE THINGS TOO FUCKING FAR SOMETIMES.**

________________________________________
"Another one who thinks you're barking," said Ron, throwing a crumpled letter over his shoulder, "but this ones says you've got her converted, and now she thinks you're a real hero — she's put in a photograph too — wow, this one's basically a pedophile, we should probably report this one, might be dangerous—"

________________________________________
"I'll bet you wish you hadn't given up Divination now, don't you, Hermione?" asked Parvati, smirking.

It was breakfast time a few days after the sacking of Professor Trelawney, and Parvati was curling her eyelashes around her wand and examining the effect in the back of her spoon. They were to have their first lesson with Firenze that morning and it was somehow impossible for her to have done up her eyelashes in her own dorm before coming down for breakfast so she could've used a proper mirror.

"Not really," said Hermione indifferently, who was reading the Daily Prophet. "I've never really liked horses."

She turned the page of the newspaper, scanning its columns.

"You're fucking kidding me," said Lavender, sounding shocked. "You'll stick up for house-elves to the point of defending a racist that I somehow know about, you get offended every time someone calls you a Mudblood even if you don't show it, and yet you call centaurs something that you must know they'd be offended by and is probably the equivalent of a slur to them?!"
"It's fine," said Hermione uncaringly, turning the page of her paper.

"Also he's kind of obscenely gorgeous…" sighed Parvati.

"That's basically bestiality," said Hermione, lowering the paper. "He's still got four legs, you know."

"Hate to know what you'd say about a human born with a defect like that," said Parvati coldly. "And it's only bestiality if I actually have sex with the guy. I'm pretty sure that won't ever happen, and in the meantime I can just stare longingly at his chest while wishing a guy like that existed in human form, what's wrong with that?"

"Not to mention you are now insulting Hagrid's dad, one of Maxime's parents, one of Flitwick's predecessors that may be a parent, one of Fleur's grandfathers, not to mention her father and Bill, and some would argue Fleur herself in addition to Tonks and hopefully Victoire," said Lavender scathingly. "Hell, some might argue even Harry's mum, if it came to that, since his dad had that option."

"Whatever," said Hermione vaguely.

"See, this is why we never hang out," said Parvati, turning away in disgust.

________________________________________

"Is she coming?" Harry asked quietly.

Dobby let out a howl, and began beating his bare feet hard on the floor. "Yes, Harry Potter, yes!"

Harry straightened up and looked around at the motionless, terrified people gazing at the thrashing elf.

"Okay, I want everyone to focus on wishing the door isn't here and that no one can get in," he said loudly.

Everyone closed their eyes and within seconds the door melted back into the wall.

"Brilliant, everyone!" said Harry, grinning as the D.A. all smiled at each other. "Now…Think we can make it let us out somewhere else, far away from the seventh floor?"

"How about the library?" suggested Alicia. "It's fine to be there still, right?"

"Okay, everyone concentrate again," said Harry, and before long a part of the floor slid down and aside to reveal a long slide that would lead, presumably, to the library.

"Right then," said Harry, smiling down at Dobby. "Dobby — this is an order — get back down to the kitchens with the other elves, and if she asks you whether you warned me, lie and say no. And I forbid you to hurt yourself, you understand?"

"Yes, thank you, Harry Potter, sir!" said Dobby, smiling tearfully and nodding so hard that a couple of his hats threatened to fall off. He snapped his fingers and disappeared.

"Okey dokey, let's get this show on the road!" said Fred, pumping his fist in the air and jumping down the slide. With similar cheers the rest of the D.A. followed one by one. Harry lingered behind, pulling the Marauder's Map out of his pocket and frowning at it.

"Reckon you should've had someone watching that at all times, eh?" said Ron cheekily.
"Yeah, kinda," said Harry, frowning. "Hey Hermione, grab the list in case Umbridge does manage to break in, would you?"

"Good idea," said Hermione darkly, running back for the list of all the D.A. members.

"Looks like we won't be able to meet anymore, though, does it," said Ron morosely.

"...I'd kinda run out of ideas beyond Patronuses anyway," Harry admitted sheepishly. "We can all still just practice on our own as long as we're careful."

"S'pose so."

A/N: Oh and Pottermore updated or something, Iunno. I think they're saving the bestest and mostest new information for the final chapters again, which after the example PoA provided I am TOTALLY down for, so...yeah, keep doing what you're doing even if you didn't give us too much new stuff this time, I guess.

Review or Hermione'll continue to make less and less sense as the series goes on.
I Can't Speak British

A/N: They fixed the prefects docking points thing in reprints and stuff. I ain't commenting on that. Also for the upcoming section with the Career Advice, yoneld informed me of certain aspects of British English as opposed to American English, but I'm ignoring it because I want to keep pretending that the four years I spent getting that degree and the obscene amount of money dollars I'll be paying for the rest of my life were actually worth something in the end even if I know for a fact that they weren't, so I'm sticking with terrible old 'Murican English rules. Just let it be known that he is right and I am purposefully being wrong. Also Rule of Funny.

Disclaimer: The usual outright theft from Pocahontas, Batman, A Very Potter Musical and Sequel, Two Best Friends Play Resident Evil 4, Monty Python's Life of Brian, and another Two Best Friends Play episode, as well as some book series or other about some kid with glasses. Arthur or something. Been years since I read/watched that...

"Oho!" said Fudge, bouncing up and down on the balls of his feet again. "Yes, do let's hear the latest cock-and-bull story designed to pull Potter out of trouble! Go on, then, Dumbledore, go on—Willy Widdershins was lying, was he? Or was it Potter's identical twin in the Hog's Head that day? Or is there the usual simple explanation involving a reversal of time, a dead man coming back to life, and a couple of invisible dementors?"

Percy Weasley let out a hearty laugh.

"Oh, very good, Minister, very good! My last name is Weasley, by the way!"

Harry could've kicked him, especially since he knew full well that Percy was, indeed, a Weasley. Then he saw, to his astonishment, that Dumbledore was looking down at Fudge with a rather puzzled expression on his face.

"I never said anything about a reversal of time, Cornelius," he said slowly, and McGonagall turned to stare at him as well. Trying not to let his expression give anything away, Harry looked at Fudge too and saw that even the other Auror that wasn't Kingsley was eyeing Fudge curiously.

"...I'm positive you did," said Fudge, looking up at Dumbledore. "Didn't you?"

"I most certainly did not," said Dumbledore, shaking his head slowly. "Though it is indeed possible, after all, I am aware that the Department of Mysteries has been developing Time-Turners for some time now...I just assumed that their use has been limited. Certainly I never used one myself, though I could see how one with...certain desires might find it useful..." he trailed off, gazing at Fudge as though he had just figured several things out.

"But I never used one either!" cried Fudge, looking flustered as both Kingsley and the other Auror looked down on him accusingly; even Percy was looking slightly betrayed. "Honest!"

"I think we should call Madam Bones here," said Dumbledore, heading over to the fireplace. "Her judgment is well-known to be unbiased."

"Now see here—"

"No, shut up, this is what we're doing."
"Aww…"

Yeah, just Memory Charm a student at will, I'm sure that won't bring any negative consequences whatsoever such as the slowly crumbling friendship between Marietta and Cho when Cho tries to talk to her about things and Marietta has no idea what she's talking about, there's no way Cho would want to investigate deeper into what's wrong with her best friend or anything—oh wait, nothing happened, there are never any consequences to anything ever.

"Well, usually when a person shakes their head," said McGonagall coldly, "they mean 'no,' at least in this part of the globe. So unless Miss Edgecombe is using a form of sign language as yet unknown to anyone outside of Bulgaria, India, Sri Lanka, Albania, and probably a few other countries that a simple Google search cannot immediately identify since it was kind of unclear about Greece and the like—"

And to Harry's horror, Umbridge withdrew from her pocket the list of names that had been pinned upon the Room of Requirement's wall. In retrospect maybe Hermione should've probably hidden it better instead of just leaving it lying around like Ernie had warned her about.

Dumbledore seized Harry's wrist.

"Remember — close your mind —"

But as Dumbledore's fingers closed over Harry's skin, a pain shot through the scar on his forehead, and he felt again that terrible, snakelike longing to strike Dumbledore, to bite him, to hurt him—

"— listen with your heart — you will understand," whispered Dumbledore in almost a singsong voice.

Fawkes circled the office and swooped low over him. Dumbledore released Harry, raised his hand, and grasped the phoenix's long, golden tail. There was a flash of fire and the pair of them had gone.

"Where is he?" yelled Fudge, pushing himself up from the ground, his voice miraculously growing much deeper and gravelly. "WHERE IS HE?"

"I don't know!" shouted Kingsley, also leaping to his feet. "He must've Disapparated!"

"That's bullshit, Shacklebolt!" cried Umbridge. "You can't Disapparate inside of Hogwarts! Right?"

"Right!" called out a random portrait.

"Right!" Umbridge repeated. "Damn it!" She kicked Marietta in the face, sending her crashing to the floor as she advanced menacingly on Harry. "You got lucky, Potter. But I know you guilty too. And I'm gonna get all of you!" she went on, pointing at the list still in Fudge's hand. "Because with Dumbledore gone, guess who gets to be the headmaster noooow!"

"Me?" said Snape excitedly.

"Snape?" said Ron excitedly.

"No! ME! Your mama! UMBRIDGE!" bellowed Umbridge. "And from now on, we gonna be
"Her enthusiasm is infectious," said Fudge adoringly as he watched Umbridge stomp around Dumbledore's office. Everyone else eyed him weirdly.

"Members of the Inquisitorial Squad do have the power to dock points," said Malfoy smugly. "So, Granger, I'll have five from you for being rude about our new headmistress...Macmillan, five for contradicting me...Five because I don't like you, Potter...Weasley, your shirt's untucked and we're supposed to be wearing robes anyway so I'll have another five for not wearing the appropriate uniform...Oh yeah, I forgot, you're a Mudblood, Granger, so ten for that..."

ShieldEcho looked up from the book and went into Pottermore to check the current House Point total. At the time that they were typing this, Pottermore was still fun and relevant, and also Gryffindor was in the lead, closely followed by Ravenclaw, and Slytherin was dead last. They stared at the hourglasses ponderously, then heard footsteps and decided to do something they'd been thinking about doing for a while.

"Yo!" they called out, and a few seconds later the mother person stuck her head into the door.

"Yo?" the mother person said mockingly.

"I just thought of something," said ShieldEcho, pointing at the computer screen where the four hourglasses were lined up. "These are rubies, these are sapphires, these are emeralds," they explained, indicating Gryffindor, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin respectively. "What the hell are these?" they asked, pointing to Hufflepuff.

"Could be topaz, could be citrine, could be amber," the mother person listed off, slightly giddy that Ravenclaw was pulling ahead of her spawn's House if only for the moment.

"Uh-huh...And all these are precious while this one's lackluster?" said ShieldEcho sullenly, moving the cursor around.

"Semi-precious," corrected the mother person, laughing.

"That figures," said ShieldEcho, resigned, as the mother person laughed even harder. "That figures."

"They could be yellow diamonds and be more precious than all of them!" said the mother person encouragingly.

"Yeah right, I'm not gonna get my hopes up."

Way to possibly have murdered a fellow student over House points and not even give a shit, you guys, I can see why everyone loves you dearly.

Umbridge had obviously gone to some lengths to get Filch on her side, Harry thought, and the worst of it was that he would probably prove an important weapon; his knowledge of the school's secret passageways and hidden places was probably second only to the Weasley twins except for the part
where the twins and the Marauders and Harry, Ron and Hermione knew way more than he did thanks to the Marauders exploring way more than he ever did and being able to use wands in order to open some of the passages and making the Map so the future magical mischief makers could know as much as they did in addition to their own knowledge of the location of the Chamber of Secrets and the Room of Requirement. So false on all counts, basically.

________________________________________

Harry's a bit slow on the uptake, I wasn't thirteen for even a month yet when this book came out and the minute Umbridge offered him the tea I knew what was up.

________________________________________

"She's a lovely person really," said Cho. "She just made a mistake—"

Harry looked at her incredulously.

"Let me tell you about another lovely person who made a mistake," he said in a low, cold voice. "His name is Sirius Black."

Cho stared at him with a puzzled expression on her face.

"Sirius Black? A lovely person?"

Harry nodded slowly, mentally resolving to apologize to Sirius the next time he saw him.

"Long ago, he was in Gryffindor House with my father and Professor Lupin. They were actually really close friends. One day, Black decided that it would be a lovely idea if he sold Lupin out and sent a Slytherin he didn't get along with after him on a full moon."

Cho gasped and covered her hands with her mouth.

"You're not serious," she said tremulously.

"Lupin told me himself," said Harry, deliberately not making the obvious pun even though Cho had set it up perfectly. "If it weren't for my father, that Slytherin might be dead now, or at least bitten."

Harry sighed.

"Now, because they were such good friends, my dad and Lupin eventually forgave Black, thinking he was a lovely person who just made a mistake," he drawled sarcastically, making Cho avoid his eyes. "A few years go by and suddenly Voldemort's after my family. Sirius Black was the one entrusted with my family's location. If no one had told Voldemort, my parents might still be alive right now."

As Cho's eyes filled with tears, Harry added, "One more point of interest: another bloke in this group of friends happened to be Peter Pettigrew."

"Oh my God," Cho breathed.

"Marietta sold us all out, including you," Harry said softly. "I'm sure she appreciates you sticking up for her, but you're being a far better friend to her than she's been to you recently. I'm not wrong, am I?"

Cho slowly shook her head, wiping her face.
"Well... we all got away, didn't we?" said Cho pleadingly. "You know, her mum works for the Ministry, it's really difficult for her—"

"Ron's dad works for the Ministry too!" Harry said, beginning to lose his patience. "And in case you hadn't noticed, neither he nor Ginny nor the twins have got 'sneak' written across their faces even though their father is their only source of income and he doesn't make a lot to begin with! So don't come at me with that bullshit excuse!"

"On the count of three then," said Snape lazily. "One — two—"

Snape's office door banged open and Draco Malfoy sped in.

"Professor Snape, sir — oh — sorry—"

Malfoy was looking at Snape and Harry in some surprise.

"...Should've probably started locking the door when we did these things just in case this exact thing happened," said Snape, lowering his wand. "Anyway, it's all right, Draco. Potter is here for a little Remedial Potions. Which is why I had my wand out."

Harry had not seen Malfoy look so gleeful since Umbridge had turned up to inspect Hagrid.

"I somehow had no idea about this even though there was no way that Smith git wouldn't have spread it all over the school as soon as he could," he said, leering at Harry, who knew his face was burning.

Snape's hand was flying across the parchment; he had written at least a foot more than his closest neighbors, and yet his writing was miniscule and cramped and virtually unrecognizable from anything Harry would ever see again ever.

"Did you like question ten, Moony?" asked Sirius as they emerged into the entrance hall.

"Loved it," said Remus briskly. "'Give five signs that identify the werewolf.' Excellent question."

"D'you think you managed to get all the signs?" said James in tones of mock concern.

"Think I did," said Remus seriously, as they joined the crowd thronging around the front doors eager to get out into the sunlit grounds. "One: He's sitting in my chair. Two: He's wearing my clothes. Three: His name's Remus Lupin..."

Peter was the only one who didn't laugh.

"I got the snout shape, the pupils of the eyes, and the tufted tail," said Peter anxiously, "but I couldn't think what else—"

"How thick are you, Wormtail?" said James impatiently. "You run round with a werewolf once a month—"
"Keep your voice down," implored Remus.

"No, seriously though, what were the other two signs," Peter demanded.

"Well, there was…er…" Sirius trailed off, looking over at Remus. "What were the other two signs again?"

"You know, it wasn't very clear," said Remus, rubbing his chin with his forefinger. "I guess the fact that they attack humans exclusively counts, right?"

"I guess…I figured it was just physical signs and the like."

"I thought that too," said James, now frowning. "And those were the only four grouped together on Pottermore, so what was the fifth one?"

"…The part mentioned way earlier where it talked about them looking ill before and after the full moon?" said Sirius, poking Remus deliberately in the face.

"That's a way to identify us when we're human, though," said Remus, swatting Sirius's hand away. "I thought it just meant the part when the moon's actually full."

"Well that does count toward 'identifying the werewolf,'" said James, shrugging apologetically at Remus.

"S'pose so."

"So…you think I'll get partial credit?" asked Peter hopefully.

James, Sirius, and Remus all grunted noncommittally.

"What the hell did I just listen to," said Harry wonderingly, staring at the Marauders.

________________________________________

"I'm bored," said Sirius. "Wish it was full moon."

"You might," said Remus darkly from behind his book. "We've still got Transfiguration, if you're bored you could test me…Here." He held out his book.

Sirius snorted. "I don't need to look at that rubbish, I know it all."

"Yeah, that's great for you, but I don't, which is why I said you could test me," said Remus slowly as if addressing a three-year-old.

"Well I don't wanna."

"You suck."

"I know."

________________________________________

Snape let out a stream of mixed swearwords and hexes, but his wand being ten feet away nothing happened.

"That was a horribly constructed sentence and your mouth should be washed out for that," said
James coldly. "Scourgify!"

Pink soap bubbles streamed from Snape's mouth at once; the froth was covering his lips, making him gag, choking him — funny how everyone only counts the incident with the Whomping Willow to be the only time any of this lot ever attempted to murder the guy, this shit's fucking brutal—

"LEAVE HIM ALONE!"

James and Sirius looked around. James's free hand jumped to his hair again.

It was one of the girls from the lake edge. She had thick, dark red hair that fell to her shoulders and startlingly green almond-shaped eyes — Harry's eyes.

Harry's mother…Why didn't it occur to him to look for her in the Great Hall as well…It really is all about the men in this series, ain't it…

________________________________________

YAY EVERYONE WAS A MASSIVE DOUCHENOZZLE YAAAAAAAY.

________________________________________

There was a flash of light, and Snape was once again hanging upside down in the air.

"Who wants to see me take off Snivelly's pants?"

"…No one," said Sirius slowly, gaping at James. "There something you want to tell us, mate?"

"Because we'd totally accept you regardless despite this being the seventies," said Peter.

"Wha—no! I just want to utterly humiliate him!" shrieked James in protest.

"By gaping at his naughty bits?" said Lupin from under the tree, closing his book at last. "You got problems, dude."

"DON'T YOU JUDGE ME," cried James.

"Totally judging you," said the other three calmly and in unison.

Also this is the first time I began to learn that 'pants' is British for 'underwear,' since in the States that's what we call trousers and thus I was confused for years, 'twas fun times.

________________________________________

"But why haven't you got Occlumency lessons anymore?" said Hermione, frowning.

"Because I finally managed to repel him and saw some of his memories that he didn't want me to see and so he threw me out of his office practically on pain of death and no I'm not telling you what I saw because I'm afraid he really will kill me if he finds out I told anyone and he will find out, he always does," Harry muttered.

"He can't do that!" cried Hermione, aghast. "He's supposed to be teaching you how to protect your mind against Voldemort — do shut up, Ron, it's been several chapters now so that totally gives me the right to insult you for the same behavior I myself have been repeating for well over four years — he can't let some stupid reason like that get in the way of something this important!"
"Tell that to Dumbledore," said Harry, "he's the one who made Snape do it in the first place."

"I can't tell Dumbledore, as well you know!"

"And I thank Merlin every day for that."

"I loathe you."

"I love you too."

________________________________________

"Well, there you are," said Hermione, handing Ron his schedule, "if you follow that you should do fine."

Ron looked down it gloomily, but then brightened.

"You've given me an evening off every week!"

"That's for Quidditch practice," said Hermione.

"You can't decide that, though," said Ron as if it were obvious, which it totally is, "Angelina's the one who decides when practice is, and N.E.W.T.s or not she'll definitely hold practices more than once a week."

"Well I'll just have to tell her that's impossible then."

"Have fun with that."

________________________________________

Yes, Harry had once overheard Professor McGonagall saying that his father and Sirius had been troublemakers at school, but she had described them as forerunners of the Weasley twins, and Harry could not imagine Fred and George dangling someone upside down for the fun of it despite what they had only recently done to Montague and all the shit they put Ron and Percy through…not unless they really loathed them like his father and Sirius seemed to have loathed Snape…Perhaps Malfoy, or someone who really deserved it…Which is exactly why James and Sirius attacked Snape like that so really Harry's no better than his father was after all…

________________________________________

Hermione was pouring over a bright pink-and-orange leaflet that was headed SO YOU THINK YOU'D LIKE TO WORK IN MUGGLE RELATIONS? "You don't seem to need many qualifications to liaise with Muggles…All they want is an O.W.L. in Muggle Studies…'Much more important is your enthusiasm, patience, and a good sense of fun!'"

"You'd need more than a good sense of fun to liaise with my uncle," said Harry darkly. "Good sense of when to duck, more like…"

"And yet we continue to suspect nothing," said Ron happily to Hermione.

"Indeed," said Hermione, smiling brightly, "after all, families have never abused each other in all of human history!"

"HOORAY!" cheered Ron, throwing his arms in the air.
"I don't much fancy banking," said Hermione vaguely, now immersed in **HAVE YOU GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO TRAIN SECURITY TROLLS?**

"...So you'd fancy training security trolls then?" asked Ron tentatively.

"Not really, I don't know why I'm reading this one."

"Is it because of your compulsive need to read everything that has ever been printed in the history of humanity?"

"Go. Eat. A boat."

"What do you think about this?" Hermione demanded of Ron, and Harry was reminded irresistibly of Mrs. Weasley appealing to her husband during Harry's first dinner at Grimmauld Place. **WHICH MIGHT BE AN ANVIL-SIZED HINT OF SOME KIND PERHAPS METHINKS.**

Harry had just turned around when he heard a smashing noise; Malfoy gave a gleeful yell of laughter. Harry whipped around again. His potion sample lay in pieces on the floor, and Snape was surveying him with a look of gloating pleasure.

"Whoopsidoodle," he said softly, "Another zero, then, Potter..."

Harry was too incensed to speak. He strode back to his cauldron, intending to fill another flask and force Snape to mark it, but saw to his horror that the rest of the contents had vanished.

"I'm sorry!" said Hermione with her hands over her mouth. "I'm really sorry, Harry, I thought you'd finished, so I cleared up for you even though there has never been any indication of me doing so for you or Ron prior to this so I suppose I'm just showing off for the fuck of it or JKR really wanted you to have an irredeemably bad day today and decided that me being a shitty friend doing something completely out of the norm was the perfect way to do it, I'm so sorry!"

"Any questions, Potter?"

"Yes," said Harry. "What sort of character and aptitude tests do the Ministry do on you, if you get enough N.E.W.T.s?"

"What sort of tests does the Ministry do on you," Professor McGonagall corrected him swiftly. "I keep telling Albus we need a writing class up in this bitch, but dear sweet Merlin that man can be thick sometimes, and the current establishment is no better, let me tell you—I WILL SHOVE A MASSIVE PILE OF COUGH DROPS DOWN YOUR SODDING THROAT IF YOU KEEP THAT UP, DOLORES."

"Why do wizards even have cough drops," Harry wondered idly, "wouldn't you lot have potions for that that would clear anything up instantaneously?"

"Do piss off, Potter."

"How shall I piss off, O Lord?"
"I hope you've thought better of what you were planning to do, Harry—" Hermione began in a whisper.

"Nope, you're not allowed to talk to me," said Harry from the seat he had purposefully taken on the other side of Ron. "After that thing you pulled in Potions I reserve the right to not acknowledge your existence for the rest of the day."

"It was a bit of a dick move," said Ron hesitantly to Hermione, who looked as though she had been slapped.

"True…” said Hermione, looking resigned. "Fine, on his own head be it."

"What is it?" said Sirius urgently, sweeping his long dark hair out of his eyes and dropping to the ground in front of the fire, so that he and Harry were on a level; Lupin knelt down too, looking very concerned. "Are you all right? Do you need help?"

"No," said Harry, "it's nothing like that…I just wanted to talk…about my dad…"

They exchanged a look of great surprise.

"And you couldn't just use the mirror for this because…?" said Sirius slowly.

"What mirror?" asked Harry, nonplussed.

A look of dawning comprehension crossed Sirius's face.

"You never opened the package I gave you before you went back to Hogwarts, did you?"

"…Forgot about it till just now," said Harry. "But what'd you give me a mirror for?"

"It's a two-way mirror," Sirius explained. "Prongs and I used to use it back in school when we had separate detentions, it allowed us to talk to each other, and I've got the other one here. Unfortunately I didn't find it until around November, otherwise we could've communicated with each other easily all year."

"I think it would be best if you go and fetch it now," said Lupin, giving Harry a small smile. "How exactly did you manage to find a fireplace that wasn't regulated, anyway?"

"I'm in Umbridge's office right now, it's the only one that isn't," said Harry, "she accidentally mentioned it to me during…a detention." He was hesitant to tell them about nearly falling for her trick of using Veritaserum on him. "Fred and George are distracting her now."

"Okay, leave now anyway, just in case," said Lupin.

"Good idea," said Harry, starting to pull back.

"Wait," said Sirius, holding out a hand to stop him. "Umbridge is mad about order and control and everything, right?"

"Yeah," said Harry, looking at Sirius nervously; the grin he was wearing was a bit unnerving.

"So her office would be really neat and orderly and everything?"
"Like you wouldn't believe."

"Brilliant. Take a vase or a tablecloth or something similar and move it just an inch or two out of place, it'll drive her mad for weeks."

"...Oh that's evil," said Lupin, suddenly grinning in a similar fashion.

"Well I am from the Ancient and Most Noble House of Black," said Sirius, smirking.

"I'm gonna get on that and talk to you again very shortly, I guess," said Harry, grinning; now this was a form of troublemaking he could get behind. With a final nod in both of their directions, Harry pulled his head out of the fire, stood up, and immediately glanced around the office. There was a large glass paperweight in the shape of a cat that was standing on a shelf behind Umbridge's desk, along with several books; wrapping his robe around his hand just in case the Wizarding World checked for fingerprints, Harry gently picked it up and moved it to the other side of the shelf. Then he wrapped himself back in his Invisibility Cloak, had fun watching the Weasley twins' escape from Hogwarts, and dashed back up to Gryffindor Tower, where he grabbed the mirror and hid in the bathroom where he had a much more productive conversation with Sirius and Lupin and was able to get a much clearer view of what his parents and their friends were like back when they were at school. And because he interacted with the mirror, he was able to remember it when Voldemort tried to plant the fake memory and since Kreacher was spending increased amounts of time with Narcissa he had no idea about Sirius's mirror so Harry was able to confirm Sirius was still at headquarters and so Sirius fucking lived and ALL WAS FUCKING WELL.

...Did Sirius and Remus never notice that Snape was at least friends with Lily? Did they never put two and two together that he may have been jealous that James was the one who got her in the end since they knew he was jealous about everything else James was?

Fred and George had not left instructions on how to remove the swamp that now filled the corridor on the fifth floor of the east wing. Umbridge and Filch had been observed trying different means of removing it but without success. Eventually the area was roped off and Filch, gnashing his teeth furiously, was given the task of punting students across it to their classrooms, which American readers basically pictured as drop-kicking until they managed to figure out that it basically means ferrying them in a special kind of boat in British and therefore wondered exactly why Filch was so upset about kicking small children across great distances since it seems like something he'd adore.

Dungbombs and Stinkpellets were dropped so frequently in the corridors that it became the new fashion for students to perform Bubble-Head Charms on themselves before leaving lessons, which ensured them a supply of fresh clean air, even though it gave them all the peculiar appearance of wearing upside-down goldfish bowls on their heads and even though it made the Boy Who Lived rage for a week straight about how useful this would've been had it happened the previous year so the second task would've gone way bloody easier and he wouldn't have had to worry so much about all the things.

Has no one written home about the new policy on whipping, and if they have or if it was announced to the public did none of the parents think that this was kind of a shit idea?!
None of the staff but Filch seemed to be stirring themselves to help Umbridge. Indeed, a week after Fred and George's departure Harry witnessed Professor McGonagall walking right past Peeves, who was determinedly loosening a crystal chandelier, and could have sworn he heard her tell the poltergeist out of the corner of her mouth, "I don't even know why wizards would need screws in the first place but it actually unscrews the other way, don't ask me how I know this."

"What if Montague's permanently injured?" said Hermione in a worried voice.

"Who cares?" said Ron irritably, while his teacup stood drunkenly again, trembling violently at the knees. "Montague shouldn't have tried to take all those points from Gryffindor, should he? After all, those are far, far more important than someone else's health, even though he probably wouldn't have taken more than around five from either twin, and victim blaming is always the greatest. And besides, he's a Slytherin, so he's subhuman anyway."

"You are no better than the Death Eaters, you know that," said Hermione angrily while Harry gaped at Ron in shock.

"Damn right," said Ron darkly, "you know he'll up and join them once he graduates anyway, I say we get a head start at destroying him before he ever gets a chance to destroy us."

"You don't know he'll be a Death Eater!" said Hermione exasperatedly.

"Oh yeah? Name one person we know was a Slytherin at this point in our lives who didn't go on to be irredeemably evil."

"Since Sirius made it sound like he was the first Black ever to be in Gryffindor, I'd put my money on Tonks's mum," said Harry easily. "Sirius even said Andromeda was his favorite cousin, I think you were there for that part of the conversation. And probably most of the guys who got blown off the tapestry as well. Oh and apparently Merlin."

"...Montague still sucks."

"Yeah, well, you don't have to be such a murderous bag of dicks."

"But it's fuuuun!" Ron whined.

"Dude, I, I kind of want to punch you. E-Everything you do makes me upset."

Once they had exhausted the subject of Fred and George's dramatic departure, which admittedly had taken many hours, Ron and Hermione had wanted to hear news of Sirius. As Harry had not confided in them the reason he had wanted to talk to Sirius in the first place, it had been hard to think of things to tell them. He had ended up not coming up with anything and told them flatly that it had been a private conversation between godfather and godson and he wished for it to stay that way, as they didn't have to know every single minute detail of his life as that was hardly fair. When Hermione had complained that not telling them about Sirius was hardly fair as they cared about him as well, Harry snorted, told her she had a fine way of showing it, and that leaving him in the dark for the entire summer was hardly fair either and now she could see how she liked it. Hermione looked as though she had been struck across the face but Ron had shrugged and said he had wondered when Harry was going to use that against them. Hermione had tried several times to force the information out of
Harry, who, fed up, said that she could hardly demand private information from him since he and Ron didn’t even know who her parents’ first names were. Hermione fell silent after that, still refusing to even give up that information because reading two hundred and sixty-three different fanfics all with different names and things is just so much more entertaining than just fucking telling us what they are already, COME ON, POTTERMORE, WHAT THE BALLS.

_A/N: I love how the more Pottermore gives us the more questions I have. Just like canon. HOORAY!_

*Review or Fileh will drop-kick you across the castle.*
A/N: So back when the parody of CoS, or maybe even PS/SS, was happening, me and Andy Elladora Black PMed each other back and forth about what could've happened to Sally-Anne Perks, the girl who was alphabetically between Harry and the Patil twins at the Sorting who mysteriously vanished for the rest of the series. She ended up writing a rather good and very funny oneshot about her theory, which I promised I would promote and advertise and things. And then I never did. I feel like such utter crap and I hope she forgives me for only being reminded of it when the distinct lack of Sally-Anne appeared once again in the narrative. But seriously, go check out "What Truly Happened to Sally-Anne," it is totally worth it.

Disclaimer: Getting less and less creative with the disclaimers as time goes on, I've noticed, but yeah, took stuff from Silent Hill 2, Firefly, Attack on Titan, Farscape, Rifftrax, DBZ Abridged, and a series of books that we probably all got made fun of for liking in grade school before everyone else jumped on the hype train. Or we just went to different secondary schools and colleges and things and never saw each other again so they couldn't make fun of us anymore, I could also see that happening. In fact I'm pretty sure that's what happened to me at least. SHRUG-FACE.

"And they're off!" said Lee. "And Davies takes the Quaffle immediately, Ravenclaw Captain Davies with the Quaffle, he dodges Johnson, he dodges Bell, he dodges Spinnet as well…He's going straight for goal! He's going to shoot — and — and —" Lee swore very loudly and McGonagall didn't cut him off at all, which was weird. "And he's scored."

"Oh Hagrid, why on earth didn't you let him go back!" said Hermione, flopping down onto a ripped-up tree and burying her face in her hands. "What do you think you're going to do with a violent giant who doesn't even want to be here!"

"What do yeh think yer goin' ter do with a bunch o' free house-elves who don' even want ter be free?!" Hagrid shot back easily.

"That's completely different!" Hermione cried. "House-elves are completely harmless!"

"Which is why Dobby made a Bludger fly into my arm, sent Lucius Malfoy flying down a flight of stairs, and made a chandelier nearly fall on you and Bellatrix," said Harry flatly, "and also why Kreacher will help cause Sirius's death and will beat Mundungus about the head with a saucepan. Size is no guarantee of power or violence, Hermione."

"Why do I get the feeling that JKR really just added this for the sake of some commentary on domestic abuse," said Hermione miserably.

"What — what does looking after Grawp involve, exactly?" Hermione inquired.

"Not food or anythin'!" said Hagrid eagerly. "He can get his own food, no problem. Birds an' deer an' stuff…Don' really know how anythin' short of several centaurs per meal'll be able ter sate him, nor do I rightly know how he'll be able ter get ter anythin' since the entire forest around his immediate area seems deserted…"
The castle grounds were gleaming in the sunlight as though freshly painted; the cloudless sky smiled at itself in the smoothly sparkling lake, the satin-green lawns rippled occasionally in a gentle breeze: June had arrived, but to the fifth years this meant only one thing: Their O.W.L.s were upon them at last, and every single reader that was still hopelessly trapped within the educational system cried in despair. They read these books to escape their everyday lives filled with homework and tests, and even those who had long since left school were sometimes made to have horrible flashbacks with this very section. WHERE’S THE PART WHERE WIZARDS ARE KILLING EACH OTHER. WE DEMAND BLOOD.

There was a SALLY-ANNE PERKS here. She’s gone now.

Okay, if fifth years already know Color-Changing Charms, why is it necessary to have them learn how to change their eyebrows different colors in Transfiguration?

Harry forgot the definition of a Switching Spell during his written exam next morning, but thought his practical could have been a lot worse. At least he managed to vanish the whole of his iguana, whereas poor Hannah Abbott, who stayed long after everyone else in her group had finished apparently since it's a long way from A to P unless the Transfiguration practical was held differently from the Charms one somehow, lost her head completely at the next table and somehow managed to multiply her ferret into a flock of flamingoes, causing the examination to be halted for ten minutes while the birds were captured and carried out of the hall instead of being vanished themselves by the very examiners who were currently grading the students on their Transfiguration skills. Nice.

Oh good, thanks for this refresher of the surname of everyone in Gryffindor, I'd forgotten, you see.

"But…Harry, think about this," said Hermione, taking a step toward him, "it's five o'clock in the afternoon…the Ministry of Magic must be full of workers…considering we actually manage to get there less than two hours from now probably ish there is no conceivable way there won't be anyone there, that would just be the most messed up and inconceivable thing in existence…How would Voldemort and Sirius or any of his heavily dressed-up Death Eaters have got in without being seen short of very specifically directed unauthorized Portkeys, stolen Time-Turners, human Transfiguration, Invisibility Cloaks, Polyjuice Potion, Dissilusionment Charms, possibly flat-out Apparition, or many other methods that probably exist that we're just not aware of as of yet since we're both so new to this glorious world of magic where nearly anything is possible? Harry…they're probably the two most wanted wizards in the world aside from the fact that since everyone's in such denial that Voldemort's even back there's a large chance that they don't even know precisely what he looks like nowadays…You think they could get into a building full of Aurors undetected?"

"Easily," said Harry and Ron in unison, with Harry adding, "How much have we complained about the entire Ministry being super incompetent at all times?"

"And also we'll be able to do just that less than two years from now with some measure of ease as
well, and we're not nearly as good as Sirius or You-Know-Who,” Ron continued. "Well, you might be, but Harry and I certainly aren't."

"Damn right about that," grumbled Hermione. I almost wrote Grumbledore just there. Insert Michael Gambon joke here.

"How d'you explain Ron's dad then, what was all that about, how come I knew what had happened to him?"

"He's got a point," said Ron quietly, looking at Hermione.

"But this is just — just so unlikely!" said Hermione desperately.

"Just like how the Chamber of Secrets's existence was absolutely impossible, something you had zero problem believing in three years ago!" Harry yelled at her. "And just like how the son of a couple of Death Eaters following in his parents' footsteps would just be so impossible, not to mention all the crap about the Hallows…"

"Look, I'm sorry," cried Hermione, "but neither of you are making any sense, and we've got no proof for any of this, no proof Voldemort and Sirius are even there—"

"Hermione, Harry's seen them!" said Ron, rounding on her. "And you never needed proof for believing Harry about You-Know-Who before, so what's your problem this time?"

"It's because she doesn't care what happens to Sirius," Harry spat angrily. "She thinks he deserves whatever Voldemort does to him."

"Wha—no I don't! How dare you accuse me of that!" cried Hermione, tears in her eyes. "I care about Sirius just as much as you do—"

"Then why are you arguing with me instead of helping me brainstorm a way to get to the Ministry? Why have you been increasingly distrusting and hateful toward him as this school year goes on?!"

"Because I think he's not in a good place right now to be offering us sound advice!" Hermione defended.

"No," said Harry fiercely. "It's because of Kreacher. News flash: We haven't been treating him the best either, do you want us dead too?"

"NO! I don't want any of you dead!"

"Well I just saw Voldemort about to kill Sirius; he's busy torturing him as we speak. If you don't want him dead, how 'bout shutting up and HELPING ME."

"Okay," she said, looking frightened but determined. "I've just got to say this…"

"What?"

"You…This isn't a criticism, Harry! But you do…sort of…I mean — don't you think you've got a bit of a — a — saving-people-thing?" she said.

He glared at her. "And what's that supposed to mean, a 'saving-people-thing'?"
"Well...you..." She looked more apprehensive than ever. "I mean...last year, for instance...in the lake...during the Tournament...you shouldn't have...I mean, you didn't need to save that little Delacour girl...You got a bit...carried away..."

A wave of hot, prickly anger swept Harry's body.

"I. THOUGHT. EVERYONE. WAS GOING. TO FUCKING. DROWN!" Harry exploded. "HOW CAN YOU BLAME ME FOR WANTING TO PREVENT PEOPLE FROM FUCKING DYING?!"

"But none of us were going to die, Harry, you should've just trusted in Dumbledore—"

"HOW MANY TIMES ARE WE GOING TO REPEAT HIS VERY LONG LIST OF FUCK-UPS WITHIN THE SAME DAMN PARODY SERIES! THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO WAY OF KNOWING THAT ANY OF YOU WERE SAFE!"

"Well...you still didn't have to—"

"If I didn't save her," Harry spat out through gritted teeth, trying in vain to calm down even the slightest bit if only to get his point across, "I wouldn't have been able to live with myself, knowing that I could have done something and still did nothing. Also, I'm sorry, Snape, but I do not do this just to sate my own ego! For the final time, I legitimately thought everyone was going to die. Just like I legitimately think Sirius is going to die now, I'm not trying to save him just for the sake of saving him, I'm trying to save him BECAUSE HE'S MY FUCKING GODFATHER. HOW DO YOU NOT GET THIS. If it were your parents that Voldemort was torturing, you'd just leave them to suffer horribly and die by his hand without doing a damn thing to save them, would you?!"

"No, no, no!" said Hermione, looking aghast. "That's not what I mean at all!"

"Well, spit out what you've got to say, because I haven't got time for this Mickey Mouse bullshit!" Harry shouted.

"I'm trying to say — Voldemort knows you, Harry! He took Ginny down into the Chamber of Secrets to lure you there, it's the kind of thing he does, he knows you're the — the sort person who'd go to Sirius's aid!"

"No he doesn't," said Harry, "his diary memory didn't transfer to him when I destroyed the diary, it was destroyed along with the physical object, Voldemort has absolutely no way of knowing about what happened with Ginny aside from what little Lucius would've been able to tell him!"

________________________________________

"Sirius told you there was nothing more important than you learning to close your mind!"

"LUPIN TOLD ME THAT, AND THERE IS NO WAY I WOULD HAVE REPEATED THOSE WORDS VERBATIM TO YOU IN ANY CASE! QUIT SPYING ON ME, DEVIL WOMAN!"

________________________________________

"Harry, I'm begging you, please!" said Hermione desperately. "Please let's just check that Sirius isn't at home before we go charging off to London — if we find out he's not there then I swear I won't try and stop you, I'll come, I'll d-do whatever it takes to try and save him—"

"Sirius is being tortured NOW!" shouted Harry. "We haven't got time to waste—"
"But if this is a trick of V-Voldemort's — Harry, we've got to check, we've got to—"

"Fine, we'll go up to Gryffindor Tower and I'll check the mirror Sirius gave me," said Harry furiously, "and when he doesn't answer, you will help me come up with a way to get us to the Ministry."

"You had a way of talking to Sirius and the rest of the Order?" said Ginny. "Kept that pretty private, did you, why didn't you just use that instead of making Fred and George create that diversion?"

"Forgot I had it till Sirius reminded me," said Harry, brushing past her.

"Are Ravenclaws allowed in Gryffindor Tower?" asked Ron as they followed Harry out of the deserted classroom and up the stairs.

"They are now," said Luna uncaringly.

Once they got up to the Fat Lady, everyone was so busy celebrating the end of exams that they didn't even notice the decidedly non-Gryffindor in their midst and Harry was able to duck and weave his way up the spiral staircase to his and Ron's dorm room, where he immediately sped to his trunk and ripped out the mirror, Ron, Hermione, Ginny, and Luna all looking over his shoulder curiously.

"Sirius Black!" Harry said firmly.

"Hey, Harry, what's up?" asked Sirius two seconds later, his chin showing spots of blood on it.

"What happened?" Harry asked immediately. "How did you get away from Voldemort?"

"...I didn't?" said Sirius slowly.

"...But I just had a vision of you being tortured by Voldemort, though."

"Did you ever go back to Snape?" Sirius asked reproachfully.

"Did Lupin?" Harry shot back.

"He said he did, but admittedly neither of us were hoping for much," Sirius confessed, shrugging. "Remus even went right to Dumbledore but I don't think Snape listened very well."

"So...He planted a fake vision in my head?"

"Looks that way."

"Then what's with the blood?"

"Buckbeak got injured somehow, I'm in the process of patching him up. Tonks is helping, even, say hi, Tonks."

"Hi Tonks!" came Tonks's voice from somewhere behind Sirius.

"Hey!" cried everyone, smiling.

"Ginny, Ron, Hermione, and Luna say hi too!" said Ginny, grinning.

"Who's Luna?" Sirius demanded swiftly, frowning, and Tonks put her face near the mirror to see better as well.
"Hello, Stubby Boardman, it's nice to meet you," said Luna, bowing deeply. "My name's Luna Lovegood, my father's the editor of the magazine that's trying to prove that you're innocent."

"...I like her," said Sirius, grinning at Luna while Tonks fell out of frame she was laughing so hard.

"So would now be a good time to tell you I told you so?" asked Hermione, smirking down at Harry.

"...Kreacher could've eventually found out about this and hid it or broken it so we still wouldn't be able to contact him," argued Harry.

"So would now be a good time to tell you I told you so?" Hermione repeated sweetly.

"Yes," said Harry wearily, "please lord this over my head for...eh, let's do a week."

"Seriously?" cried Hermione excitedly, jumping up and down and clapping her hands together.

"Enh, exams are over, my godfather's not being horribly tortured by the guy that killed my parents... What can I say? I'm in a good mood."

"YAYZ."

"You can check whether Sirius is at home or not while I keep watch, I don't think you should be in there alone, Lee's already proved the window's a weak spot, sending those nifflers through it, which might actually be a better idea to try and enter through there since no one ever considers windows to be decent places to try and enter so there's no way Umbridge would've thought of it either as she's not that bright..."

Maybe grabbing the Map so Hermione could've kept a better look-out would've been advisable, but that would've made things too easy and would've been intelligent, can't have that from Harry.

The garish kittens were basking in the late afternoon sunshine warming their plates, but otherwise the office was as still and empty as last time. Hermione breathed a sigh of relief.

"I thought she might have added extra security after the second niffler...After all, there's no way wizards would have come up with some magical version of a silent alarm or any other way of notifying someone that a place had been broken into where the perpetrators would be able to be caught without any warning themselves..."

They pulled off the cloak, even though Hermione probably should've left it on while she kept a lookout so she could stop Umbridge or the Inquisitorial Squad from behind easily when they showed up...Come to think of it, where'd the cloak even go during this whole scene, you'd think one of the Inquisitorial Squad would've immediately stolen it or something, and Harry would've been in no condition to try to retrieve it from either the office or the Slytherin who stole it after the events of that night; did Neville, Ginny, and Luna go on a side quest to get it back in an epic fashion that only they could've pulled off? What happened to that chapter?!

Harry dashed over to the fireplace, seized the pot of Floo powder, and threw a pinch into the grate,
causing emerald flames to burst into life there. He stepped into the dancing fire, and cried, "Number twelve, Grimmauld Place!"

He began to spin rapidly through the flames. He kept his eyes screwed up against the whirling ash, and when the spinning stopped, he opened them to find himself falling face-first into the kitchen of Grimmauld Place.

There was nobody there. He had expected this, yet was not prepared for the molten wave of dread and panic that seemed to burst through his stomach floor at the sight of the deserted room.

"Sirius?" he shouted, walking further into the room. "Sirius, are you there?"

His voice echoed around the room as he began walking up the stairs.

"Sirius?" he bellowed once again, completely uncaring that he had woken up Mrs. Black; with any luck, her constant shouting of "MUDBLOODS! BLOOD-TRAITORS! MUTANTS!" would bring Sirius running faster than his own shouting could as he ran up the stairs. Sure enough, he had barely reached the second landing when he nearly ran into Sirius and Tonks coming downstairs themselves.

"Sirius!" Harry cried over Mrs. Black's carrying voice, rushing forward and throwing himself at a very startled Sirius. "I thought Voldemort had you!"

"What?" said Sirius sharply, pushing Harry away and holding him at arms length. "Why'd you think that? What're you even doing here?"

"Making sure I was right," said Harry, "Hermione wouldn't help me mount a rescue mission unless I made sure my vision was real. Guess I really was wrong…Why're you and Tonks covered in blood?"

"Buckbeak's injured himself somehow," replied Tonks, still staring at Harry wonderingly. "I was helping Sirius bandage him up."

"How'd you even get here?" asked Sirius, gripping Harry's shoulders tightly.

"Umbridge's Floo isn't monitored," Harry replied.

"So — wait — Voldemort sent you a false vision?"

"Yeah — he was torturing you in the Department of Mysteries, I'm pretty sure."

Sirius's eyes widened and he hurriedly exchanged looks with Tonks, who nodded at him and went past Harry down the stairs herself, nearly falling down the last of them in her haste towards the door.

"…Sirius, what's going on," said Harry.

"We were kind of afraid this might happen eventually," Sirius admitted.

"…And you didn't tell me because…?"

"Thought it might make it easier for him to break into your mind if you were terrified it was actually going to happen."

"You mean like I was over the Christmas holidays?"

"Yeah, screwed that one up, I admit it, I was just too excited to actually have people in the house again…"
"Okay, fair enough…Crap! I need to get back, I was only assured of five minutes!"

"Okay, get over here, you," said Sirius, pulling Harry into a quick hug once more. "Tell the others I said hi…and thanks for checking up on me."

"Wish I could do it more often," said Harry softly, pulling back.

"Me too, little one," said Sirius affectionately, ruffling Harry's hair a little bit. "Me too."

Harry smiled at him one last time, then bolted back to the kitchen where he saw Kreacher beating his head against a chair over and over for some reason. Giving him an odd look, Harry grabbed Sirius's stash of Floo Powder off the mantle and threw some into the grate, shouting, "Professor Umbridge's office, Hogwarts!"

One spinny, soot-filled ride later, Harry found himself being dragged up by Umbridge herself, demanding answers and crap, but Harry found himself grinning too widely to care, which gave Ron and Ginny a profound sense of relief, Hermione a profound sense of intellectual superiority, Neville a profound sense of confusion, and Luna a profound sense of hunger as she hoped there might be pudding at dinner that night.

Harry had no idea what Hermione was planning, or even whether she had a plan. He walked half a pace behind her as they headed down the corridor outside Umridge's office, knowing it would look very suspicious if he appeared not to know where they were going. He did not dare attempt to talk to her; Umbridge was walking so closely behind them that he could hear her ragged breathing.

So he swiftly spun around, grabbed the wand smoothly out of her hand, punched her in the throat, and Stunned her for good measure; then he and Hermione ran back to Umbridge's office to free the others. HOW AWESOME WOULD THAT HAVE BEEN.

Behind them, Umbridge tripped over a fallen sapling. Neither of them paused to help her up again; Hermione merely strode on, calling loudly over her shoulder, "It's a bit further in!"

"Hermione, we should totally circle around in opposite directions and just leave her here," Harry muttered, hurrying to catch up with her. "There's two of us, she can't follow us both, and if one of us manages to get back up to the castle…"

"That is a way better idea than the one I had," she answered quietly, an approving look on her face as Umbridge jogged noisily after them.

"Okay, on three," said Harry, picking up the pace. "THREE!"

Harry went left and Hermione broke off to the right, running as fast as they could while Umbridge shrieked after them. A spell grazed one of the trees Harry was running past, but he soon left her far behind and nearly ran into Hermione in the darkness; they soon met up with Ron and the others and headed off to the Ministry on thestrals, leaving Umbridge crying alone in the forest. And it was glorious.

"What are you doing in our forest?" bellowed the hard-faced gray centaur whom Harry and Hermione had seen on their last trip into the forest. "Why are you here?"
"Your forest?" said Umbridge, shaking now not only with fright but also, it seemed, with indignation. "I would remind you that you live here only because the Ministry of Magic permits creatures with massive hooves that can easily kick one's head in and kill one instantly certain areas of land—"

An arrow flew right between her eyes and she fell over, dead. Harry and Hermione immediately began to worship the centaurs as their new gods.

"Please," said Hermione breathlessly, "please, don't attack us, we don't think like her, we aren't Ministry of Magic employees! We only came here because we hoped you'd drive her off for us—"

Harry knew at once from the look on the face of the gray centaur holding Hermione that she had made a terrible mistake in saying this. The gray centaur threw back his head, his back legs stamping furiously, and bellowed, "Did you really not expect that we would be offended by you clearly stating that you were using us flat-out like that?!"

"No!" said Hermione in a horrorstruck squeak. "Please — I didn't mean that! I just…I just figured you'd want revenge on someone who only let you have this miniscule portion of land to live on, so you could make an example of her for other humans who look down on you so you can prove that it should clearly be the other way around!"

"…See, now that we can get behind," said Bane approvingly.

"Question!" asked a white-bodied centaur in the back. "Why are none of us female, or at least the ones who show ourselves to the kids? Is it because our females are repressed in our society or because JKR didn't want to describe boobs in what is still technically considered a children's series?"

While the centaurs pondered this question, Hermione turned to Harry.

"You know," she said matter-of-factly, "mythological representations of centaurs indicate that they are a sort of illustration of the more 'savage' instincts of humans. That's why so many are depicted as rapists."

"…So—" Harry began, staring, horrified, at Hermione.

"Yeah, let's not go there," said Hermione, a closed expression on her face indicating that she was trying not to think about what she may have just done, especially when she was looking so triumphant before.

"Yeah…" said Harry slowly, resolving to reevaluate his current circle of friends as soon as possible.

A bearded centaur toward the back of the crowd shouted, "They came here unasked, they must pay the consequences!"

A roar of approval met these words and a dun-colored centaur shouted, "They can join the woman!"

"Oh dear God," whimpered Harry and Hermione in unison, shitting themselves simultaneously.

…I picked a bad time to start watching Attack on Titan. O.O
"So," said Ron, pushing aside a low-hanging branch and holding out Harry's wand, "any ideas on how to get to London?"

"Well," said Harry slowly, "since the Inquisitorial Squad is now out of commission, we could always run back up to Umbridge's office and using the only fireplace that's not being monitored to Floo directly into the atrium in record time so we can get down to the Department of Mysteries almost as quickly as Apparating there would take, meaning instantaneously for the most part."

"That's just silly," said Luna, "we should fly their instead!"

"I LOVE YOU."

Harry's eyes met Ron's. He knew that Ron was thinking exactly what he was: If he could have chosen any members of the D.A. in addition to himself, Ron, and Hermione to join him in the attempt to rescue Sirius, he would not have picked the one who just proved herself with her amazing Bat-Bogey Hex, the second fastest-learning student in the entire D.A. after Hermione, or the one who just came up with the perfect plan to get them to London short of going back to Umbridge's fireplace and could therefore probably do some quick thinking on the battlefield as well.

"Oh, more thestrals will come," said Ginny confidently, who like Ron was squinting in quite the wrong direction, apparently under the impression that she was looking at the horses.

"What makes you think that?"

"Because in case you hadn't noticed, you and Hermione are both covered in blood," she said coolly, "and we know Hagrid lures thestrals with raw meat, which I totally know because I'm totally also taking Care of Magical Creatures apparently and Hagrid showed his fourth years exactly the same thing he showed his fifth years because that just makes perfect sense."

"This is bizarre!" Harry heard Ron yell from somewhere behind him, and he imagined how it must feel to be speeding along at this height with no visible means of support…which is the exact effect that the Invisibility Booster gave the flying Ford Anglia over three years ago so why is Ron treating this like a new thing and why does Harry not immediately understand exactly what Ron, Hermione, and Ginny are all going through right now…

Okay, seriously, how is the entire Ministry of Magic deserted. And if Voldemort can just do that whenever he wants apparently and send a dozen of his dudes in completely undetected, why couldn't he just have set this up way earlier in the year at any time and gotten the prophecy himself. What if Harry hadn't even been able to get out of the castle, Lucius must know from Draco and all his trips to the Ministry how hard it is to get out of Hogwart these days! This whole thing is dumber than the convoluted as shit plan to get Harry to the frelling graveyard the previous year!

"Department of Mysteries," said the cool female voice. "Also hardware, ladies' lingerie, and blatant traps for idiot children."
"Okay, listen," said Harry, stopping again within six feet of the door. "Maybe...maybe a couple of people should stay here as a — as a lookout, and—"

"And how're we going to let you know something's coming?" asked Ginny, her eyebrows raised. "You could be miles away."

"Do you have your D.A. coins on you?" asked Hermione.

"Yeah, why?"

"Well there you are then."

"I don't — Ohhhh, okay."

"Can't anyone else hear it?" Harry demanded, for the whispering and murmuring was becoming louder; without really meaning to put it there, he found his foot was on the dais.

"Not another bloody basilisk," Ron grumbled, "though I suppose it could just be any normal snake... Shit, is You-Know-Who's snake here with us, then?" he added in a panicked voice, his lit wand jerking around wildly as he hurriedly scanned the surrounding area.

"I can hear them too," said Luna, joining them around the side of the archway and gazing at the swaying veil.

"Oh, are you a Parselmouth as well, Luna?" asked Ron curiously, one eye still on the lookout for any potential serpents.

"No, I just hear voices," said Luna smoothly. "There are people in there!" she went on, seemingly mesmerized at the fluttering veil.

"What do you mean 'in there'?" demanded Hermione, jumping down from the bottom step and sounding much angrier than the occasion warranted. "There isn't anyone 'in there,' it's just an archway, there's no room for anybody to be there even though we live in a world where single-person tents can comfortably host ten people with room to spare and there are bound to be far more things that are beyond our understanding as we're in the bloody Department of fucking Mysteries so that's practically the definition of what this department is supposed to contain, that being a load of stuff that we cannot possibly comprehend; however, I am really uncomfortable with the fact that I cannot understand a single damn thing about this room and therefore want to leave. NOW."

"Shiny pretty..." said Harry and Luna together.

"Why aren't you two a thing," said Ron, deadpan.

"He should be near here," whispered Harry, convinced that every step was going to bring the ragged form of Sirius into view upon the darkened floor. "Anywere here...really close..."

"Harry?" said Hermione tentatively, but he did not want to respond. His mouth was very dry now.

"Somewhere about...here..." he said.

They had reached the end of the row and emerged into more dim candlelight. There was nobody there at all. All was echoing, dusty silence.
"Now," said Harry, in a slightly stronger voice. "He should be right here. Riiight here. Where the hell is he. He couldn't have gone anywhere. All right. I'm going to close my eyes. When I open them up, he's going to be right here he's not here. Why isn't he here."

"…So would this be a bad time to say I—"

"One more word, Hermione, and I will take your right arm and right leg and make a charming pasta salad."

"Aww…"
A/N: ...Okay so I flat-out forgot to post this yesterday. No excuses except poor memory. Nyang. Y'all can tar and feather me any time ya like.

Disclaimer: Random lines were taken from Rifftrax, Code MENT, Clue, and Doctor Who, and then I paraphrased an entire monologue from Attack on Titan. And all of this is based on some random book series that really likes to kill puppies, just like every other book I had to read in school. Except I read Harry Potter by choice for some reason. Think it might be 'cause it's okay or something, Iunno. Oh and the title of the chapter comes from Cowboy Bebop. Because yes.

The woman who had mimicked Harry let out a raucous scream of laughter.

"You hear him? You hear him? Giving instructions to the other children as though he thinks of fighting us!"

"Oh, you don't know Potter as I do, Bellatrix," said Malfoy softly. "He does have a tendency to overcome every obstacle every time, so he probably just thinks we're more of the same old shit and therefore believes that he can take us easily."

"Well then," said the female Death Eater laughingly, "let's all throw Stunners at them until they break through their shields until they're all unconscious and grab the prophecy and leave immediately in order to prove them wrong and teach potty wee Potter a lesson in humility! Or, as we can be reasonably sure even at this point that the Dark Lord still wants to kill Potter himself even though we could easily do it right here and now, why not just kill the other five children outright so we don't even have to put up with their cute widdle Shield Charms at all since avada kedavra has no way of being blocked, crucio the baby Potter until he drops the prophecy, Stun him for good measure, bring both him and the shiny ball thing to the Dark Lord, get immensely rewarded until the end of time for not only delivering the information he's craved all year but also handing him his most reviled enemy on a silver platter, and not chase all of the children throughout the entire Department of Mysteries throwing benign spells at them resulting in the incarceration of most of us with the Dark Lord being massively disappointed in us forever or at least until he painfully kills us very very slowly?"

"My, my," said Malfoy condescendingly, "Azkaban must have altered your brain even more than we'd originally thought, what with you spouting such inane crap like that. You poor, poor thing."

"...I cannot wait for you to no longer be in the Dark Lord's favor."

"Also there's the vague possibility that the boy might have to physically hand it to one of us, I'm not too sure how this works."

"...Okay, I'll give you that one."

"Why?" Malfoy sounded increduously delighted. "Because the only people who are permitted to retrieve a prophecy from the Department of Mysteries, Potter, are those about whom it was made, which must make Unspeakables' jobs rather difficult but whatever, it doesn't matter how shit's actually supposed to work in this secret society."

"..."
"Someone made a prophecy about Voldemort and me?" Harry said quietly, gazing at Lucius Malfoy, his fingers tightening over the warm glass sphere in his fingers. Imagine the giggle-fest that would've ensued if the narrative said 'ball' instead of 'sphere.' It was hardly larger than a Snitch and still gritty with dust. "And he's made me come and get it for him? Why couldn't he come and get himself?"

"Get it himself?" shrieked Bellatrix on a cackle of mad laughter. I have no idea what that sentence means. "The Dark Lord, walk into the Ministry of Magic, when they are so sweetly ignoring his return? The Dark Lord, reveal himself to the Aurors, when at the moment they are wasting their time on my dear cousin?"

"Well, he could've used Polyjuice Potion," said Harry, nodding in Malfoy's general direction. "Dress himself up as Mr. Malfoy here, he's nearly always in the Ministry for some reason or other."

"Even I am not permitted to enter a department that I have no reason to be in," said Malfoy smoothly, so smoothly that Harry was sure he was covering up the fact that Voldemort probably hadn't thought of that scenario.

"Which is when he would use an Invisibility Cloak or a Dissilusionemnt Charm," said Harry patiently, as if he was explaining something to a small child.

"Or he could've used a Portkey or human transfiguration or many, many other methods of concealment that we haven't yet learned about," said Hermione.

"BE QUIET, MUDBLOOD!" shouted Bellatrix, pointing her wand wildly at Hermione.

"Meep."

"And you know," Ginny started to say slowly, "He really could've come right into the Ministry at any time he wanted to with absolutely no reason to worry about any Aurors whatsoever, seeing as the entire Ministry seems to be completely deserted even as we speak, which I assume was for the sake of Harry getting down here unimpeded, and also presumably so you lot could sneak down here in order to ambush him and retrieve this ball thing you're all obsessed over."

"Heh heh, balls," Luna giggled to herself.

"Hey yeah," said Ron, "how did you manage to get everyone to just stop working in a government building like this that usually has at least one poor bastard working overtime for the good of the nation and get everyone to go home en masse like this, anyway?"

"…I LIKE MOO COW," cried Bellatrix while the rest of the Death Eaters shifted uncomfortably.

"OH EM GEE, LYKE ME TOO!" yelled Luna, smiling brightly and clapping her hands together while bouncing on the balls of her feet.

"…Well this is going well," Neville commented idly.

BOY is it lucky that none of the kids had to answer for fucking up the Department of Mysteries and that presumably all blame was laid upon the shoulders of the Death Eaters; all the damage the kids may have caused could've been chalked up to self-defense instead of all of them being charged for massive damage to government property. Especially Neville…His grandmother probably wouldn't be so proud of him if she'd found out he was the one who broke all the Time-Turners the department
The Death Eater had pulled his head out of the bell jar. His appearance was utterly bizarre, his tiny baby's head bawling loudly while his thick arms flailed dangerously in all directions, narrowly missing Harry, who ducked. Harry raised his wand but to his amazement Hermione seized his arm.

"You can't hurt a baby!"

"...Well then, can I do the magical equivalent of sedating him so he's temporarily no longer a danger to himself and others?"

"...Fine, I guess."

"Thank you. Stupefy."

What's the betting that that purple slash fire spell thing was how Dolohov killed Remus. T_T

But before they could make a decision as to which way to try, a door to their right sprang open and three people fell out of it.

"Ron!" croaked Harry, dashing toward them. "Ginny — Luna — How narratively convenient that we've all wound up at the same place!"

They also probably should've Stunned Ron for his own protection, to be honest...

People die from falling down shorter flights of wooden stairs than this amphitheater place thing with stone tiers! How the balls did Harry manage to keep his limbs intact, let alone the prophecy?!

"You are not in a position to bargain, Potter," said Lucius Malfoy, his pale face flushed with pleasure. And suddenly the real fanfiction begins in earnest. "You see, there are ten of us and only one of you...or hasn't Dumbledore ever taught you how to count?"

"He has not," Harry admitted, "and there's also no math classes of any kind at Hogwarts aside from that one advanced calculus-type class that's an elective that I chose not to take, so frankly, I doubt your son would've done much better. Hell, I'm surprised you managed to count that high, you didn't even have the benefit of Muggle primary schools, there's no way your private tutors covered things you'd never use again, because the Wizarding World's almost entirely focused solely on things that're actually useful, like making teacups have legs and dance around and shit."

"To answer your question on how I managed to count that high," said Malfoy, sounding slightly proud of himself, "unlike that infernal Pettigrew, I am in full possession of every single one of my fingers."

"Oooh, and does that help?" asked Harry curiously.
"Oh, immensely."

"Cool beans, yo."

Then, high above them, two more doors burst open and five more people sprinted into the room: Sirius, Lupin, Moody, Tonks, and Kingsley.

"To the Death Eaters who attempted to murder small children and destroyed half the Department of Mysteries in order to accomplish the murders of said small children," Tonks announced in a carrying voice, nearly tripping over the first tier as she sent a Stunning Spell right at Malfoy, "you are under arrest. We are ninety-three percent sure that that is illegal."

How does Harry not know *finite incantatem* by this point.

…Jesus Christ, I just teared up again reading this bullshit, IT'S BEEN MORE THAN TEN YEARS, WHAT THE FUCK, HE'S NOT EVEN A REAL FUCKING PERSON. DX

There was a loud bang and a yell from behind the dais. Harry saw Kingsley, yelling in pain, hit the ground. Bellatrix Lestrange turned tail and ran as Dumbledore whipped around. He aimed a spell at her but she deflected it. She was halfway up the steps now—

"Harry — no!" cried Lupin, but Harry had already ripped his arm from Lupin's slackened grip.

"SHE KILLED SIRIUS!" bellowed Harry. "SHE KILLED HIM — STUPEFY!"

The Stunning Spell hit Bellatrix in the small of the back and she collapsed, falling face-first into the stone tier in front of her. Harry scrambled up the stone steps until he reached her and began kicking her still form over and over again, shouting and screaming until Lupin dragged him away once again.

~*~*~That's how it could have happened. But how about this?~*~*~

There was a loud bang and a yell from behind the dais. Harry saw Kingsley, yelling in pain, hit the ground. Bellatrix Lestrange turned tail and ran as Dumbledore whipped around. He aimed a spell at her but she deflected it. She was halfway up the steps now—

"Harry — no!" cried Lupin, but Harry had already ripped his arm from Lupin's slackened grip.

"SHE KILLED SIRIUS!" bellowed Harry. "SHE KILLED HIM — I'LL KILL HER!"

And he was off, scrambling up the stone benches. People were shouting behind him but he did not care. The hem of Bellatrix's robes whipped out of sight ahead—

A cry of "Stupefy!" in Lupin's voice was the last thing Harry heard before his vision faded to black.

~*~*~But here's what really happened.~*~*~

There was a loud bang and a yell from behind the dais. Harry saw Kingsley, yelling in pain, hit the ground. Bellatrix Lestrange turned tail and ran as Dumbledore whipped around. He aimed a spell at
her but she deflected it. She was halfway up the steps now—

"Harry — no!" cried Lupin, but Harry had already ripped his arm from Lupin's slackened grip.

"SHE KILLED SIRIUS!" bellowed Harry. "SHE KILLED HIM — I'LL KILL HER!"

And he was off, scrambling up the stone benches. He didn't get very far, however, as Lupin had instantly gotten up behind him and chased after him, wrapping his arms once more around Harry's chest and pulling him back down to where Neville was still sitting. Eventually Harry stopped struggling in Lupin's grasp and collapsed, sobbing, into Lupin's chest, while Lupin rubbed his back and muttered, "I'm so sorry," over and over.

Oh good, Ron fought off the brain, that's nice for him.

"Never used an Unforgivable Curse before, have you, boy?" Bellatrix yelled. She had abandoned her baby voice now. "You need to mean them, Potter! You need to really cause pain — to enjoy it — to actually make sense with your rage, to not cock it up after someone you loved as a parent has just died and yet perfectly pull it off when one of my mates spits at a teacher you're vaguely fond of at best—"

"Potter, you cannot win against me!" Bellatrix cried. Harry could hear her moving to the right, trying to get a clear shot of him. He backed around the statue away from her, crouching behind the centaur's legs, his head level with the house-elf's. "I was and am the Dark Lord's most loyal servant, I learned the Dark Arts from him, and I know spells of such power that you, pathetic little boy, can never hope to compete with, spells that I should probably try using on you right now or at least at some point in the septology instead of spouting out the same old spells we always see in every book so I'm not just blowing smoke out of my arse—"

"Stupefy!" yelled Harry.

"Potter, I am going to give you one chance!" shouted Bellatrix. "Give me the prophecy — roll it out toward me now — and I may spare your life!"

"Well, you're going to have to kill me, because it's gone!" Harry roared — and as he shouted it, pain seared across his forehead. His scar was on fire again, and he felt a surge of fury that was quite unconnected with his own rage. "And he knows!" said Harry with a mad laugh to match Bellatrix's own. "I'm not sure how, but your dear old mate Voldemort knows it's gone! He's not going to be happy with you, is he?"

"What? What do you mean?" she cried, and for the first time there was fear in her voice. "How could he have heard you? Is he in your head all the time the way you keep getting into his? If so, why isn't your scar burning whenever he does that, isn't that how it works? Also WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT,"

"The prophecy smashed when I was trying to get Neville up the steps! Why d'you suppose Voldemort didn't know about it back then at the moment when it actually happened but is only finding out now because I physically said it out loud, eh?"
"I don't know."

"Thanks so much for all your help, it's really appreciated."

________________________________________

"Don't waste your breath!" yelled Harry, his eyes screwed up against the pain in his scar, now more terrible than ever. "He can't hear you from here!"

"Can't I, Potter?" said a high, cold voice.

Harry opened his eyes.

Tall, thin, and black-hooded, his terrible snakelike face white and gaunt, his scarlet, slit-pupiled eyes staring…Lord Voldemort had appeared in the middle of the hall, his wand pointed at Harry, who stared back at him.

"How'd you get in here?" Harry asked flatly.

"Apparition, Potter," said Voldemort softly, staring at Harry with those pitiless red eyes.

"Okay. Why now?"

"Because my Death Eaters have let Harry Potter thwart me again…"

"Well I wouldn't've had to thwart you again in the first place if you had just come here yourself to get your own hands on the prophecy to begin with, you know," said Harry matter-of-factly over the sounds of Bellatrix groveling and attempting to apologize to Voldemort. "The whole Ministry of Magic's deserted, there isn't even a watch wizard anywhere to be found; if your best Death Eaters were able to sneak in, there is no reason that you, someone who is supposedly far more intelligent and superior to the lot of them, wouldn't have been able to do the same thing."

"Do not question my motives, boy," said Voldemort dangerously, shaking Bellatrix off his leg.

"What, the motives that make the final events of this whole book even more pointless than the rest of it?" said Harry mockingly.

"I WILL MURDER YOUR ARSE!"

"Wanna get on that, then? I look forward to another tug-of-war match between our two wands."

"…Right. Probably should've borrowed another's wand as soon as that first happened…and I would've had two extra years to search for the Elder Wand and everything, especially when everyone was ignoring my continued existence…Merlin's sonic screwdriver, I'm such a bloody idiot…"

"No arguments here," said Harry blithely.

________________________________________

"I have nothing more to say to you, Potter," Voldemort said quietly. "You have irked me too often, for too long. AVADA KEDAVRA!"

Harry had not even opened his mouth to resist. His mind was blank, his wand pointed uselessly at the floor.
He saw a flash of green light, and everything was gone.

~*~*~*~*~*~

He lay face-down, listening to the silence. He was perfectly alone. Nobody was watching. Nobody else was there. He was not perfectly sure that he was there himself.

A long time later, or maybe no time at all, it came to him that he must exist, must be more than disembodied thought, because he was lying, definitely lying, on some surface. Therefore he had a sense of touch, and the thing against which he lay existed too.

Almost as soon as he had reached this conclusion, Harry became conscious that he was naked. Convinced as he was of his total solitude, this did not concern him, but it did intrigue him slightly. He wondered whether, as he could feel, he would be able to see. In opening them, he discovered that he had eyes.

He lay in a bright mist, though it was not like mist he had ever experienced before. His surroundings were not hidden by cloudy vapor; rather the cloudy vapor had not yet formed into surroundings. The floor on which he lay seemed to be white, neither warm nor cold, but simply there, a flat, blank something on which to be.

He sat up. His body appeared unscathed. He touched his face. He was not wearing glasses anymore. He glanced down at the back of his right hand. The skin was completely smooth.

Then a noise reached him through the uniformed nothingness that surrounded him: the small soft thumpings of something that flopped, flailed, and struggled. It was a pitiful noise, yet also slightly indecent. He had the uncomfortable feeling that he was eavesdropping on something furtive, shameful.

For the first time, he wished he were clothed.

Barely had the wish formed in his head than robes appeared a short distance away. He took them and pulled them on: They were soft, clean, and warm. It was extraordinary how they just appeared, just like that, the moment he had wanted them…

He stood up, looking around. Was he in some great Room of Requirement? The longer he looked, the more there was to see. A great domed glass roof glittered high above him in sunlight. Perhaps it was a palace. All was hushed and still, except for those odd thumping and whimpering noises coming from somewhere close by in the mist…

Harry turned slowly on the spot, and his surroundings seemed to invent themselves before his eyes. A wide-open space, bright and clean, a hall larger by far than the Great Hall, with that clear, domed glass ceiling. It was quite empty. He was the only person there, except for—

He recoiled. He had spotted the thing that was making the noises. It had the form of a small, naked child, curled on the ground, its skin raw and rough, flayed-looking, and it lay shuddering under a seat where it had been left, unwanted, stuffed out of sight, struggling for breath.

He was afraid of it Small and fragile and wounded though it was, he did not want to approach it. Nevertheless he drew slowly nearer, ready to jump back at any moment. Soon he stood near enough to touch it, yet he could not bring himself to do it. He felt like a coward. He ought to comfort it, but it repulsed him.

"You can't help it."
He spun around. Sirius Black was walking toward him, wearing clean scarlet robes. He was tall and handsome, and younger by far than Harry had seen him in life. He loped with an easy grace, his hands in his pockets and a grin on his face.

"Sirius?" Harry asked softly as his godfather drew closer to him, hardly daring to breathe. It was only then that he realized he even needed to breathe.

"Hey there, little one," said Sirius brightly, drawing level with him at last.

Harry reached out and was glad to find he could touch him: He gripped his arms tightly as Sirius pulled him into a hug. Harry had no idea how long it lasted, but when they finally pulled apart, Sirius was still grinning down at him, though there was a distinct aura of sadness about him.

"Lupin said you were dead," said Harry at length.

"Yeah," said Sirius, scratching the back of his neck, "I was never overly fond of him usually being right either."

"Then… I'm dead too?"

Sirius shrugged.

"Not really," he replied casually. "In fact, if I'm being honest, I really hope you won't be."

"But I don't want you to be dead, either!"

"I don't have a choice in the matter," said Sirius, miraculously still smiling. "You do. And what sort of godfather would I be if I were to suddenly wish death upon my godson?"

"But… " Harry raised his hand instinctively toward the lightning scar. It did not seem to be there. "But I should have died — I didn't defend myself! I all but let him kill me! Hell, I'm pretty sure I meant to let him kill me in that moment!"

"Which is why you now have this chance," said Sirius.

Happiness seemed to radiate from Sirius like light, like fire. Harry had never seen the man so utterly content.

"C'mon," Sirius said after a short while, "let's walk a little ways."

"But… " Harry turned back to the thumping child behind them.

"There's nothing you can do for it," said Sirius softly, putting a hand on Harry's shoulder and leading him away.

"… It seems wrong to leave it, though," said Harry, "Shouldn't we at least try something?"

"I know how you feel, but I also know that nothing we do can ever help it."

"How can you know that?"

"I… " Sirius abruptly stopped, blinking. "I don't really know how I know, I just know I know." He grinned and looked down at Harry. "You know?"

"No," Harry replied, starting to smile a little himself. He followed as Sirius strode away from where the flayed child lay whimpering, leading him to two seats that Harry had not previously noticed. Set
some distance away under that high, sparkling ceiling. Sirius sat down in one of them, and Harry fell into the other, staring at his godfather's face. His hair was cut short again and was cleaner than Harry had ever seen it, and his eyes had at long last lost that shrunken, hollow look they had gained since Azkaban. Despite everything, it was still unmistakably Sirius, and yet…

"How are you dead and I'm not if we're both here right now?"

"Yeah, that's going to take some explaining, isn't it," said Sirius, situating himself more comfortably in his seat. "See, you know when Dumbledore told you that Voldemort had transferred some of his powers to you? And how it eventually developed into the connection between him and your scar?"

"Yeah," said Harry slowly.

Sirius nodded behind him and Harry turned to look in the direction they had come from, where the flayed child could still barely be made out.

"…Is that…"

"That's basically the physical manifestation of that connection, yes," Sirius summed up. "That is what Voldemort irrevocably killed. Whether he killed you as well is entirely up to you."

"But…how could I still have this chance, though? Is it because of my mother's sacrifice?"

"A hell of a lot of it has to do with that, yes," said Sirius encouragingly. "The protection she left you runs through the blood in your veins, and—"

"Hang on," Harry cut in, letting his gaze drift over his surroundings. If it was indeed a palace in which they sat, it was an odd one, with chairs set in little rows and bits of railing here and there, and still, he and Sirius and the stunted creature under the chair were the only beings there. Then the answer rose to his lips easily, without effort.

"Voldemort took some of my blood," said Harry.

"Exactly!" said Sirius. "He rebuilt his body with your blood, tying him to you and making the connection to you even deeper without realizing it! As long as he lives, you can't really die!"

"…Does the same thing apply to him?"

"It may have once," Sirius admitted, "but not anymore. Like I said, he destroyed that connection himself when he cast the Killing Curse on you just now. Right now, his body is still tying you to life, should you choose to go back." He paused. "Please choose to go back," he said quickly, his face looking more serious than Harry had ever seen it.

"…You're here, though," Harry said quietly.

"Ron and Hermione and Remus and Hagrid and the Weasleys and everyone who came to help you tonight are still out there," Sirius told him, nudging his shoulder gently.

Harry sat in thought for a long time, or perhaps seconds. It was very hard to be sure of things like time, here.

"Where are we, exactly?"

"I was going to ask you the same thing," said Sirius, looking around. "What do you see?"

Until Sirius had asked, Harry had not known. Now, however, he found that he had an answer ready
"It looks," he said slowly, "like King's Cross Station. Except a lot cleaner and empty, and there are no trains as far as I can see."

Sirius stared at him.

"You're a weird kid," he said matter-of-factly. "Although… I suppose I get it… Yeah, on second thought, that's not too bad at all."

"Well, where do you think we are?" asked Harry, a little defensively.

"Forbidden Forest," Sirius answered promptly, gazing fondly at his surroundings.

"Oh sure, that isn't weird at all," said Harry, grinning at him.

"Hey, the four of us had a lot of really good memories in this place," said Sirius, shoving Harry playfully. "So to you it looks like we're sitting on a bench, then?"

"Yeah, why, where do you think we're sitting, tree stump?"

"A flat rock the four of us rested on one time when we wandered too far out and exhausted ourselves. Took us ages to find it again when the moon wasn't full. Had a pretty fun Exploding Snap tournament on it to celebrate finding it again without encountering any acromantua, which is no small feat, let me tell you."

"I believe it," said Harry, but then remembered a much more pressing question than that of their current location.

"Do you know what the prophecy says?" he said, and he was glad to see that the words wiped the smile from Sirius's face.

Sirius looked away, obviously uncomfortable, but somehow Harry knew that he would finally get some answers.

"…Basically that it'll come down to you and Voldemort in the end," he said at last.

"…I think I knew that," said Harry, gaping at Sirius. "Is that it?"

"Kinda, yeah."

"Did Voldemort know that?"

"Yep, but he wanted the exact wording, which I think only Dumbledore really knows. And we've been assured that knowing the exact phrasing really won't change much, and in fact part of it just repeats for some reason."

"…So this whole time the Order's just been guarding a piece of information that pretty much anyone could have guessed at and that Voldemort already knew."

"Well there wasn't really much else for us to do with the Ministry grinding everything to a standstill," Sirius defended.

"Fair enough." Harry paused. "So is there anything else the Order's been keeping from me that's directly about me?"
"You're sure taking this opportunity by the balls, aren't you," said Sirius, letting out his bark-like laughter.

"You have no idea," said Harry, laughing a little himself.

"Let me think," said Sirius once he had sobered up a little. "Other than the part where the rest of the Order was stalking you the entire previous summer and the part where we were kind of afraid that the connection would become so strong that Voldemort might eventually lead you astray, manipulate your memories, and maybe even possess you…No, that's kind of it."

"…Okay, that thing about the connection? Might've been useful to know," said Harry, unable to help the accusatory tone from seeping into his voice.

"Dumbledore had his reasons for keeping things from you, and no matter how hard we tried to argue the point, we usually followed his orders in the end."

"And why exactly is it that he didn't tell me any of this?" asked Harry bitterly. "Or am I still too young and naïve to know anything, even if it might protect me?"

"You were never too naïve to know and you certainly aren't too young. But the reason we didn't tell you anything is because we thought that the connection between you and Voldemort opened both ways. We were afraid that Voldemort would be able to break into your mind and see all of your memories, especially the ones about the Order. We were also afraid that the connection would grow stronger over time, so strong that he'd be able to possess you and do serious harm to you. And that came really close to happening the night after the attack on Arthur, didn't it?"

"…So how come Dumbledore didn't order you or someone else to tell me that you lot thought Voldemort might break into my head and that's why you couldn't tell me anything? I would've accepted that far more readily than the 'You're too young' excuse and probably wouldn't've been as mad at all of you as I have been all year."

"True, but we were worried that you knowing would terrify you and make it all the more easier for Voldemort to use that fear to break into your mind."

"Yeah, but then all he'd see would be a select few of the newer members (which I grant you would've sucked), the interior of a place that's physically impossible for him to get to, and the theory that he might break into my head which would've been useless to him after he'd already broken into my head."

"Again with the possible possession, though."

"Then why didn't Dumbledore make me learn Occlumency before Voldemort was aware of the connection? That would've been the smartest move for him to make, wouldn't it have been? And letting me know about the possible possession and breaking into my head and the possibility of fake visions would have definitely given me motivation to actually try and learn the damn stuff no matter what Snape did to me! How could Dumbledore not have thought of any of this?!"

"You can't blame Dumbledore for all of this," said Sirius softly.

Harry stared at him incredulously.

"How can't I?" he said angrily. "Sirius, you died for absolutely no reason!"

"Harry, after the fact, it's easy to say 'We should've done something else.' However, no one knows how things will turn out. And even so, you have to make a choice. You must. The lives of half a
dozen fellow Order members, or the lives of everyone within Wizarding Great Britain and even Muggle Great Britain...Dumbledore made his choice. He chose to lead us into a scenario where any of us could've died, and it was probably pure luck that I was the only casualty." Sirius smiled gently at Harry. "I really haven't lived all that long, all things considering, but I'm certain of one thing: If there's anyone who can bring change, it will be someone willing to sacrifice what they care for. It will be someone who can throw aside their humanity, in order to defeat people who can truly be called monsters. Someone who can't sacrifice anything can never change anything."

"...Then what the hell is the point of this whole parody series that's made up of like seventy-five percent hindsight," Harry burst out after Sirius had finished.

"Because it's funny and it develops plot bunnies and it gets people thinking and stuff," said Sirius, laughing. "And also it's mainly to try and get people to lay off Dumbledore at least a little. I may not agree with most of the crap he tries to pull, but I do understand his reasoning behind trying to do what he considers the right thing."

"You still basically just abandoned the whole point of any of these stories even existing, though," said Harry.

"Oh bite me, it's fun," said Sirius, and he and Harry laughed before lapsing into another silence.

They sat in silence for a long time, and the whimperings of the creature behind them barely disturbed Harry anymore.

At last he said, "I'm going to have a lot more to say about that baby when we get to the seventh book."

"And it'll be a complete rehash of what you've already said when we went through the eighth movie," said Sirius confidently.

"I might expand on it a little," muttered Harry defensively.

"No you won't."

"No I won't."

The creature behind him jerked and moaned, and Harry and Sirius sat without talking for the longest time yet. The realization of what would happen next settled gradually over Harry in the long minutes, like softly falling snow.

"I've got to go back, haven't I?"

"That's up to you, but again, I'd really appreciated it if you go back."

Harry sat in silence for a few more moments before Sirius spoke up again, saying, "You realize we'll see each other again, don't you?"

"Will I always get a choice like this?" Harry could see this getting progressively harder to turn down if it kept happening.

"No, this is pretty much your one chance, unless you got a similar chance when you were one or something."

"And even if I did, I wouldn't remember it."
"Yep."

"So...if Voldemort hit me with the Killing Curse a third time—"

"Fairly positive it would kill you."

"Okay. I'll try to avoid that, then."

"See that you do."

Harry nodded and sighed. Leaving this place would not be nearly as hard as anything he'd been through in the past few hours, but it was warm and light and peaceful here, and he knew that he was heading back to pain and the fear of more loss. He stood up, and Sirius did the same, and they looked for a long moment into each other's faces.

"Tell me one last thing," said Harry. "Is this real? Or has this been happening inside my head?"

Sirius beamed at him, and his voice sounded loud and strong in Harry's ears even though the bright mist was descending again, obscuring his figure.

"Bugger if I know!"

~*~*~*~*~*~

He was lying facedown on the floor. The smell of the polished wood filled his nostrils. He could feel the cold hard floor beneath his cheek, and the hinge of his glasses, which had been knocked sideways by the fall, cutting into his temple. The place where the Killing Curse had hit him felt like the bruise of an iron-clad punch.

He groaned.

"WHAT THE FUCK," bellowed Voldemort from his own prone position on the floor. "WHAT THE FUCKING FUCK."

Meanwhile, Dumbledore was cackling in the background.

"I FUCKING CALLED IT, YOU SHIT!" he shouted triumphantly, giggling and doing a jig as Voldemort flailed with rage.

A/N: Yep, sorry again for the delay, hope you enjoyed that extra-long section with Sirius that took me weeks to write and then completely forgot to show off. HOORAY!

Review or you'll be attacked by brains and shit.
A/N: SHIT. FUCK. Um. Least it's on Saturday this time even though it's like nine hours later than usual? Apparently taking excessive notes for HBP is making me forget that I didn't finish posting OotP yet. Except now I just did so I can move on now. Yay-face.

Disclaimer: I'm pretty sure all three of the tiny Airplane!, A Very Potter Sequel, and Two Best Friends Play references were very quickly used up in the first passage thing and the rest is just Harry shouting at Dumbledore. Huh.

"There is nothing worse than death, Dumbledore!" snarled Voldemort.

"Tell me, how do you feel about the Dementor's Kiss?" said Dumbledore, still closing in upon Voldemort and speaking as lightly as though they were discussing the weather. "Losing one's memory? What about the state that dear Bellatrix over there left poor Frank and Alice in forever, surely she must have told you about that by now?"

"Don't call me Shirley, you old fool!" Voldemort spat out in a rage.

"Forgive me, Tom, forgive me."

"Don't call me that either, you bastard-ass!"

"Sorry, That Either."

"Is this, like, the state of affairs today?"

The Atrium was full of people. The floor was reflecting emerald green flames that had burst into life in all the fireplaces along one wall, and a stream of witches and wizards was emerging from them. As Dumbledore pulled him back to his feet, Harry saw the tiny gold statues of the house-elf and the goblin leading a stunned-looking Cornelius Fudge forward.

"He was there!" shouted a scarlet-robed man with a ponytail, who was pointing at a pile of rubble on the other side of the hall where Bellatrix had lain trapped moments before. "I saw him, Mr. Fudge, I swear, it was You-Know-Who, he grabbed a woman and Disapparated!"

"I know, Williamson, I know, I saw him too!" gibbered Fudge, who was wearing pajamas under his pinstriped cloak and was gasping as though he had just run miles. "Merlin's beard — here — here! — in the Ministry of Magic! — great heavens above — it doesn't seem possible — my word — how can this be?"

"WHERE THE FUCK HAVE ANY OF YOU BEEN THIS WHOLE TIME," Harry and Dumbledore bellowed in unison.

"I know how you are feeling, Harry," said Dumbledore very quietly.

"No, you don't," said Harry, and his voice was suddenly loud and strong. White-hot anger leapt
inside him. Dumbledore knew nothing about his feelings.

"Yes, I do," said Dumbledore gently. "I've lost people who were close to me, too. You are not the first one to experience grief as painful as this, nor, unfortunately, will you be the last."

Harry looked up at him.

"Why didn't you just say that instead of making me so angry that I wrecked your office?" he asked quietly.

Dumbledore shrugged.

"I'm an idiot," he said apologetically.

Harry let loose a weak giggle and then completely broke down.

"What's with him?" asked Phineas NIGELLUS.

"Shut the fuck up, Phineas," said Dumbledore cheerfully.

"More recently," said Dumbledore, "I became concerned that Voldemort might realize that this connection between you exists. Sure enough, there came a time when you entered so far into his mind and thoughts that he sensed your presence. I am speaking, of course, of the night when you witnessed the attack on Mr. Weasley."

"Yeah, Snape told me," Harry muttered.

"Professor Snape, Harry," Dumbledore corrected him gently.

"Here's an idea, how 'bout I call him WHATEVER THE FUCK I LIKE," Harry exploded, jumping up from his chair again. "And how 'bout you stop with this bullshit and GET TO THE FUCKING POINT," he raged on, moving behind the chair and upending another table.

"...Huh," said Dumbledore ponderously, stroking his long, flowing silver beard. "I think I'm getting the tiniest sense that I might be going about this the wrong way..."

"YA THINK?!" bellowed Harry, twisting apart some other useless piece of crap that serves no plot-related purpose in his hands.

"Well," said the corpulent wizard fairly, "you are giving him a target to lash out at since the real culprit isn't really here at the moment."

"Maybe," said Dumbledore, lightly dodging the remains of the latest object Harry had just destroyed and subsequently thrown at his face, "but I don't think I have to be quite as much of a dick about it, especially since I only appear to be making it worse and am offering him no actual comfort whatsoever..."

"Why didn't you get Lupin all up in this bitch?" asked Dilys Derwent curiously. "He could've comforted the boy and grieved together with him, and he probably would've also benefited from your explanation and apologies as well."

"I would have, I think, but he went to make sure Nymphadora was all right."

"Oooh, fair enough, then," said Dilys, smirking.
"I know, right?" giggled Dumbledore, flailing slightly.

"I warned Sirius when we adopted twelve Grimmauld Place as our headquarters that Kreacher must be treated with kindness and respect. I also told him that Kreacher could be dangerous to us. I do not think that Sirius took me very seriously, or that he ever saw Kreacher as a being with feelings as acute as a human's—"

"Or he just considered Kreacher to have as much worth as the average Death Eater or some other member of his family," Harry spat out through clenched teeth. The rage that had subsided so briefly had flared in him again; he would not let Dumbledore criticize Sirius. "Maybe, just maybe, Sirius hated being confined to that stupid house enough as it was without a living, breathing reminder of how miserable his early probably-distinct-lack-of childhood had been that goes about insulting him at every turn and making him feel like less of a human himself with every word that fucking elf said to him!"

"Kreacher is what he has been made by wizards, Harry," said Dumbledore. "Yes, he is to be pitied. His existence has been as miserable as your friend Dobby's. He was forced to do Sirius's bidding, because Sirius was the last of the family to which he was enslaved, though since Sirius had gone to prison he probably should've been transferred directly to Narcissa after Walburga died, especially since Sirius had been disowned to begin with, and thus Kreacher felt no true loyalty to Sirius. And whatever Kreacher's faults, it must be admitted that Sirius did nothing to make Kreacher's lot easier—"

"IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO, DICKHEAD!" Harry yelled. "Kreacher would've had to make an effort as well if any progress would've been made whatsoever, and you can't force someone like that to suddenly make that giant leap! And besides, Dobby turned out all right despite his environment, and so did Sirius — fuck, so did I — and sometimes a kind word here and there isn't enough, sometimes people just don't change no matter how much you try unless something extremely life-changing happens to them — when are you going to start insisting that we should be treating Voldemort with kindness and respect so that maybe he'll change for the better, eh?!"

He was on his feet again, furious, ready to fly at Dumbledore, who had plainly not understood Sirius at all, how much he had suffered, how miserable anyone would be at being forced to live in such a traumatic location from their past with no hope of ever being let out, what it was like to live with a family that hated you and was most likely at least emotionally abusive toward you every day of your life...

"Snape — Snape goaded Sirius about staying in the house — he made out Sirius was a coward—"

"Sirius was much too old and clever to have allowed such feeble taunts to hurt him," said Dumbledore.

"Sirius's development was arrested when he was put in Azkaban! He was still mentally in his very early twenties for twelve years, and how mature was he before then, anyway, because from what I can tell he really wasn't all that much, nor are most people in their early twenties! And then he gets out, barely has any time to try and grow up, and then you come along and stick him right back in prison, which is located in a place from his childhood that probably made him regress from all the memories trapped with him! And you don't know what it's like to have even the most casual of taunts get under your skin, haunting you, keeping you awake at night since you have absolutely no outlet for any of your frustrations, and having them get worse and worse over time as the one taunting you
just keeps heaping it on you and they won't ever stop and there's nothing you can do to make them stop — of course Snape hurt him! How can you ever say he didn't?!

"Indifference and neglect often do much more damage than outright dislike—"

"YOU DON'T SAY."

"...Did Dumbledore do a bad thing?"

"DUMBLEDORE KIND OF DID."

"...Oops."

"GO F**K YOURSELF."

Dumbledore lowered his hands and surveyed Harry through his half-moon glasses.

"It is time," he said, "for me to tell you what I should have told you five years ago, Harry. Please sit down. I am going to tell you everything."

Harry fell out of his chair, he was laughing so hard. Even most of the portraits were chuckling appreciatively.

"Why does everyone keep doing that?" said Dumbledore, pouting.

"While you can still call home the place where your mother's blood dwells, there you cannot be touched or harmed by Voldemort. He shed her blood, but it lives on in you and your sister. Her blood became your refuge. You need return there only once a year, apparently for a certain length of time that may only amount to a fortnight judging by the next book, it's not clear, but as long as you can still call it home, there he cannot hurt you. Your aunt knows this. I explained what I had done in the letter I left, with you, on her doorstep. She knows that allowing you houseroom may well have kept you alive for the past fifteen years."

"Wait," said Harry. "Wait a moment."

He sat up straighter in his chair, staring at Dumbledore.

"I have never called that place home," said Harry quietly. "Especially since I came to Hogwarts; this castle has always been my home, and the Burrow is my home away from home — Grimmauld Place has been more of a home to me than Privet Drive ever was. Doesn't that, like, horribly negate everything?"

Dumbledore turned pale.

"Er..."

"And since Voldemort now has my blood, now that my mother's blood lives on in him, can't he just pop by whenever he wants now without having to worry about anything?"

Dumbledore covered his mouth with his hand.
"That makes a disturbing amount of sense, how did I not think about that…"

"And also there's evidently a clear radius around the house that the protection extends to, and not even the continuation of my mother's blood in the form of her nephew can extend it," Harry went on. "At the very least, yes, you should have told me about this stuff and the limits of it, so I wouldn't have gone beyond them and therefore would never have been attacked by dementors over the summer."

"Those weren't sent by Voldemort, though," Dumbledore deflected.

"…But they were dementors."

"IT'S SUPER UNCLEAR, OKAY?!"

________________________________________

"I defy anyone who has watched you as I have — and I have watched you more closely than you can have imagined—"

Harry stood up, ran to the fireplace, and Flood as quickly as he could to the Ministry of Magic before Dumbledore could stop him, where he swiftly sought out Amelia Bones and worked out the terms for a magical restraining order against the newly-reinstated headmaster Albus Dumbledore, whose credentials were immediately called into question once again due to him admitting to being a creepy stalker of an underage student.

________________________________________

…So Harry proved to Dumbledore that he was exceptional only after Dumbledore all but forced him to break the laws of time and space, and not when he single-handedly killed a basilisk…?

ALRIGHTY THEN.

________________________________________

"My only defense is this: I have watched you struggling under more burdens than any other student who has ever passed through this school and I could not bring myself to add another — the greatest one of all."

Harry waited, but Dumbledore did not speak.

"I still don't understand."

"You're pregnant, Harry."

________________________________________

The curse Dolohov had used on Hermione had been less effective than it would have been had he been able to say the incantation aloud, even though when he tried to use it again on Harry when he had his voice back it didn't look like there was an incantation, and also nonverbal magic is a thing that will only be invented when the next book comes out apparently.

________________________________________

…Tell me dandelion juice isn't a real thing.
Ron and Hermione left the hospital wing completely cured three days before the end of term. Despite both of them being completely receptive to what Harry had needed out of them after the traumatic events of the previous year, only Ron got it right this time and ended up having to shut Hermione up whenever she tried to bring up Sirius's name. Master of tact, that one, she should totally give lessons and correct Harry and Ron's behavior at every turn.

WHO WON THE HOUSE CUP, THOUGH, IT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE SERIES, WHY ARE WE MOVING FOCUS AWAY FROM IT, THIS MAKES NO SENSE.

"How come you're not at the feast?" Harry asked.

"Well, I've lost most of my possessions," said Luna serenely. "People take them and hide them, you know. But as it's the last night, I really do need them back, so I've been putting up signs."

She gestured toward the notice board, upon which, sure enough, she had pinned a list of all her missing books and clothes with a plea for their return.

"...You're a fourth year, right?" said Harry.

"Yes," said Luna. "Why do you ask?"

"Accio," said Harry simply.

"...WOW that's a large infestation of Wrackspurts I got going on, thanks, Harry, I can't believe I never thought of that."

"No problem. Want me to help?"

"Nah, I'm good, I got this."

"M'kay then."

As the train slowed down in the approach to King's Cross, Harry though he had never wanted to leave it less. He even wondered fleetingly what would happen if he simply refused to get off, but remained stubbornly sitting there until the first of September, when it would take him back to Hogwarts. So he tried it, and Tonks and Moody had to physically drag him out of the compartment while Lupin spoke to him softly.

Moody turned away from Uncle Vernon. "So, Potter...give us a shout if you need us. If we don't hear from you for three days in a row, we'll send someone along..."

"...Did I even end up doing that?" asked Harry. "It never really said if I went through with this or not."

"Makes good material for fanfiction, though," said Lupin, shrugging.

"I guess..."
"You know," said Tonks, "I can see you purposefully not writing to any of us in the vain hope that one of us would show up so you could talk to someone who gives a shit about whether or not you live or die."

"I can also see this, why wasn't this a thing."

A/N: Been working almost extensively on those Kingdom Hearts parodies I promised I'd try and do back when I was doing movie parodies. Guess that's what happens when you get KH 1.5 HD Remix for Christmas and are completely unable to turn off the sarcastic cynical snarkiness that you've so carefully cultivated over several years of finding plot holes and a couple decades of despising Donald Duck. No, those aren't going up next; I'm still in the note-taking stage for like three of those games at once, at any rate. I just need to pry myself away from the controller and focus on HBP instead. And that should go pretty quickly considering that it is, in fact, HBP. Meaning it'll be easy as shit since there's no Umbridge and there were no deaths that I cried over. X3 With luck, it'll start going up some time during April.

**Review or Dumbledore will continue to have absolutely no idea how to deal with distraught teenagers.**

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!